

EL MALCRIADO:

Voice of the Farm Worker, Voice of a Movement

A Thesis

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by

Vanessa Madrigal

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by

Vanessa Madrigal

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_, Committee Chair  
Dr. Paula Austin

\_\_\_\_\_, Second Reader  
Dr. Christopher Castaneda

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Student: Vanessa Madrigal

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\_\_\_\_\_, Graduate Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Rebecca Kluchin Date

Department of History

Abstract  
of  
EL MALCRIADO:  
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by  
Vanessa Madrigal

Statement of Problem

This research seeks to understand how the National Farm Worker Association and the newspaper, *El Malcriado: Voice of the Farm Worker* engaged farmworker and activist identity during the Delano grape strike, and ensuing nation-wide boycott. It analyzes rhetoric and imagery as grassroots mobilization tactics and contextualizes these within the political climate of the time, and also places the activists inside of a broader Mexican American Civil Rights Movement. The analysis considers race, gender, class, and culture.

Sources of Data

The newspaper, *El Malcriado: Voice of the Farm Worker*, forms the backbone of this study. It provides a unique insight into the perspective of grassroots organizers and formal leadership in the National Farm Worker Association.

### Conclusions Reached

The National Farm Worker Association bridged two phases within the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement. The former highlighted Anglo-American values and utilized traditional patriotic strategies to prove worthiness of civic inclusion; whereas the latter emphasized ethnic Mexican values and cultural pride, which centered on familial and religious worthiness.

\_\_\_\_\_, Committee Chair  
Dr. Paula Austin

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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## INTRODUCTION

From the Unity Clap to cries of “*Si se puede*,” the marks of *la Huelga* (the strike) are now indelibly ingrained into American culture. When a movie features a slow clap that rises into a roar, it references the action that rallied the multicultural, multilingual United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, and broke through the language barrier during rallies. When Barack Obama shouted, “Yes we can!” in 2008, the chant not only invigorated a newly politicized youth of the Recession, but it resonated with the previous generation that embraced protest culture, who came together forty years prior to the Spanish equivalent “*Si se puede!*” Over a decade of farmworker strikes, boycotts, and marches in the 1960s and 1970s brought the fight for social justice into the mainstream of American life. Yet despite an apparent absorption into American culture and life, the farmworker movement has received comparatively little attention. This study aims to fill that gap in American history, placing the movement within a larger context of Mexican Americans’ pursuit for social, economic, and civil justice.

Protest strategy in the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement manifested in four phases that corresponded with the changing identity of ethnic Mexican Americans. Post-conquest, Mexican Americans entered what Alfredo Cuéllar refers to as an apolitical period. From the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 and through the early twentieth century, the Mexican American community took a defensive posture to protect

encroachments on civil rights.<sup>1</sup> Experiencing discrimination throughout the Southwest, and receiving little protection from the largely White civil authorities, Mexican Americans turned inward. They created social clubs that educated the community as well as provided a space for cultural activities. These organizations offered protections against the structural discrimination that members of *La Raza*<sup>2</sup> (ethnic Mexicans and Mexican Americans) endured. Facing obstacles like employment discrimination, many families plummeted into economic hardship. During this time, social clubs called *mutualistas* provided an economic safety net in times of emergency, offering services including funeral expenses. While this period was marked by social activity and defense, the community remained largely excluded from political entanglements. Though this period is not thoroughly addressed within the scope of this paper, its influence can be seen in the early goals and structure of the National Farm Workers Association.

Following World War I, however, these social clubs began taking on a more political dimension, restricting membership to United States citizens. These organizations highlighted assimilationist tactics to attain inclusion among, and equality with, the larger Anglo-dominated society. This phase was marked with increasing political identity and

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<sup>1</sup> Alfredo Cuéllar, "Perspective on Politics: Part I," in *La Causa Política: Achicano Politics Reader*, by Chris F. Garcia (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press: 1974), 36.

<sup>2</sup> "*La Raza*" is a racialized self-identification of Mexicans and Americans of Mexican descent. It originated in the mid-1920s, connotes racial pride, and is widely used to identify the community belonging to this ethnic heritage rather than identifying them according to citizenship status.

legislative activism, seen with the emergence of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), Order of Sons of America (OSA), and other organizations. Mostly middle-class male Latinos, these activists had access to legal recourse in cases of discrimination, and were privy to the political underpinnings of activism, thus making them effective lobbyists.

By the 1960s, a new generation of activists emphasized grassroots methods that proved effective in the Black Civil Rights Movement. Consequently, activism lost its privileged place among the middle-class and became inclusive of migrant farm workers, students, and women. This third phase of activism used direct action, civil disobedience, and involvement of non-Raza allies.

As the 1960s progressed, the movement became more radicalized in the face of increasingly violent opposition. Activists embraced their ethnic heritage, and openly protested U.S. policy as racist. And as World War I politicized the earlier generation into civic duty, America's war in Viet Nam created a newfound political awareness in Raza youth. A fourth phase of activism within *el Movimiento* (the Movement) revealed increasing radicalism and militancy. Activists created connections with other oppressed minorities, and reappropriated cultural symbols to wage a rhetorical war on injustice, and critiqued earlier generations' approach as assimilationist and accommodationist.

Discussions on the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement fail to effectively incorporate the social and cultural impact that the United Farm Workers had in the Raza community and the broader United States. These historians are thoroughly discussed in

Chapter 1, and include Albert Camarillo, David Gutierrez, Cynthia Orozco, and Lorena Oropeza, among others. While their contribution to the field of Mexican American Civil Rights history remains unquestionably beneficial, the exclusion or brief overview of the United Farm Workers is apparent.<sup>3,4,5</sup> General UFW studies limit themselves to the height of the boycott, and neglect to explore the origins of mobilization; furthermore, historians focus on either the UFW's grassroots organizing or its distinct Mexican American demographic.<sup>6</sup> However, the UFW was integral in bridging two distinct phases of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement. During the early years of the association, changing ideologies became visible in the newspaper, *El Malcriado: The Voice of the Farm Worker*. From 1965 to 1967, the newspaper revealed a shift in activism: direct action replaced formal methods of legal recourse, while ethnic nationalism and minority solidarity replaced citizenship-based identity grounded in a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant value system.

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<sup>3</sup> Albert Camarillo, *Chicanos in California: A History of Mexican Americans in California*, (Sparks, Nev: Materials for Today's Learning, 1990), 88-92.

<sup>4</sup> David G. Gutierrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity*, (Berkeley: University of California Press 1995), 196-200.

<sup>5</sup> Lorena Oropeza, *¡Raza Si! ¡Guerra No! Chicano Protest and Patriotism During the Viet Nam War*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 70-71.

<sup>6</sup> Margaret Rose, "Woman Power Will Stop Those Grapes: Chicana Organizers and Middle Class Female Supporters in the Farm Workers' Grape Boycott in Philadelphia, 1969-1970," in *Journal of Women's History*, Vol 7 no 4, (1995).

This study utilizes an interdisciplinary approach to analyzing *el Movimiento*. It employs resource mobilization framework, developed by sociologists, to understand the effectiveness of the social networks between activists and allies. Ethnic studies methodologies offer a look into the cultural significance of Catholic symbols within the Mexican American community, as well as insight into a cultural value system. Its primary historical approaches stem from social and cultural history, analyzing structural problems that surrounded and led to the rise of the UFW, and relating them to how the community responded to them. The archive for this research is comprised of English language editions of the union's newspaper, *El Malcriado: Voice of the Farmworker*, during the first few years of its publication, allowing for an examination of the intended audience: English-speaking activists and allies. The research thus far excludes the Spanish editions.

Chapter One, "Movement Roots," outlines the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement history and historiography. This lays the foundation upon which the farmworker movement was built. The chapter contextualizes the United Farm Workers' protests and strategies within the larger movement history, and demonstrates how the struggle was a national effort that cross-germinated with other movements. It looks at the traditional faces of activism within the Mexican American community. The chapter examines activism with a broader perspective of the movement within the larger Southwest Mexican American community, and then narrows its scope to the fields of central California.

Chapter Two, “The Road to Muchachito,” argues that the farmworker movement utilized religion as a mobilization tactic to create ethnic solidarity among a primarily Catholic Mexican constituency. The chapter explores the cultural value system rooted in the community’s sense of religion and gender. The union’s newspaper, *El Malcriado*, utilized various religious rhetoric, imagery, and symbolism to reinforce the organization’s message and mobilize its readership. During its first year of publication, the newspaper cultivated an audience with a combination of assimilationist rhetoric and ethno-cultural pride.

Chapter Three, “*El Malcriado*: Mobilizing Race and Religion,” follows the newspaper as it develops mobilization tactics based on ethnic nationalism, by way of religious symbolism. The chapter engages in a discussion of a gender-based cultural value system through which the union effectively appealed to the ethnically Mexican sector of its audience. The organization appealed to the religious scruples within the largely Catholic Mexican American community, and blended their argument with images and rhetoric from the Mexican Revolution. This expanded the roles traditionally ascribed to women, and empowered men with regard to the oppressive and emasculating social construct between rancher and worker.

Chapter Four, “*La Mujer Huelguista*,” finishes the exploration of the National Farm Worker Association through the lens of social movement theories, focusing on women’s activism. Here, women, children, and family activism come to the forefront of direct action programs. The chapter offers a brief examination of the structural elements that split White

and minority feminism. Overall, this section makes use of Belinda Robnett's framework on resource mobilization and bridge leadership. The chapter argues that the farmworkers' movement made Chicana activism both commonplace at large, and specifically integral to the boycott's success. Their inclusion in leadership and grassroots activism became transformational to the larger movement.

## CHAPTER 1: MOVEMENT ROOTS

In the 1960s, Mexican American activists looked beyond the contemporary struggle for social justice, beyond the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and delved into the fractured cultural memory of a race that is at once conquered and conquering. Pivoting on this perspective, activists identified themselves as Chicanos, a previously pejorative and racially prejudiced term identifying a member of la Raza as lower-class bandits. Reappropriation of this word highlighted the indigenous roots of la Raza, expressing pride in religious, cultural, and ethnic heritage. This placed them within the context of the centuries-old racial, religious, and political struggle of the indigenous Mexican community.

The Mexican American Civil Rights Movement, much like the Black Civil Rights Movement, began long before the cries for the boycott, the march, and the *huelga*. “The Long Civil Rights Movement,” a familiar term among African American Civil Rights historians, elongates the struggle for civil rights in the African American community beyond the 1950s and 1960s. It extends the timeline back into the 1930s, and argues that the actions of southern Black communities during the mid-twentieth century did not arise spontaneously; rather, they fit within and built upon a broader history of struggle and triumph.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, Mexican American Civil Rights historians utilize a similarly broad

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<sup>7</sup> Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *The Journal of American History* March, 2005.

perspective, rooting formal activism for Mexican American social justice, *la Causa*, in institutions and organizations following World War I.

With an elongated perspective of Mexican American resistance to racial discrimination, historians overlooked the United Farm Worker strike and boycott, instead focusing on the more formal civil rights organizations that straddled the farm workers' struggle, like the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) during the 1930s, and the Crusade for Justice during the late 1960s and 1970s. Likewise, social historians shoehorned the UFW activities between the Black Civil Rights Movement and Women's Liberation Movement, since the farm workers' movement encompassed something in between a labor movement and a social justice movement, often earning only a paragraph-length mention within textbooks. Though United Farm Workers' methods, strategies, and successes are indicative of, and contextualized within, the wave of progressive movements during the 1960s, the spirit of the movement had roots in a broader Mexican American Civil Rights Movement. The UFW was uniquely poised to transition *el Movimiento* into its third phase of direct action and non-violence. At the same time, the association united several historically underrepresented and oppressed ethnic minority communities under the banner of social and economic justice: Blacks, Filipinos, and Latinos found common cause in the fields. Women, too, began to occupy formal and informal leadership roles, in contrast to an earlier male-driven activism.

Since the 1970s, journalists and sociologists have provided excellent examinations of the UFW struggle. While untrained in historical methodologies, their accounts form the

basis of any historiographical examination of the United Farm Workers. Historians availed themselves of these resources, and integrated them into their own historical arguments. Modern journalists like Miriam Pawel explore facts against the grain, and dare to oppose hagiographic lore that surrounded Cesar Chavez.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, sociologists and ethnic studies professionals offer thorough structural analyses of the movement, contextualizing the boycott and strike within particular socio-economic and cultural conditions. The border between disciplines thus proved to be as fluid as the social and political boundaries they examined.

Sociologists laid the foundation for historicizing social justice movements. Mid-century scholarship discussed social movements as symptoms of socio-economic tensions, with elite groups making ameliorative decisions. Collective behavior theory argued that socio-economic tensions, a product of rapid social change, resulted in spontaneous individual grievances of a disparate and oppressed group. Further, the relative powerlessness of the oppressed lent to the idea that “movement participation was relatively rare, discontents were transitory, movement and institutional actions were sharply distinct, and movement actors were arational [*sic*, non-rational] if not outright irrational.”<sup>9</sup> Thus,

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<sup>8</sup> Miriam Pawel, *The Crusade of Cesar Chavez: A Biography*, (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2014).

<sup>9</sup> Jenkins, J. Craig. 1983. “Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements”. *Annual Review of Sociology* 9. Annual Reviews: 527–53. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2946077>. (528).

social movement participants displayed passionate passivity, leaving true agency with external [White] elites.<sup>10</sup>

Resource mobilization theorists, however, argued that collective behavior theory posited an incomplete explanation of social movements. It highlighted the resources necessary to mobilize participants and support in a social movement, as well as acknowledged the institutional framework necessary to buttress a movement. These resources might include ecclesiastical support, political favor, or money, to name a few. Collective behavior theory, by contrast, cannot account for the decades of institutional and organizational activity upon which social movements stand. Rather than confirming spontaneity and irrationality, the mere existence of organizations like Order of Sons of America and the LULAC show the intentionality behind the quest for social justice among Mexican American citizens throughout the twentieth century. They set the groundwork for *el movimiento* to arise in the 1960s.<sup>11</sup>

Aldon Morris's *Origins of the Southern Civil Rights Movement* built upon the framework for resource mobilization theory, and is thus invaluable to the historiography.<sup>12</sup> Current mobilization scholarship builds upon or is in conversation with *Origins*. He argued

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<sup>10</sup> Jenkins, J. Craig, *Politics of Insurgency: The Farm Worker Movement in the 1960s*, (NY: Columbia University Press, 1985), 1-27.

<sup>11</sup> Belinda Robnett, *How Long? How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights*. (NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), 12-15.

<sup>12</sup> Aldon Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, (NY: The Free Press, 1984).

that conscious, deliberate, indigenous leadership provided the resources for the Black Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Taking aim against collective behavior theorists, Morris asserted that the coordinated efforts of the local institutional base led to strategic successes within the movement. His argument, therefore, placed the locus of power within community churches and institutions. This de-emphasized the role of external, often White elite, leadership contributions, typical of traditional resource mobilization theorists. His analysis further acknowledged indigenous leadership agency within a narrowed examination of power structures.

Sociologist J. Craig Jenkins utilized resource mobilization theory in his examination of the United Farm Workers. Unlike Morris, Jenkins focused less on individual contributions of indigenous leadership and more on systems of power. These relationships revealed tensions within the system and explained the formation of oppression and reaction. For instance, Jenkins devoted an entire chapter to the structure of agriculture and grower power, and the need to maintain cheap, docile labor within this particular economic system.<sup>13</sup> He argued that the success of the United Farm Workers depended on the UFW's strategies of mobilization and the changed political environment from a conservative to a center-left governing coalition. In arguing this, he blended

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<sup>13</sup> J. Craig Jenkins, *The Politics of Insurgency: The Farm Worker Movement in the 1960s*, (NY: Columbia University Press, 1985), Chapter 3.

resource mobilization theory with institutional theory of the state, which “distinguishe[d] political processes that restrict or expand opportunities for insurgency.”<sup>14</sup>

While sociologists analyzed the power dynamics of social movements, historians began to place the UFW within the broader perspective of a Mexican American Civil Rights Movement. A proliferation of historical works from the 1980s and early 1990s examine the ebbs and flows of Mexican American history, the historiography of which is examined below. Historians like Albert Camarillo, Ana Minian, David Gutierrez, and Lorena Oropeza, among others, made strides in the race, class, and gender analyses. Although there is a general consensus that the movement’s political activism began with the formation of LULAC, these histories begin the journey of the Mexican American community at the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo or earlier. This framing positions identity politics of the movement within a broader socio-political power structure.

Rudolfo Acuña wrote one of the first Chicano histories during *el Movimiento*. The Chicano Movement was marked by Mexican Americans’ shift away from assimilationist perspectives as it reestablished identity with pre-Columbian indigenous communities. Originally published in 1972, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos* is a clear product of this movement. As a result, Acuña’s work expanded the perspective beyond the modern nation-state, beginning the story before the North American occupation by European colonizers. The perspective of perpetual occupation and colonization is integral to Chicano

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<sup>14</sup> J. Craig Jenkins, *The Politics of Insurgency: The Farm Worker Movement in the 1960s*, (NY: Columbia University Press, 1985), xiv.

understanding of identity. This occupation extends from Spanish conquest of what is now Latin America to United States' conquest of Mexican territories; he also employs the theme of the colonization of the mind and body through assimilationist politics and social power dynamics that permit abuse of the body.<sup>15, 16</sup> His work has become the key source for textual information on Chicano history, and is structured both chronologically and thematically.

Through the 1980s, Chicano history reflected the broader themes within Acuña's work. Historians frequently utilized borderlands history which offers a more effective examination of this community's interaction in the region before, during, and after modern national boundaries. This approach takes on a world-systems perspective, while acknowledging the naturally arbitrary, though politically significant, border lines established by state powers. It focuses on cultural, social, economic, and political exchange of the colonial past, to contextualize recent historical events, movements, and identity.

Keeping identity as a central point of analysis, historians of the late 1980s and 1990s sought more methodologically rigid approaches to tease out the themes of the earlier Chicano historian. Albert Camarillo comes to the fore as a foil to Acuña. Camarillo took a more traditional historical approach to the subject by periodizing discrete shifts in Mexican American history. However, Camarillo still utilized similar themes, like identity, which

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<sup>15</sup> Rodolfo Acuña, "The Occupation of Middle America," in *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2015), 19-33.

<sup>16</sup> Rodolfo Acuña, "Legacy of Hate: The Conquest of Mexico's Northwest," in *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2015), 39-61.

became central to Chicano history. From 1769 to 1848, inhabitants experienced an identity shift from colonial Spanish to Mexican nationals. Camarillo marked the beginning of American identity with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, in 1848. Placing individuals within this timeline highlighted citizenship, particularly the transition from Mexican to American citizenship, as a new theme of Chicano history. Camarillo also blended cultural and labor history, using the changing identity of the Mexican American population. He discussed the rise of social tensions in terms of labor: the shift from a pastoral life to an industrial one inevitably broke down traditional gender roles as women left the house in search for work. In addition, forced urbanization, often a result of loss of family land or political disenfranchisement, left Mexican Americans segregated from the larger Anglo (non-Hispanic) American community. He explained that this “barrioization — the formation of Mexican neighborhoods socially, culturally, and politically segregated from Anglo sections of cities and towns — and shifts in occupations were the two principal changes during the last quarter of the [19th] century.”<sup>17</sup> Camarillo then described the twentieth century Mexican American in terms of vacillating degrees of activism and assimilation, pivoting on changing perspectives of labor and identity. Immigration is a common theme throughout. Though tied to a broader state, national, and international

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<sup>17</sup> Albert Camarillo, *Chicanos in California: A History of Mexican Americans in California*, (Sparks, Nev: Materials for Today’s Learning, 1990), 24.

power relation, it reveals the expectations and realities of the ethnically Mexican population.<sup>18</sup>

Up to this point, male-focused accounts of organization and mobilization largely dominated the UFW's story, and they situated Chavez as the focal point of discussion. This perspective tended to overlook women and the role of family participation in activism. Historians frequently highlighted Dolores Huerta's contributions; still, as the co-founder of the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), Huerta upheld the goals and visions of the leadership within a male-dominated organization. Additionally, the historiography frequently discusses her only in relation to Cesar Chavez. In the 1990s, Margaret Rose expanded efforts to connect the role of women to the success of the boycotts. Rose emphasized the politicization of the family, with every member participating in the boycott: children canvassed bus stops, church groups, or non-cooperative shops, while parents attended community meetings, contacted media sources, or public affairs programs.<sup>19</sup> A family-pattern of boycott activism, Rose argued, was critical to the success of the boycott. The family unit was too severely disrupted when the UFW sent men to distant cities and harsh climates without a strong support-system. Meanwhile, women were left with the hardship of raising children and supporting the family on strike benefits, which included a five-dollar per week stipend and access to the association's food pantry. Sending the entire

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<sup>18</sup> Albert Camarillo, *Chicanos in California*, 23-30.

<sup>19</sup> Margaret Rose, "From the Fields to the Picket Lines: Huelga Women and the Boycott, 1965-1975," in *Labor History* Vol 31, No 3 (Summer 1990), 276.

family to urban centers proved vitally important in creating stability for activists and, Rose argued, was instrumental to the boycott's success. Behind the scenes, women were frequently responsible for the gender-specific tasks— "the domestic side of the boycott."<sup>20</sup> Rose traced the story of Esther Padilla, a former social worker who uprooted her family to assist in the boycott. Padilla used her knowledge of the welfare system to acquire food stamps and health care benefits for workers; she juggled arranging medical visits for activists while lobbying on Capitol Hill.<sup>21</sup>

In her other work, Rose argued that the movement from strike to boycott offered women autonomy within a patriarchal organization, and allowed them to manipulate gender-specific roles. In a few cases, women possessed leadership roles. Rose explained that the "lack of a trained professional staff and limited resources contributed to the decentralized approach to the boycott which by default allowed more opportunities for women to rise to these positions."<sup>22</sup> Gilbert Padilla, a veteran organizer, explained that the need to keep activists engaged during the off-season led the NFWA to organize a boycott of table grapes throughout the country.<sup>23</sup> The field workers picketed in front of stores and

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<sup>20</sup> Margaret Rose, "From the Fields to the Picket Lines," 279.

<sup>21</sup> Margaret Rose, "From the Fields to the Picket Lines," 280.

<sup>22</sup> Margaret Rose, "Woman Power Will Stop Those Grapes: Chicana Organizers and Middle Class Female Supporters in the Farm Workers' Grape Boycott in Philadelphia, 1969-1970," in *Journal of Women's History*, Vol 7 no 4, (1995), 7.

<sup>23</sup> Matthew Garcia, *From the Jaws of Victory*, 47.

distribution centers, and the NFWA sent organizers to mobilize urban centers across the nation. Although women were not recruited as primary targets for leadership, their involvement led to a destabilizing of the gendered status quo, placing women not only in the public view, but also empowering them with a political message.

Women's presence in *huelga* activism fostered new strategies of organization. The UFW collaborated with other civil rights parties, which united them with the broader social justice movement of the era. This strategy also connected the UFW to the multi-ethnic condition of poverty. Chicanas found common ground across the class border. They used middle-class values of domesticity to underline shared experiences of birth, motherhood, and family life to appeal to Anglo-American middle-class women. Rose explained that "this idealized maternalist argument based on female values, moral power, and the female domain of the consumer market united them at the same time as class differences tested their alliance."<sup>24</sup>

The code of domesticity added to Chicana protest strategy, and simultaneously offered an outlet for feminist women. The Women's Liberation Movement created a new opportunity within *la Causa* for an added a dimension of equality to be gained. However, Chicana agricultural workers were not directly connected to more radical women's liberationists, as they were with radical black freedom parties. Instead, they extended their lobbying efforts to moderate, middle-class, reputable women's groups. The YWCA and

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<sup>24</sup> Margaret Rose, *Woman Power*, 9.

the League of Women Voters offered farm workers a doorway into elite circles of bourgeois feminism.

Although Dolores Huerta aligned herself with both the organization and Chavez, the historiography fails to analyze these decisions in the context of a complex gendered system. The association's men and women created a unified front, which served as a tactical advantage for the organization during the strike. Still, when historians frame women's contributions only in juxtaposition with men's, it perpetuates a problematic analytical structure. Huerta's actions, for example, thus became a mere shadow of Chavez's ideology. Historians' selection of photographs mimic the larger narrative: Chavez is generally a central figure, supported by male strikers, organizers, and politicians. This image selection reflects the tendency to overlook individual contributions and agency of women and children on the picket lines, creating a well-curated male narrative.

Though lacking a strong gender analysis, David Gutierrez extended the discussion of identity, power, and labor in 1995, in *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Walls of Ethnicity*. He argued that the execution of United States' immigration policy in the late 1950s alienated the American-born Mexicans. This alienation led Mexican Americans on the path toward ethnic solidarity with immigrants, rather than nationalistic identification with American citizens.<sup>25</sup> Mexican Americans

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<sup>25</sup> David G. Gutierrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity*, (Berkeley: University of California Press 1995), 177.

traditionally supported of tight border control as a tactic to differentiate themselves from Mexican nationals, and thus gain legitimacy within Anglo American power structures. Beginning at conquest and culminating in the contemporary debate, *Walls and Mirrors* used a Long Civil Rights Movement perspective.<sup>26</sup>

In 1996, F. Arturo Rosales, in conjunction with the Public Broadcasting System, published *Chicano! The History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*.<sup>27</sup> It, too, placed the UFW within the chronology of civil rights and social justice activism. The book devotes each chapter to a phase in the movement, making *Chicano!* one of the first histories to delve into the UFW as a part of the movement, and attributes their use of the boycott and theatrical protest as key tactics. Rosales devoted much more time to explain and analyze the roots and context of the boycott and strike than previous survey texts. While still contextualizing the UFW within a broader ethnic Chicano Movement, Rosales's work focused on how Chavez utilized Mexican ethnicity and cultural symbolism as mobilization strategies.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, he, like Jenkins, acknowledged the shift in external power dynamics that assisted the cause for social justice. Jerry Brown replaced Ronald Reagan, which, Rosales argued, "assured an improved political climate in Sacramento for the UFW ... Brown introduced a bill called the Agricultural Labor Relations Act to provide

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<sup>26</sup> David Gutierrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, 13-14.

<sup>27</sup> F. Arturo Rosales. *Chicano! The History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*, (Houston, TX: Arte Publico Press, 1996).

<sup>28</sup> F. Arturo Rosales. *Chicano!*, 139.

California farm workers protection from which they were excluded when the US Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act.”<sup>29</sup>

Simultaneously, scholars were integrating women’s roles into methodological approaches to analyses of the Civil Rights Movement. Belinda Robnett engaged Morris’s argument in *How Long? How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights*.<sup>30</sup> Up to this point, social movement theorists identified the loci of power within titled positions of formal institutional bases. Aldon Morris’s research identified indigenous sources of power, thereby broadening the analysis to include non-Whites. His analysis observed individuals retaining formal positions within nationally recognized organizations, be they exogenous allies or indigenous activists. Since men traditionally held leadership positions within mainstream and ecclesiastical organizations, Morris’s work resulted in a large exclusion of female activism. Robnett addressed this gap with the inclusion of bridge leadership.

Bridge leadership offered alternative but necessary forms of leadership activism outside the framework of formal organizations and institutions. Robnett observed that “women constituted a large portion of those in this category of leadership and were underrepresented in the formal leadership sector even though their rates of participation exceeded those of men. Bridge leaders were not always women, but it was the most

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<sup>29</sup> F. Arturo Rosales, *Chicano!*, 149.

<sup>30</sup> Belinda Robnett, *How Long? How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights*. (NY: Oxford University Press, 1997).

accessible and acceptable form of leadership available to them.”<sup>31</sup> These leaders provided grassroots mobilization of community members, and linked them to the movement’s political and ideological goals and strategies. They connected individual identity to movement identity. Expanding movement theory to include points of analysis for race and gender, Morris and Robnett’s advancements of resource mobilization theory provided useful frameworks for analyzing the grassroots mobilization tactics of the Mexican American community in the United Farm Workers’ fight for social justice.<sup>32</sup>

Lorena Oropeza continued the discussion of identity regarding race, citizenship, and masculinity in the Chicano movement. In *¡Raza Si! ¡Guerra No!*, Oropeza explored Mexican American activists’ transition from “politics of supplication to politics of confrontation.”<sup>33</sup> Uniting Mexican Americans across class lines, she marked the United States’ entry into Vietnam as a watershed moment for the community. Lorena Oropeza argued “that the war in Viet Nam fundamentally shaped the Chicano movement’s challenge to long-held assumptions about the history of Mexican-origin people and their role within American society.”<sup>34</sup> Chicano anti-war activism forced a reevaluation of identity, protest tactics, and world-view.

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<sup>31</sup> Belinda Robnett, *How Long? How Long?*, 19.

<sup>32</sup> Aldon Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, (NY: The Free Press, 1984), 277-285.

<sup>33</sup> Lorena Oropeza, *¡Raza Si! ¡Guerra No! Chicano Protest and Patriotism During the Viet Nam War*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 49.

<sup>34</sup> Lorena Oropeza, *¡Raza Si! ¡Guerra No!*, 5.

In her first chapter, Oropeza utilized historiographical research and archival newsletters of activist organizations to argue that traditional forms of Mexican American civil rights endeavors wrested upon Americanization. With the expectation that the risk of life on battleground was a great equalizer, LULAC and the Mexican American Movement (MAM) encouraged enlistment into military service to prove loyalty and citizenship. They “embraced an American identity and advocated ethnic self-improvement as the first step toward improved race relations.”<sup>35</sup> Comprised of middle-class male Mexican Americans, the groups highlighted their masculinity with military service, and a mentality of warrior patriotism.<sup>36</sup>

The rising death toll of Mexican Americans in Viet Nam highlighted the inherent inequality within American society, leading the community to question, and ultimately reverse, traditional protest tactics. They noted the discriminatory nature of the American war machine: "Chicanos, at the time comprised 6% of this nation's population, but made up 20% of the casualties in Vietnam! Young whites started to receive deferments, and white controlled draft boards began to draft (in record numbers) poor people, blacks, and especially Chicanos for Vietnam."<sup>37</sup> Oropeza wove oral history throughout her narrative

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<sup>35</sup> Lorena Oropeza, *¡Raza Si! ¡Guerra No!*, 21.

<sup>36</sup> Lorena Oropeza, “To be better and More Loyal Citizens: A tradition of Mexican American Activism,” in *¡Raza Si! ¡Guerra No!*, 11-46.

<sup>37</sup> Herman Baca, "The Day the Police Rioted! Remembering 32 Years Ago," August 15, 2002, in *Voices of the U.S. Latino Experience*, Vol 3 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), 849.

of the period and argued that the Chicano movement offered alternatives to militaristic manhood, which urged the community to fight at home for social justice and civil rights. She contextualized these events with interviews and historical ephemera that qualified the emerging mentalities and identities. Nina Genera and Lea Ybarra published the pamphlet, *La Batalla Está Aquí*, and worked as *Adelitas de Aztlán*, a group of Chicanas that fought against female exclusion from the cause. They urged a rethinking of both masculine and feminine roles, arguing that women should rise up alongside, rather than behind, men, while men ought to reimagine traditionally accepted militaristic manhood.<sup>38</sup> This analysis of Chicano identity is consistent with the United Farm Workers' rhetorical usage of revolutionary language with regard to gender, and compliments the findings within this study.<sup>39</sup>

Using mass demonstrations and speeches, like Rosalío Muñoz's public protest in front of the draft board, Oropeza grounded recollections of experiences within historical events, offering the reader an effective interpretation of the period.<sup>40</sup> She also used these experiences and events to convey Mexican Americans' transition away from an assimilationist policy and toward one of cultural pride and solidarity. This change recognized historical oppression and led to an identification with the broader brown

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<sup>38</sup> Lorena Oropeza, *¡Raza Si! ¡Guerra No!*, 110-111.

<sup>39</sup> Lorena Oropeza, *¡Raza Si! ¡Guerra No!*, 80-112

<sup>40</sup> Lorena Oropeza, *¡Raza Si! ¡Guerra No!*, 113.

community and connected Mexican Americans to the invaded Vietnamese rather than to the Anglo invaders. The cooperation of street-smart Brown Berets like David Sanchez, with intellectual cultural nationalists like Corky Gonzalez gave the Chicano movement a diverse, though tenuous legitimacy. Moratorium marches and demonstrations faced extreme brutality: police beat university students and faculty with impunity, dragged teen girls through the streets, and shot protesters and Mexican nationals alike.<sup>41,42</sup> Oropeza ultimately remarked that “Chicano movement participants failed to preserve their coalition in the face of continued violence and law enforcement repression.”<sup>43</sup>

Lorena Oropeza’s examination of identity within the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement added depth to the historiography, and it provided a necessary framework for the analysis of citizenship and race within the UFW. Her selection of sources resembles the selection for the research herein, reinforcing the importance of ephemeral documents and memory in historical analysis. Still, though it is understood that her target subject was Mexican American protest to the Viet Nam War, her overview of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement glossed over the UFW’s contributions. The farmworker movement ran parallel to the rise of Crusade for Justice and the anti-Viet Nam protests, but Oropeza does not discuss the UFW’s contributions to the wave of brown pride

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<sup>41</sup> Moratorium marches became a feature of the Chicano Movement. Participants protested American involvement in the United States’ war in Viet Nam, and, particularly, the overrepresentation of Latinos at the front lines.

<sup>42</sup> Lorena Oropeza, *¡Raza Si! ¡Guerra No!*, 164.

<sup>43</sup> Lorena Oropeza, *¡Raza Si! ¡Guerra No!*, 182.

and solidarity. Further, she does not adequately discuss the ideological rift between Chicano non-violence and militancy, an issue that Chavez and the UFW leadership spearheaded in the face of violent opposition.

Of the earlier historians that delved deeper into UFW's role in Mexican American Civil Rights Movement history, Arturo Rosales was thorough in his overview of the UFW's ascendance in the 1960s and 1970s. However, he fell short of offering a holistic picture of the leader, to whom he compared Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi (though, Chavez admitted to emulating these men as examples). Rosales failed to critically assess Chavez's decisions and personality throughout the period, and neglected to address female leadership outside of a boxed reference to Dolores Huerta. Matt Garcia picked up the critique against the dominant narrative of Cesar-As-Savior, in *From the Jaws of Victory: The Triumph and Tragedy of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement*. He argued that Chavez's willingness to distribute the burden of decision-making and organizing efforts, as well as his openness to creativity resulted in the momentum and success of the union during the early period. However, "Chavez became increasingly invested in his power to dictate the strategies and priorities of the union as the decade wore on."<sup>44</sup> Chavez's pride and increasing need to control the organization curtailed the sustained success of the movement.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Matthew Garcia, *From the Jaws of Victory: The Triumph and Tragedy of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 15.

<sup>45</sup> Matt Garcia, *From the Jaws of Victory*, 174-203.

Federal laws originating under New Deal legislation consistently excluded minority workers from benefits. The Social Security Act of 1935 and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, excluded farm workers from their protections, allegedly to ease the administration of benefits. With this legislation, law makers effectively cemented and maintained the South's discrimination practices, though it affected farm workers across the nation.<sup>46</sup> Discriminatory politics continued after World War II, when minorities entered the industrial workforce, leading the Southern Democrats to pull away from the union-friendly legislation of the previous decade. Again, these discriminatory policies, aimed at Blacks, affected a broader swath of the low-wage workers in America. In particular, this resulted in a double-blow to agricultural laborers: they were unprotected by federal legislation, and attempts to organize were stifled by anti-labor sentiment.

Lauren Araiza linked the Black Civil Rights Movement with the Mexican Civil Rights Movement through the UFW's connections with African American social justice organizations and consistent use of peaceful protest tactics iconic of organizations like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Both participated in the struggle for economic justice and racial equality during

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<sup>46</sup> Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth Century America*, (NY: WW Norton & Company, 2005), 44.

the rise of the Black Civil Rights Movement. They, like the UFW later would, fought for equitable hiring practices, fair wages, and safe working conditions.<sup>47</sup>

In Araiza's assessment, race and labor were inextricably intertwined for agricultural workers. A racially-focused strategy opened avenues for collaboration with other civil rights activists. The UFW found allies in SNCC, CORE, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the Black Panther Party (BPP). Araiza revealed that SNCC activists trained and assisted NFWA during the 1965 grape strikes against Schenley Industries and DiGeorgio Corporation,<sup>48</sup> and the BPP rallied support in boycotting at the consumer level in the late 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>49</sup> Despite different strategies between these organizations, activists obtained a "profound understanding—based on hard-won experience—of the connection between racial discrimination and economic oppression."<sup>50</sup>

Like the scholars before her, Ana Raquel Minian situated identity as a central theme in the analysis. Minian, however, looked at religious symbolism and imagery within the farmworkers' movement to convey the cultural tactics behind mobilization efforts.<sup>51</sup> United

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<sup>47</sup> Lauren Araiza, *To March for Others: The Black Freedom Struggle and the United Farm Workers*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 9.

<sup>48</sup> Lauren Araiza, *To March for Others*, 55.

<sup>49</sup> Lauren Araiza, *To March for Others*, 72.

<sup>50</sup> Lauren Araiza, *To March for Others*, 11.

<sup>51</sup> Ana Raquel Minian, "'Indiscriminate and Shameless Sex': The Strategic Use of Sexuality by the United Farm Workers" in *American Quarterly*, no. 1 (2013), 63-90.

Farm Workers' strategy included gender-based language and symbolism to reestablish power dynamics between grower and farm workers. The rural, Catholic culture of many Mexican Americans resulted in large, tight-knit families and communities. Anglo stereotypes and prejudicial arguments asserted that these communities resulted from overly sexual, backwards, illegal aliens. Minian explores how the UFW challenged the depiction of race-based sexual impurity. Rather than ceding to the pressures on birth control (even from within the organization), male leaders linked sexual purity to labor demands. The UFW declared its moral superiority in its appeal to feminine modesty and its assault on the morality of growers and contractors, who molested, harassed, or peeped pruriently at women forced to relieve themselves in the fields.<sup>52</sup> These underlined their demand for better working conditions.

Additionally, Chavez co-opted Catholic symbolism and imagery to develop an ethos of purity and sacrifice embedded within Chicano activism. Catholics venerate saints as models of holiness and intimacy with God. The UFW adopted the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe as its patron saint. Minian explained that the use of the Virgin Mother became an implicit announcement of sexual purity and upheld the virtues of motherhood.<sup>53</sup> This

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<sup>52</sup>Ana Raquel Minian, "'Indiscriminate and Shameless Sex': The Strategic Use of Sexuality by the United Farm Workers" in *American Quarterly*, no. 1 (2013), 71-72

<sup>53</sup>Ana Raquel Minian, "Indiscriminate and Shameless Sex," 71.

symbol invigorated the march from Delano to Sacramento, pronouncing that strength comes through struggle.

Minian paid careful attention to the symbolic acts of Chavez's leadership. Chavez used fasting as a method to display the discipline of the movement and its people. Fasting, familiarly associated with Lent, the season of penance within the Catholic liturgical calendar, evoked a religious and political response. According to Minian: "When he concluded his twenty-five-day fast for nonviolence he insisted, 'The strongest act of manliness is sacrificing ourselves for others in a totally non-violent struggle for justice.' The associations between fasting and bodily restraint were not lost on the organizer Saul Alinsky, who compared Chávez's fast to the practice of sexual abstinence."<sup>54</sup> Fasting produced a multi-faceted result: it declared the purity of the people in juxtaposition to the oppressive growers; it presented nonviolent opposition, which gained the respect of contemporary social justice activists; and it reinterpreted a social struggle into a symbolic code that transcended literacy or language. These religious themes and symbols present themselves at the beginning of the NFWA's involvement with the strike, and can be readily found in the association's newspaper, *El Malcriado*.

The UFW emphasized the connection between race and labor in their mobilization strategy. The association argued that it fought under the banners of economic and social justice, and against discriminatory practices that undermined both. In its opening editions,

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<sup>54</sup>Ana Raquel Minian, "Indiscriminate and Shameless Sex," 71.

the newspaper incorporated culturally significant language as ethnic nationalism and cultural pride within the community began to rise.

## CHAPTER 2: THE ROAD TO MUCHACHITO

Serving poor Central California farm laborers gave the National Farm Worker Association (NFWA) a particularly Mexican cultural constituency; its geography dictated the identity as much as its placement in time. When the NFWA began organizing in 1962, they provided services grounded in the conventions of mutual aid societies. By 1965, the association shifted their tactics to direct action and began adopting pro-Raza rhetoric in addition to traditional appeals to American patriotism. The farmworkers were poised to transition *el Movimiento* into the next phase of activism, and adding to the reformulation of indigeneity within Mexican American identity that took place during the 1960s.

### ***From Mutualista to Movimiento***

Cesar Chavez created the NFWA with the expectation that he was laying the foundation for a union. Its original function as a farm worker cooperative resembled many aspects of the mutualistas from the late 1800s. The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo assured full benefits of American citizenship to individuals that chose to remain in United States territory in the Southwest, and promised to protect property rights of those newly naturalized citizens. Despite constitutional protection, the reality in the Southwest relegated power and authority to White immigrants in the region, who maintained a system of segregation similar to the Jim Crow South. Order of Sons of America co-founder, John C. Solís, explained the situation leading up to the creation of the organization in the 1920s: “You could not go and sit down in a restaurant that didn’t have the sign [‘No Mexicans Allowed’] and they would come and tell you: ‘We don’t serve Mexicans here.’ Those were

the conditions we were fighting. You couldn't go to barber shops. You couldn't go to an Anglo theater."<sup>55</sup> Segregation affected public facilities like schools, baths, and swimming pools; private businesses, like restaurants, shops, and theaters, also implemented these policies. Life insurance companies, funeral services, and banks frequently excluded Mexicans and Mexican Americans from their services. In response, La Raza created *mutualistas*. Mutualistas acted as a safety net for the community, offering previously unavailable social services like healthcare, employment, and material assistance. They also advocated on behalf of civil and property rights, immigration, and other legal issues.<sup>56</sup>

These organizations provided a safe space for ethnic solidarity and community socialization. Men primarily participated in the membership of mutualistas, by-and-large controlling the leadership positions. There were few ladies' auxiliaries. Because mainstream Anglo society practiced a policy of exclusion, mutualistas became increasingly important to La Raza. Historian Cynthia Orozco reported that "Between 1915 and 1930 San Antonio had twenty-five societies with a total of more than 10,000 members... La Unión, like others, included Mexicans and México Texanos and typically consisted of skilled and common laborers. Professionals comprised of less than 7 percent."<sup>57</sup> Middle- and upper-class men and women could financially afford the services and protections

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<sup>55</sup> Cynthia Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women or Dogs Allowed: The Rise of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 74.

<sup>56</sup> Orozco, *No Mexicans*, 67.

<sup>57</sup> Orozco, *No Mexicans*, 68.

provided by mutualistas, thereby making the organizations' benefits redundant. Thus, mutualistas primarily assisted working-class men (and women, though less frequently).

The National Farm Workers Association initially worked within the mutualista tradition, offering services and community solidarity in Delano for the farm workers. They provided a space for cultural and religious celebrations, like Cinco de Mayo and Christmas. In the summer 1962, the association had only 300 families registered; by spring 1965, there totaled 1500 families. This increase depended upon the community solidarity that the NFWA provided in the early years. J Craig Jenkins explained that “by providing incentives like low cost credit, health services, and cooperative buying and collective incentives through festivals and celebrations, the Association solved the workers’ most immediate problems and created a sense of solidarity.”<sup>58</sup> Chavez sent surveys to identify prospective members, then followed up with house meetings, which became a trade mark of the NFWA activists. During these meetings, he created connections and pinpointed the needs of the individuals. He then offered the Association’s services: experienced a death in the family? The NFWA offered funding for funeral services. Had the tires in the van gone bald? The association co-op provided affordable automotive assistance. The NFWA also promoted its services in *El Malcriado*, with co-op tire and mechanic advertisements in the back of the paper and the Farm Workers Credit Union (Figure 1: Farm Workers Credit Union Ad). Chavez hoped that these cooperatives would serve to empower the community and offer

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<sup>58</sup> J. Craig Jenkins, *Politics of Insurgency: The Farm Worker Movement in the 1960s* (New York: Columbia University Press), 135.

independence from ranchers and contractors.<sup>59</sup> In its early days, the NFWA resembled a mutualista more than a union. Chavez wanted the association to focus on assistance programs while it was still cutting its teeth; he expected labor organization to come in the years to follow.<sup>60</sup>



Figure 1: Farm Workers Credit Union Ad<sup>61</sup>

Mutualistas acted as nascent civil rights organizations during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, defending la Raza in the United States. However, few lasted long enough to create a movement. They frequently disregarded matters of citizenship and

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<sup>59</sup> Abbey Flores Rivera, “Farm Workers Credit Union,” under “Essays,” <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/category/commentary/farm-worker-credit-union-essay-photos/>.

<sup>60</sup> J. Craig Jenkins, *Politics of Insurgency: The Farm Worker Movement in the 1960s* (New York: Columbia University Press), 135.

<sup>61</sup> Figure 1: “Farm Worker Credit Union Ad,” *El Malcriado: Voice of the Farm Worker* no. 17 (1965): 5, under “Archives,” <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/adair/No17.pdf> (accessed September 12, 2015).

nationality, and utilized resources on both sides of the border, including pressure from the Mexican consulate and litigation within United States' courts. Still, their stance was defensive: mutualistas responded to acts of aggression, like lynchings, but rarely exerted a proactive effort for social justice in the United States.<sup>62</sup> From the tradition of mutualistas, a Mexican American Civil Rights Movement began to take shape.

The Order of Sons of America (OSA), in the tradition of mutualistas that came before it, offered a safe space for La Raza to cultivate “the intellectual, musical, educational, and physical development of its members, by the promotion of economic and educational conditions among members and their families.”<sup>63</sup> They convened their first public meeting in November 1921, in San Antonio, Texas. Departing from the mutualista custom, the OSA made an official stance on political participation. Rather than performing primarily fraternal duties, the OSA was an activist organization, fighting racial discrimination in the criminal justice system, lobbying politicians, raising funds for court cases.<sup>64</sup>

While still cooperating with mutualistas and the Mexican consulate, the OSA constitution specified their purpose as a protective organization:

...Created with the specific purpose of turning the tide of events, combating the negligence and moroseness of citizens of this country of Mexican or Spanish

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<sup>62</sup> Orozco, *No Mexicans*, 66-70.

<sup>63</sup> Orozco, *No Mexicans*, 74.

<sup>64</sup> Orozco, *No Mexicans*, 76.

extraction who have never had heretofore some well-defined ideal as to what they intend to do in their capacity and within the bounds of their duties, rights, and prerogatives as citizens of the United States.<sup>65</sup>

This constitution created the largest break from the mutualista tradition in its exclusion of Mexican citizens. The policy shaped the stance that the organization would take as a United States civil rights organization; the unifying identity of members revolved around American citizenship. Thus, while the constitution acknowledged La Raza's "Mexican or Spanish extraction," it implied that the community was responsible for educating itself on the obligations of citizenship in order to fully attain the rights afforded as such. The organization, while fighting for social justice, also educated the community in its rights and responsibilities in the larger, Anglo-dominated society. The language in the constitution placed the onus upon La Raza, declaring ignorance as the vector of oppression. Shifting blame from unjust White practices to ignorant minority "moroseness" revealed an internalized racism. Race and citizenship became central to identity creation throughout the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement.

The Order of Sons of America ultimately splintered into several competing organizations, and in 1929, the Harlingen Convention convened in an effort to create a unifying umbrella organization. Controversy loomed around the future identity of the organization: will it represent La Raza as a transnational community? Or will it promote the advancement of the rights of United States citizens? With a split community, and the future of La Raza in the United States on the line, the heated debate resulted in a walkout

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<sup>65</sup> Orozco, *No Mexicans*, 75.

of 75 percent of participants after the leadership decided to exclude Mexican citizens from membership.<sup>66</sup>

Newspaper articles offer conflicting reports regarding the exclusion: Mexican American dominated papers reported the democratic decision to create a citizenship-based membership, while other Mexican nationalist papers noted the exclusion as a classist and racist move. Organizer Jose Tomas Canales referred to Mexican nationals as a “PITIFUL LOT who come to this country in great caravans to retard the Mexican Americans’ work for unity, Mexican Americans that should be at the Anglo-Saxon’s level.”<sup>67</sup> However, Eduardo Idar Sr. offered several practical reasons for restricting membership, including the fact that Mexican nationals already had recourse to the Mexican consulate and other protective organizations. “Mexican Americans,” Idar further explained, “could not risk making either the US government or the Mexican government an enemy.”<sup>68</sup> Activist and League of United Latin American Citizens co-founder, M.C. Gonzales explained this argument and the underlying American supremacist sentiment:

The Mexican citizen[s] can at least call upon their government for protection through the many conveniently located Consular offices ... [and] he being an alien and not having the right to vote and participate in the administration of governmental affairs, not being able to sit on juries, hold public office, cannot

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<sup>66</sup> Orozco, *No Mexicans*, 125.

<sup>67</sup> Orozco, *No Mexicans*, 128. (Emphasis original.)

<sup>68</sup> Orozco, *No Mexicans*, 142.

complain when those privileges granted by the [US] Constitution are not given to them.<sup>69</sup>

Gonzales illustrated the alternate perspective, as well, when he referred to the “community tied by blood, culture, Mexican heritage, race, territorial location in the United States, and racism against La Raza. Mexicans, he suggested, said race needed to be the basis for organization, not citizenship.”<sup>70</sup> Canales argued based on internalized racism, Idar focused on pragmatic means to attain civil rights, and Gonzales addressed shared identity of La Raza. Still, LULAC leadership ultimately agreed to exclude members based on citizenship.

Ultimately, the Harlingen Convention did not result in a unified coalition; rather, another organization, the League of Latin American Citizens, formed. Orozco explains that the name intentionally also focused membership among US citizens, while shifting the racial qualifier of “Mexican” to “Latin American.” The League thus expanded its reach to American citizens of Central and South American descent. It created distance from the term “Mexican,” which served as an identifier of oppression and exclusion from the dominant Anglo society through which signs like “No Mexicans Allowed” were prevalent.<sup>71</sup>

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the Mexican American Movement (MAM), and the GI Forum dominated the fight for civil rights and social

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<sup>69</sup> Orozco, *No Mexicans*, 129.

<sup>70</sup> Orozco, *No Mexicans*, 130.

<sup>71</sup> Orozco, *No Mexicans*, 153.

recognition until the 1960s. These organizations, originating in the Southwest, quickly opened chapters nationwide. In 1930, LULAC consisted of twenty councils; by 1965, 165 councils existed throughout the nation. While LULAC took root in larger cities nationwide, the GI Forum spread throughout places like the Central Valley in California, in addition to the dense urban zones like San Francisco and Los Angeles.<sup>72</sup> These organizations sought to avoid the perception of foreign status, radical politics, or the appearance of color. Member identity revolved around their experiences in the world wars, and thus focused on warrior patriotism. With the expectation that the risk of life on battleground was a great equalizer, LULAC and MAM encouraged enlistment into military service to prove loyalty and citizenship. Like the OSA before them, they “embraced an American identity and advocated ethnic self-improvement as the first step toward improved race relations.”<sup>73</sup> Comprised of middle-class male Mexican Americans, the groups highlighted their masculinity with military service as proof of their worthiness of the rights and privileges of citizenship.<sup>74</sup>

In September 1965, Larry Itliong and Philip Vera Cruz of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (aka AWOC) approached Cesar Chavez, president of the National

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<sup>72</sup> “LULAC and American GI Forum: History and Geography 1929-1974,” from *Mapping American Social Movements Through the Twentieth Century*, (University of Washington: ) [http://depts.washington.edu/moves/LULAC\\_map.shtml](http://depts.washington.edu/moves/LULAC_map.shtml) (Accessed 21 February, 2017).

<sup>73</sup> Lorena Oropeza, *¡Raza Si! Guerra No! Chicano Protest and Patriotism During the Viet Nam War*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 21.

<sup>74</sup> Lorena Oropeza, *¡Raza Si! ¡Guerra No!*, 25.

Farm Workers Association, to ask for support in a strike. President Chavez and vice president Dolores Huerta swiftly supported the cause in the fields of Central California. The workers demanded a higher wage in accordance with the federal minimum wage, the right to vote on a union, and safer working conditions, among other items. This movement identified racial discrimination as a root cause for treatment of farm workers and ethnic minorities as second-class citizens. The NFWA began to function more as a union, and pulled from the language of earlier organizations in the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement to create a community identity and give voice to the cause.

### **Shifting Rhetoric**

The NFWA's strike coverage in *El Malcriado* developed an economic and moral critique of the situation using traditional appeals to citizenship and democratic ideals. Systemic corruption underscored the NFWA's frustration with the justice system, particularly that ranchers had judges in their pockets. In an article that appeared in *El Malcriado*'s first and second English editions, a rancher beat five-year-old Ramiro Villarreal, and the NFWA sued for reparations. The newspaper argued against the biased justice system, asserting that the rancher and judge were in cahoots, since the judge served the rancher as his book keeper.<sup>75</sup> The rancher's employment of the judge as book keeper revealed the inherent power imbalance within the community. The judge's corruption

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<sup>75</sup> "Criminal Complaint Against Rancher," *El Malcriado: Voice of the Farm Worker* no 18 (1965): 7, under "Archives," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/adair/No18.pdf> (accessed September 12, 2015).

undermined American values and American exceptionalism. *El Malcriado* took the opportunity to assert the moral supremacy of *la Causa*, implicitly declaring the strike to be an expression of true American democracy, by true Americans. The newspaper doubled-down on this latter theme in the article, “The Roots of Cowardice.” A translation from issue twelve, *El Malcriado* opened the article boldly asking, “Why do some men live in fear from the moment they are born until the moment they die? For a single reason: IGNORANCE. Ignorance of the rights which the Constitution gives them.”<sup>76</sup> This article made it clear that the audience, at least initially, was almost exclusively male. It urged the reader to familiarize himself with constitutional rights, so that he may feel emboldened in the face of corruption, effectively defend the cause, and reassert his masculinity.

*El Malcriado* exposed the socio-economic injustice through photographs. One depicted a farm camp, with a woman doing her laundry outside a shack, while her children play barefoot in the foreground (Figure 2: Rent Strike).<sup>77</sup> The newspaper paired the photo with a picture of the house of Tulare County Housing Authority Director, Ferris Sherman. He lived in a middle-class suburban home, with indoor plumbing, and modern amenities. Its value, reportedly \$20,000, contrasted sharply with the “400 shacks which had been built

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<sup>76</sup> “The Roots of Cowardice,” in *El Malcriado*, no. 18 (1965): 12.

<sup>77</sup> “Rent Strike: The People’s Houses,” in *El Malcriado*, no 18 (1965), 9, under “Archives,” <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/adair/No18.pdf> (accessed September 12, 2015).

for \$100 each as ‘temporary housing’” in the 1930s.<sup>78</sup> Women within the home, with her washing machine and electricity, exemplified strength of consumer-based democracy. U.S. Cold War propagandists used images like this to judge the communist nations and developing countries as uncivilized, inherently unequal, and distinctly un-American: unable to complete domestic chores and obligations, living in an unsanitary shack, unable to educate her children to wear proper shoes and clothes, let alone educate them in democratic ideals. However, with this photo taken in the heart of California, the NFWA exposed the third-world in America. These images, in addition to the reality that “the Soviet economy on average grew faster than the US economy from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, raising Soviet GNP from 49 to 57 of US GNP,”<sup>79</sup> turned the argument for American supremacy on its head. Echoing the language of the Constitution’s opening “We the People,” *El Malcriado* titled the image “The People’s Houses.” The paper used this rhetoric to emphasize that this degree of economic disparity between the classes was un-American, and established the farm workers’ patriotism and Americanness. Appealing to White, middle-American social mores, the NFWA charged the ranching class with undermining American values, and thus America’s supremacy in the Cold War.

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<sup>78</sup> “Rent Strike: Pressure Forces Commission to Talk to Tenants,” in *El Malcriado*, no. 18 (1965), 8-9, under “Archives,” <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/adair/No18.pdf> (accessed September 12, 2015).

<sup>79</sup> Office of Soviet Analysis, “A comparison of the Soviet and US Economies: Evaluating the Performance of the Soviet System” in CIA Historical Review Program, Release as Sanitized (1999): v.

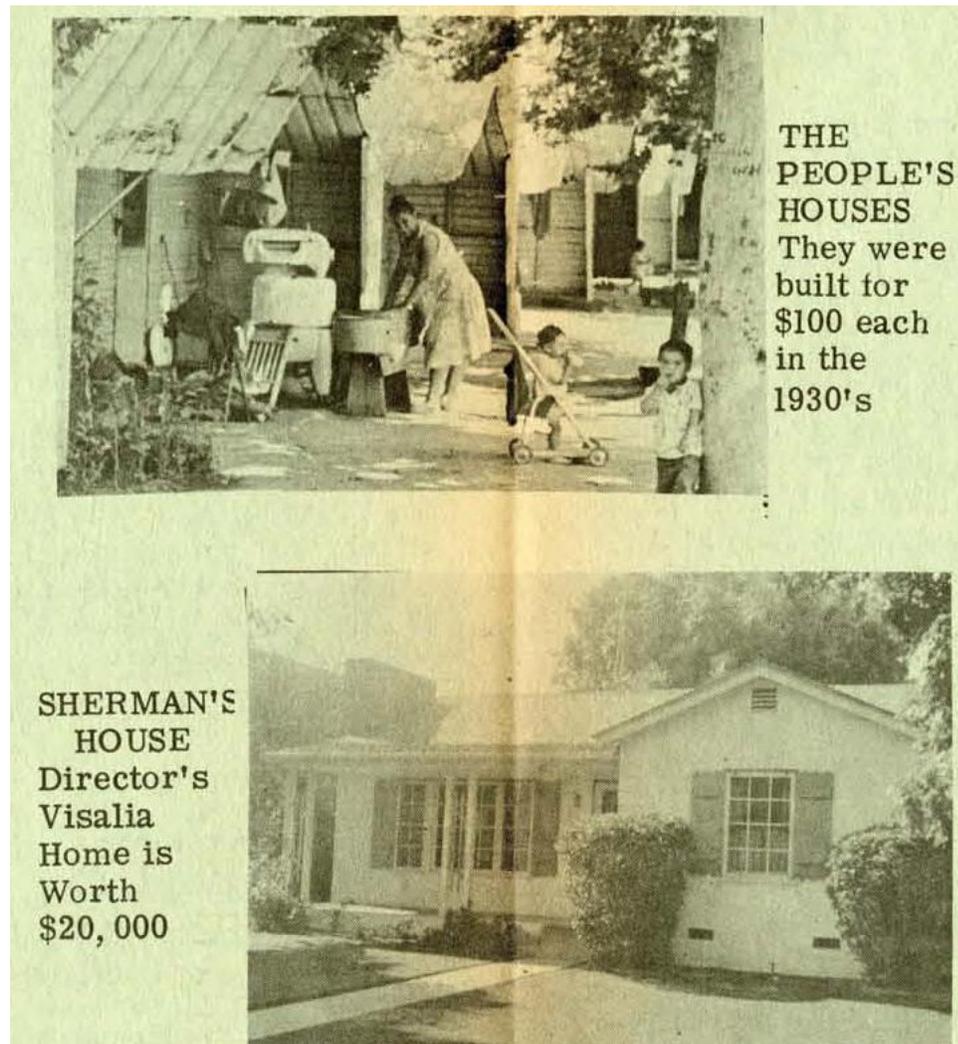


Figure 2: Rent Strike<sup>80</sup>

The nature of Cold War anxiety and the lingering fears of 1950s McCarthyism, as well as a xenophobic perception of Mexican Americans as foreigners, placed the onus on the farm workers to prove their loyalty to the United States. *El Malcriado* carefully wove

<sup>80</sup> Figure 2: "Rent Strike" in *El Malcriado*, no. 18 (1965), 8-9, under "Archives," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/adair/No18.pdf> (accessed September 12, 2015).

cultural symbols and social values particular to an increasingly multi-ethnic American audience. Further, it conspicuously placed proof of its allegiance to American ideals throughout the pages. For example, in an ad that appeared in 1965, *El Malcriado* threatened suit against accusations of communism (Figure 3: Anti-communism Ad). The aggressive language underscored the NFWA's defensive stance.

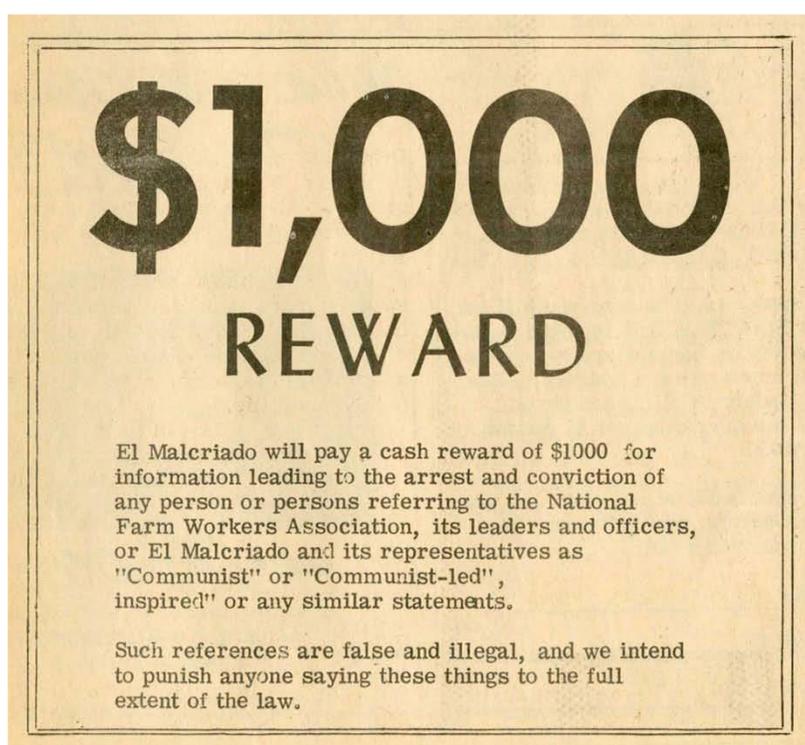


Figure 3: Anti-communism Ad<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Figure 3: "Anti-communism Ad," in *El Malcriado*, no. 22 (1965), 19, under "Archives," [https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/SFSU/No\\_Date\\_No\\_22.pdf](https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/SFSU/No_Date_No_22.pdf) (Accessed September 12, 2015).

Bracero labor frequently undermined Californian farm worker strikes. The newspaper used the term "wetback" in another editorial (Figure 4: Anti-Bracero Editorial) to further identify the farm workers in the association as distinctly American. "Wetback" is a racially derogatory word used to describe a Mexican person who crossed the Rio Grande border into America without proper immigration credentials. This differentiated the American farm worker from the foreigner. This anti-immigrant epithet was rooted in the NFWA's opposition to the Bracero Program, since ranchers frequently bussed in Mexican migrant workers as scab labor to undermine strikes and worker resistance. The NFWA thus deemed Mexican nationals as interlopers to the cause.

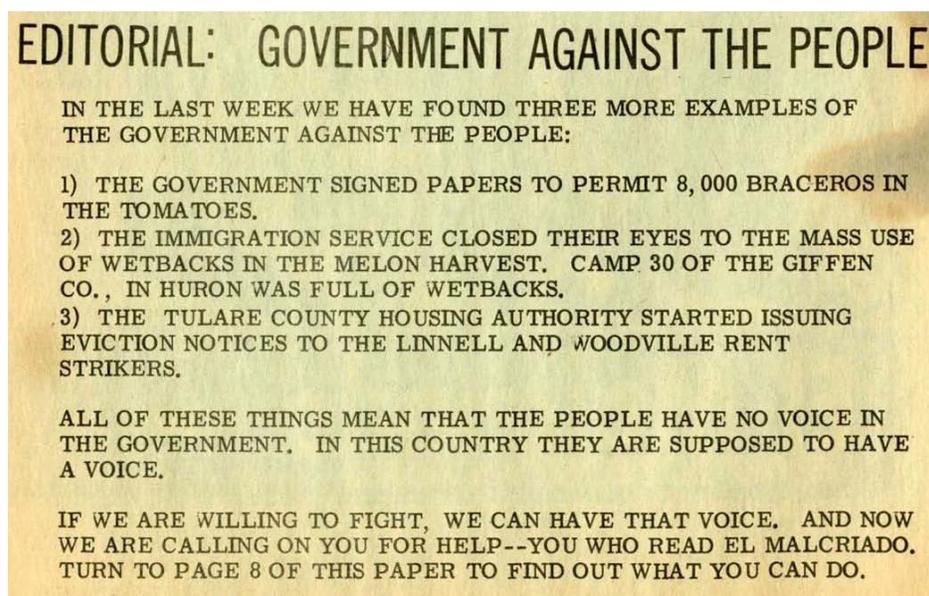


Figure 4: Anti-Bracero Editorial<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Figure 4: "Anti-Bracero Editorial," in *El Malcriado*, no. 17 (1965), 2, under "Archives," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/adair/No17.pdf> (accessed September 12, 2015).

*El Malcriado*'s images and language raised arguments about economic systems and engaged the reader in a racial discussion. Referring back to the pictured woman in "Rent Strike" (Figure 2), *El Malcriado* portrayed her fulfilling her domestic role despite the hardship of poverty. In this way, the Latina woman also challenged racist assumptions of White moral superiority. Furthermore, the male farm worker's conspicuous invisibility did not infer his absence from the family; rather, it implied his presence in the fields, in an effort to support his kin. It further reinforced the value of *familismo* (the valuation of family loyalty) and reasserted masculine providence. Instead of undermining the humanity of Mexican Americans (by using appeals to fear and xenophobia, and reinforcing the stereotype of "dirty" or less-civilized Mexicans), the photograph stood as a judgment against the racially-based double standard of justice. *El Malcriado* argued that the system excluded farm workers from the American Dream, while Director Sherman lived in luxury on their backs. For its Mexican American audience, the photo was a call to arms, to rise out of victimization. The image also resonated with their Black readers in the South. It represented oppressed agricultural workers, deprived of a vote in the fields, and called for the correction of a corrupt ruling class.<sup>83</sup>

The National Farm Workers Association, through *El Malcriado*, opened a multi-generational discussion on race and class reaching back to Spanish colonization, a struggle

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<sup>83</sup> Figure 2: "Rent Strike" in *El Malcriado*, no. 18 (1965), 8-9, under "Archives," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/adair/No18.pdf> (accessed September 12, 2015).

that previous movement organizations avoided. Identifying the White ruling class as patronizing, if not oppressive, betrayed previous arguments from middle-class Raza members who expected that members of La Raza might achieve equality through civic and patriotic engagement. Editorials like "The Children of Muchachito" addressed the roots of conquest: racism. This editorial retells the story of "Muchachito," a young native boy on his deathbed during Spanish colonization of California. A priest, with fondness, gives him the Last Rites, the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and names him Muchachito. The editorial serves to strike against the Eurocentric perspective of paternalism, and reassert Chicano agency. Even though the priest benevolently titled the dying Indian boy "Muchachito," a term evoking a sense of endearment, the naming was laced with the paternalistic ideology behind racial and social conquest.<sup>84</sup>

The story, even if it contained questionable veracity, packed huge allegorical meaning to a community that was redefining itself according to generations of conquest. In the story, the priest stood before his church with "Father" as his title, entrusted to keep and tend to his children. The priest functioned as an active agent in this allegory: he pursued title and vocation of Father, and offered benediction, grace, and eternal life through the sacrament of the Eucharist. In exchange for "protection," priests used Native American neophytes as slave labor to work the mission farm lands. Corporal and capital punishment

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<sup>84</sup> "The Children of Muchachito," *El Malcriado* No 32 (May 19, 1966), 2, under "Archives," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/1966/May%2019,%201966.pdf> (accessed November 11, 2016).

were dealt out to apostates, heretics, and the disobedient "heathens." Meanwhile the Indian boy is robbed of agency, as he became the recipient of a name, a host,<sup>85</sup> and a death. Conferring the name "Muchachito" robbed the Native American of his self-identity. *El Malcriado* used the priest's power over the Native American's spiritual and physical reality to parallel the power imbalance throughout the centuries between the Spanish and the Native population, between the Anglo conqueror and the Mexican-suddenly-American, and finally between the rancher and the farm worker. Including this editorial in the pages of *El Malcriado* tied La Raza to its indigenous roots that earlier movement activism rejected. For example, LULAC successfully objected when the 1930 census placed Mexican Americans in a category distinct from Whites. Members sought to avoid an appearance of foreign, non-White status.<sup>86</sup> *El Malcriado* launched a distinct departure from this thinking, and paved the way for cultural pride in ethnic Mexican and indigenous heritage.

*El Malcriado* and the National Farm Workers Association contributed to the shift in the way that activists self-identified. Throughout the 1960s, Mexican American civil rights activists began moving away from arguments based on Whiteness and assimilation into White society. This shifted *La Causa* away from the middle-class activism present in

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<sup>85</sup> Receiving the Eucharist (also called the host) is one of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church. The host is believed to be transformed by prayer into the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ. Along with the Last Rites, the Eucharist is often given to people nearing death.

<sup>86</sup> Oropeza, *¡Raza Si! ¡Guerra No!* 17-19, 37-39.

previous generations, and opened the door to migrant farmers, women, and children. With a changing class structure to activism, the association precariously straddled two distinct methods of mobilization: appeals to American exceptionalism and ethnic pride. Incorporating indigeneity into the campaign foreshadowed the wave of ethnic nationalism that the Chicano Movement embodied. Taking advantage of the Cold War rhetoric and anti-Bracero sentiment kept the association in line with more traditional Mexican Americans and White allies. Blending these with culturally specific images and language avoided alienating them from the farmworker base.

Expanding to multiple audiences, *El Malcriado* also linked Black and brown farm workers throughout the nation as an oppressed bloc. The featured images fostered ethnic solidarity among these unrepresented communities throughout the nation. Originally intended to recruit *barrio* members into an association based on mutual aid, *El Malcriado* broadened its messaging as it shifted gears into a campaign for the strike and boycott. With a diverse audience base, the newspaper toed the line with past expectations of citizenship. The NFWA's disdain for the Bracero Program paired well with Cold War rhetoric, as it perpetuated the fear of the "other" while highlighting the American supremacy. Still, the anti-"wetback" sentiment within the association primarily stemmed from ranchers' use of immigrant labor to undermine strikes, rather than internalized racism. In a Texas protest outside of the Immigration and Naturalization office in Texas, picketers carried signs that read, "Join our union or stay in Mexico." They reported their frustration in letters to the editor, who in turn explained that, "The grape strikers in Delano have this same problem.

There should be a law forbidding green card holders from breaking a strike ... for it is a crime against their American brothers to break a strike!”<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> “Melons in Texas,” in *El Malcriado*, no 46 (October 7, 1966), 5, under “Archives,” [https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/1966/October%207,%201966\\_PDF.pdf](https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/1966/October%207,%201966_PDF.pdf) (accessed April 1, 2017).

### CHAPTER 3: *EL MALCRIADO*: MOBILIZING RELIGION AND RACE

The Mexican American community participated in political activism throughout the twentieth century. The National Farm Workers Association began weaving religious imagery with patriotic rhetoric in an effort to appeal to a wider swath of working-class Mexican Americans. Within the first year of the union's newspaper, *El Malcriado: Voice of the Farm Worker*, the National Farm Workers Association intertwined religion, rhetoric, and race to create a cohesive message to motivate, expand, and connect its audience across boundaries of race and space. Though the association still highlighted citizenship as a means to gain civil rights, they shifted the overarching rhetoric to emphasize racial injustice that led to their oppression. Addressing this reality, activists began to utilize cultural displays, language, and imagery to mobilize the community. These tactics shifted the direction of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement toward grassroots activism and ethnic pride.

First published in Spanish in early 1965 by The Farm Worker Press, NFWA President Cesar Chavez founded *El Malcriado: The Voice of the Farm Worker*. The paper's independence from the National Farm Workers Association cushioned the union against criticism of the newspaper's radical rhetoric. It wasn't for over a year that *El Malcriado* became the official paper of the association. Nevertheless, *El Malcriado* aimed its stories primarily toward the NFWA's Mexican-American demographic. Furthermore, Chavez "decided the paper would be a benefit for the members, offered by subscription, and sold

in barrio [sic] stores throughout the Central Valley of California.”<sup>88</sup> Published every two weeks, the paper launched the English edition in the summer of 1965, aimed at US educated Mexican American youth and English-speaking farm workers.<sup>89</sup>

When the NFWA went on strike with the largely Filipino AWOC in late 1965, and subsequently declared a nationwide grape boycott, the importance of having an English edition grew. Editor Bill Esher explained that the English version communicated news of the strike to urban supporters in Los Angeles and Oakland, and “garnered key subscribers in urban California, including Sam Kushner, a reporter for the Communist newspaper, ‘*The People’s World*,’ and progressive folks in the Bay Area, including those linked with The Committee for Farm Labor.”<sup>90</sup> In reality, the distribution list extended to the fields in the South, urban centers in the North and throughout the nation, creating solidarity among black activists and motivating white allies. Bill Esher worked closely with Chavez through most of the paper’s first year, so that once the strike began in September, Chavez left the

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<sup>88</sup> Doug Adair and Bill Esher Rampujan. *El Malcriado: “The Voice of the Farm Worker”: Origins 1964-1965*. (March 2009), 2, under "Archives," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/billEsher.pdf> (accessed September 18, 2015).

<sup>89</sup> Doug Adair. *El Malcriado: 1965-1966: Bill Esher, Editor*. (July, 2009), 2, under "Archives," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/elmalcriado2.pdf> (accessed September 18, 2015).

<sup>90</sup> Doug Adair, *El Malcriado 1965-1966: Bill Esher, Editor* (May 2009), 1-2, under "Archives," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/elmalcriado2.pdf> (accessed September 18, 2015).

newspaper in Esher's hands, confident of a continuity in radical messaging.<sup>91</sup> Thus, the tone and messaging reflected Chavez and official NFWA perspective and intentions. Rather than spreading the voice of the farm worker, Chavez and Esher used *El Malcriado* as the voice of the union.

### **Mobilizing the Power of Cultural Catholicism**

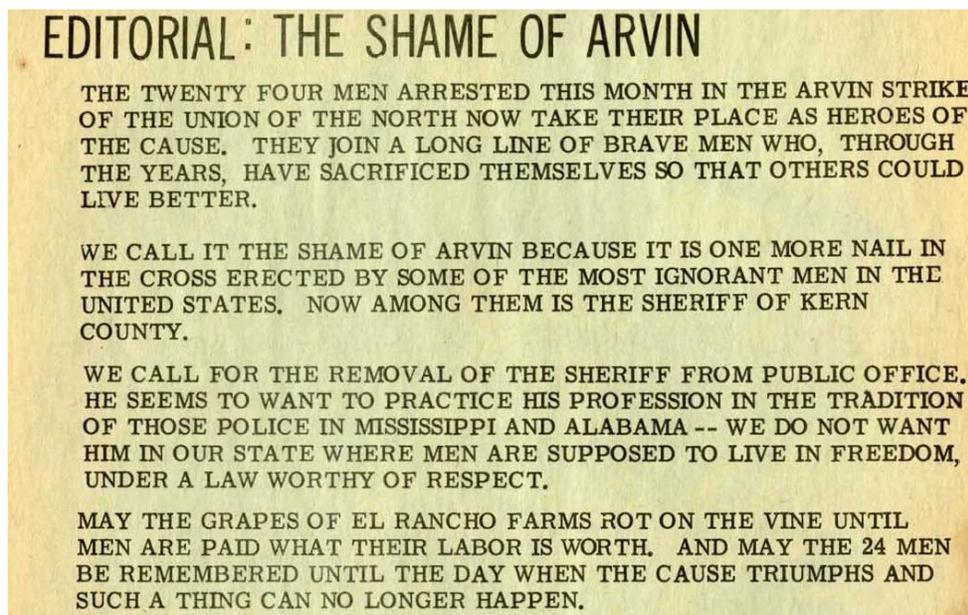
Esher and Chavez carefully infused culturally significant imagery into their reports, turning the newspaper into an effective tool for widespread mobilization. *El Malcriado* introduced the newspaper's English edition in July 1965, with the editorial, "The Shame of Arvin" (Figure 5). Arvin is a small town, southeast of Bakersfield, California. The community consisted largely of oil-field workers and migratory farm laborers of Mexican descent. Underrepresented and marginalized, the farm laborers in Arvin decided to join the strike in hopes of achieving better wages, a vote in the fields, and improved working conditions. In response, the community powerholders — ranchers, law enforcement officials, and judges — tightened their grip on the offending laborers. The NFWA began to publicize the injustices in *El Malcriado* to create awareness and solidarity with the plight of the farm workers among the urban Mexican American community.

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<sup>91</sup> Doug Adair, *El Malcriado 1965-1966: Bill Esher, Editor* (May 2009), 2, under "Archives," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/elmalcriado2.pdf> (accessed September 18, 2015).

Working within a familiar Christocentric gender system, the NFWA used the strike in Arvin to energize a grassroots base of organizers. Within this edition were stories of defeat and corruption that led to the emasculation of the community — to its shame. The editorial had a ritualistic tripartite structure: it began with a public cry of grievance, which connected the unjust treatment to the sufferings of Christ; followed by an admonishment of evil-doers; closed with a curse (threat of damnation) until the ultimate restoration of justice.

Portraying the male strikers as victims served a twofold purpose. First, the language connected the farm workers' struggles with the suffering of Jesus Christ. Second, the portrayal of helplessness in the face of injustice served as a point of emasculation: the tyrannical, white authority figures worked to undermine the strikers' roles as *machistas* (those that embody *machismo*). *Machismo* is a gender expectation wherein masculinity is characterized by male assertiveness, virility, and authority. *El Malcriado* described *machistas* with overt religious imagery, associating them with Christ's suffering. Thus the *machista* emulated Christ. *El Malcriado* transformed *machismo* beyond more than a point of pride; it became a vocational role in the strictest sense of the word: that is, a calling. The rancher's emasculation of the farmworker then placed him at enmity with the divine plan, while motivating the male reader to reclaim his rightful place in this patriarchal cosmology.



<sup>92</sup>Figure 5: “The Shame of Arvin”

Published two weeks later, the paper’s next edition, Number 18, expanded the argument of “The Shame of Arvin” by motivating its readers toward an aggressive fight against racism and social inequality with a male-centered shift from victimization to mobilization, highlighting the necessity to redeem the head of household’s masculinity. In both editions, the editorst blended *machista* values with a critique of the Southern-style system of racial justice. This gave *El Malcriado: The Voice of the Farm Worker* its social justice messaging, and linked it to the Civil Rights Movement. In “Dignity of the Farm Worker,” the newspaper vowed to aggressively reassert its masculinity and reclaim its

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<sup>92</sup> Figure 5: “Shame of Arvin.” *El Malcriado*, no 17 (July 1965) under "Archives," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/adair/No17.pdf> (accessed September 18, 2015).

dignity in the face of the injustices in the fields.<sup>93</sup> The NFWA argued that education and macho expression of defiance would restore the farm worker and his family. The NFWA's particular expression of defiance manifested itself in strict peaceful protest, availing themselves of the tactics and training of organizers from civil rights leaders like Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King Jr.

Chavez co-opted Catholic symbolism to create an implicit language of purity. Catholics venerate saints as models of holiness and intimacy with God. As men emulated Jesus's perfection of masculinity, women, then, assumed the qualities of Mary. The use of the Virgin Mother became an implicit announcement of sexual purity, and upheld the virtues of motherhood.<sup>94</sup> At the same time, her declaration as the handmaid of the Lord solidified the primacy of self-sacrifice on the road to sanctity. This symbol invigorated protest demonstrations, pronouncing that strength comes through struggle.

*Marianismo* infused the Virgin Mary's qualities into the Mexican-American cultural value system. These qualities often reflected male preference of femininity: docility, motherhood, and obedience.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, Marian deference exemplified

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<sup>93</sup> "Dignity of a Farm Worker," in *El Malcriado*, no 18 (July 1965), 2, under "Archives," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/adair/No18.pdf> (accessed September 18, 2015).

<sup>94</sup> Lauren Araiza, *To March for Others: The Black Freedom Struggle and the United Farm Workers*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 71.

<sup>95</sup> LG Castillo, FV Perez, R Castillo, and MR Ghosheh. "Construction and initial validation of the Marianismo Beliefs Scale." *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, no. 2. (2010) <http://proxy.lib.csus.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.csus.edu/login.a>

passive femininity, such as Mary's response when the Archangel Gabriel announced of Mary's upcoming virginal conception. She declared, "I am the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to your word."<sup>96</sup> Her instructions at Jesus's first miracle at the wedding at Cana, "Do whatever he tells you,"<sup>97</sup> further reinforced the patriarchal system within the Church, community, and home. The interplay between Jesus and Mary reinforced traditional *machismo* masculinity and the gender role ascribed to women within the *marianismo* construct. This rhetoric was particularly salient to *El Malcriado's* Mexican-American audience.

The *machismo-marianismo* system forms a complementary relationship between the sexes; *familismo* completes and contextualizes the value system of the Mexican-American community. The *machista* and *marianista* are expected to perform their roles within the context of *familismo*, which "stems from a collectivistic interdependence and self-sacrifice for the group [which] is viewed as the norm."<sup>98</sup> This cultural value regards duty and obligation toward family members as expectations; Catholicism infuses austerity to the paradigm, using the Holy Family as a template for perfection. At the heart of both *marianismo* and *machismo* are the *familismo* imperatives to nurture, protect, and provide.

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spx?direct=true&db=rzh&AN=105032604 (accessed December 7, 2015 via EBSCOhost).

<sup>96</sup>Luke 1:38. New American Bible.

<sup>97</sup>John 2:5. New American Bible.

<sup>98</sup> Castillo, et. al. "Construction of Marianismo," 164.

*El Malcriado* reported stories that epitomized the triumph or failure of these roles to its Mexican-American audience. In the case of Ramiro Villareal, a child abused by a rancher, *El Malcriado* utilized *marianista* values to mobilize women to protect *la familia* by way of union participation: the story introduced Dolores Huerta as an intercessor between the victim and the judge, assisting the family in the court paperwork process. Meanwhile, the newspaper highlighted the family's (and thus, the community's) impotence in the face of injustice: "The judge stalled them for one and a half hours, using excuses like, 'He could not remember Mr. Buerkle's [the rancher] name.' Because of this, the Association felt that there is a question whether the case can get a fair trial . . . Also, there is gossip that the judge is the bookkeeper of the rancher."<sup>99</sup> Rather than discouraging its base, *El Malcriado* called it to action. .

### **Religious Revolutionaries**

Chicano Catholicism is deeply entrenched in the engagement of the senses. Venerated saints' icons adorn the walls of the blessed house and sacred cathedral alike; the sounds of traditional *marachi* horns boom in celebration of sacramental rites of passage; and the aroma of *tamales and empanadas* fill the air with festivity during the holiday season. The National Farm Workers Association quickly infused the tradition wherein the spiritual mingles with the secular into their mobilization techniques and protest tactics.

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<sup>99</sup> "Criminal Complaint Against Rancher," in *El Malcriado*, no. 18 (July 1965), 7, under "Archives," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/adair/No18.pdf> (accessed September 18, 2015).

However, the success of the grape boycott, launched in 1965, depended upon national, multi-ethnic cooperation. The NFWA extended its use of culturally-specific language, symbolism, and imagery to mobilize White Americans in the Midwest and Black Americans in the South and urban centers of California. The contemporaneous African American Civil Rights Movement complemented the cause.

Not unlike the visual strategies of Black Civil Rights organizations, *El Malcriado* also captured the ranchers' violence, allegorizing victims according to Mexican American Catholic culture. A 1966 incident elevated the status of the men and women of *la Causa* to messianic and Marian figures. Ida Cousino was among the peaceful strikers at DiGiorgio's Sierra Vista ranch, along with Manuel Rosas. Participating in the nonviolent protest, Cousino fulfilled her Marian role as the protectress of the domestic sphere of family and social values. Since the Marian role assumes sacrifice of her self-interest for her husband, her children, and her community, the *huelguistas'* obligation to these ideals extended to and became intertwined with the boycott and strike.

Strong female leaders take center stage in Mexican mythology and history. The legend of Adelita arose during the Mexican Revolution. She was an organizer of the people, loved by all, and honored by the revolutionaries. *El Malcriado* featured various constructions of the image throughout the run of the newspaper. In Figure 6, a design with Adelita surrounded by *villistas*, the central figure appears to assert female sexuality, revolutionarily politicization, and martial prowess. According to legend, her beauty and patriotic loyalty caught the adoration of the general, and her strength gained his respect.

With her bandoliers draped over her shoulders, she symbolized the strength of women in war.

*El Malcriado* used cultural language and imagery to argue that one did not need to be confined to a role of either Mary or Adelita; rather, a woman could embrace both roles simultaneously without betraying the value of the other. Likewise, a man could embody a macho *villista* while still sacrificing himself for the cause in a Christian way. The newspaper chronicled stories of women on the picket line and in the face of danger to prove this reality. In one instance, *El Malcriado* lauded the acts of Ida Cousino, who embodied both of these roles. While she picketed at a DiGiorgio farm, armed men arrived and drew their guns. Cousino approached the armed men to put them under citizen's arrest, was assaulted, and thrown to the ground. Manuel Rosas, a fellow picketer, came to her defense, but the armed man "took a heavy club and bashed in his head."<sup>100</sup> The injuries to Rosas's head symbolically represented the wounds of a suffering savior, according to the Biblical representation of Christ's Passion: "And they spat upon him, and took the reed and struck him on the head."<sup>101</sup> *El Malcriado*'s description of these wounds transformed Rosas into a messianic figure, fulfilling his vocational role as a messianic *machista*.

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<sup>100</sup> "Farm Workers Sue DiGiorgio for \$650, 000," in *El Malcriado*, no 35 (May 5, 1966), 4, under "Archives," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/1966/May%205,%201966.pdf> (accessed September 18, 2015).

<sup>101</sup> Matt. 27:30. NAB.



<sup>102</sup> Figure 6: “Adelita and Villistas”

Cousino and Rosas’s experience exemplified the interplay between the Mexican American understanding of gender relationships, as well as the Catholic interpretation of Marian participation in eschatology (theology pertaining to the ultimate salvation and restoration of humanity). This links the activists to the Catholic theological understanding of Mary’s participation in the sufferings of Christ: “And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, ‘Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.’”<sup>103</sup> Instead of a passive domestic figure,

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<sup>102</sup> Figure 6: “Adelita and Villistas,” in *El Malcriado*, no. 3 (1965), 1, under “Archives,” <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/Miller/1965%20No%203.pdf> (accessed September 18, 2015).

<sup>103</sup> Luke 2:34,35. NAB.

Mary is an active participant in the eschatological narrative. Catholic Catechetical teachings explain that “Mary’s role in the Church is inseparable from her union with Christ and flows directly from it. ‘This union of the mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ’s virginal conception up to his death.’<sup>104</sup> Only after accepting the sufferings of injustice, Christ (masculinity) rises from the dead, and Mary (femininity) also is assumed in glory.<sup>105</sup> Catechetical instruction during youth ingrained these subtle images into Catholic consciousness.

Dolores Huerta’s arrest in late 1965 provided the organization with the opportunity to ease the religious scruples of the audience and associate Huerta’s identity with both the *marianista* as well as Adelita. *El Malcriado* expressed her moral superiority, and quoted her saying, “While in jail, I prayed that God would give me strength in continuing our struggle, and that He would guide our actions so that true justice will be established . . . I

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<sup>104</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, Paragraph 6, I. 964.

<sup>105</sup> Pope Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*, (1950): Paragraph 40, outlines the Marian dogmas: “Hence the revered Mother of God, from all eternity joined in a hidden way with Jesus Christ in one and the same decree of predestination,(47) immaculate in her conception, a most perfect virgin in her divine motherhood, the noble associate of the divine Redeemer who has won a complete triumph over sin and its consequences, finally obtained, as the supreme culmination of her privileges, that she should be preserved free from the corruption of the tomb and that, like her own Son, having overcome death, she might be taken up body and soul to the glory of heaven where, as Queen, she sits in splendor at the right hand of her Son, the immortal King of the Ages.”  
[http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/apost\\_constitutions/documents/hf\\_p-xii\\_apc\\_19501101\\_munificentissimus-deus.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_p-xii_apc_19501101_munificentissimus-deus.html) (accessed September 18, 2015).

am more determined than ever to continue in the fight for justice for farm workers.” This quote simultaneously proved Huerta’s moral and spiritual superiority as well as her indignation in the face of injustice. Additionally, Huerta unified the revolutionary rhetoric of Adelita with the docility of Mary, thus her portrayal of a non-violent revolutionary connected the cause more closely with the Civil Rights Movement. The newspaper redefined femininity, proclaiming that farm worker women embodied both Adelita and Mary in *la Causa*, uniting *marianista* and *villista* ideology. *El Malcriado* consistently utilized revolutionary rhetoric and images, including Adelita, to inspire readers. The newspaper likewise extolled the values of the *villistas* (so called after Francisco “Pancho” Villa, who embodied the liberal and democratic ideals of the Mexican Revolution) to such great extent that newspaper requested submissions for and frequently published personal stories from the Revolution.

### ***Peregrinacion, Penitencia, Revolucion***

The Sacramento Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe hosted the marchers on their pilgrimage. Extending the use of Marian imagery, the NFWA adopted the Virgin of Guadalupe as their patron saint, leading their marches with a banner image. The Virgin of Guadalupe holds a distinct place in Mexican American Catholicism, as the patron saint of Mexico. According to their belief, in the sixteenth century, the Virgin Mary appeared to an Aztec Indian, Juan Diego. Dressed in the traditional garb of the indigenous people, she urged the man to have a church built in her honor. After collecting mysteriously out of season flowers as miraculous proof of the Virgin's appearance, Juan Diego set off to ask

for the establishment of the church to the Bishop. When Juan Diego removed his cloak, not only did he present the Bishop with the flowers, but an image of the Virgin was miraculously imprinted onto the cloak. The apparition led to the conversion of the formerly-hesitant indigenous population, and the church became a site of global pilgrimage.<sup>106</sup> Activists' adoption of the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe points toward a shift in identity that gravitates toward the indigenous roots of the Mexican community. It is not an about-face against Whiteness; rather it acknowledges the blending of Spanish and Aztec cultures in equal value. It reflects the change happening in the broader national Mexican American Civil Rights Movement, wherein activists take ownership of their brown heritage, rather than perpetuate its stigmatization.

*El Malcriado* also used the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe on the march to assert the strikers' righteousness, and accuse the police of spiritual and corporeal corruption. *El Malcriado* explained that the "penitents" (marchers) carried the banner of the Virgin alongside both the Mexican flag as "a reminder of the Mexican Revolution, a symbol of liberation," and the American flag as "a sign of loyalty to the nation which seeks to provide

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<sup>106</sup> Mina Garcia Soormally. "The Image of a Miracle: The Virgin of Guadalupe and the Context of the Apparitions," in *Chasqui* Vol 44, no 2(November 1, 2015), 175, EBSCOhost  
<http://proxy.lib.csus.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hlh&AN=110779823> (accessed November 22, 2016).

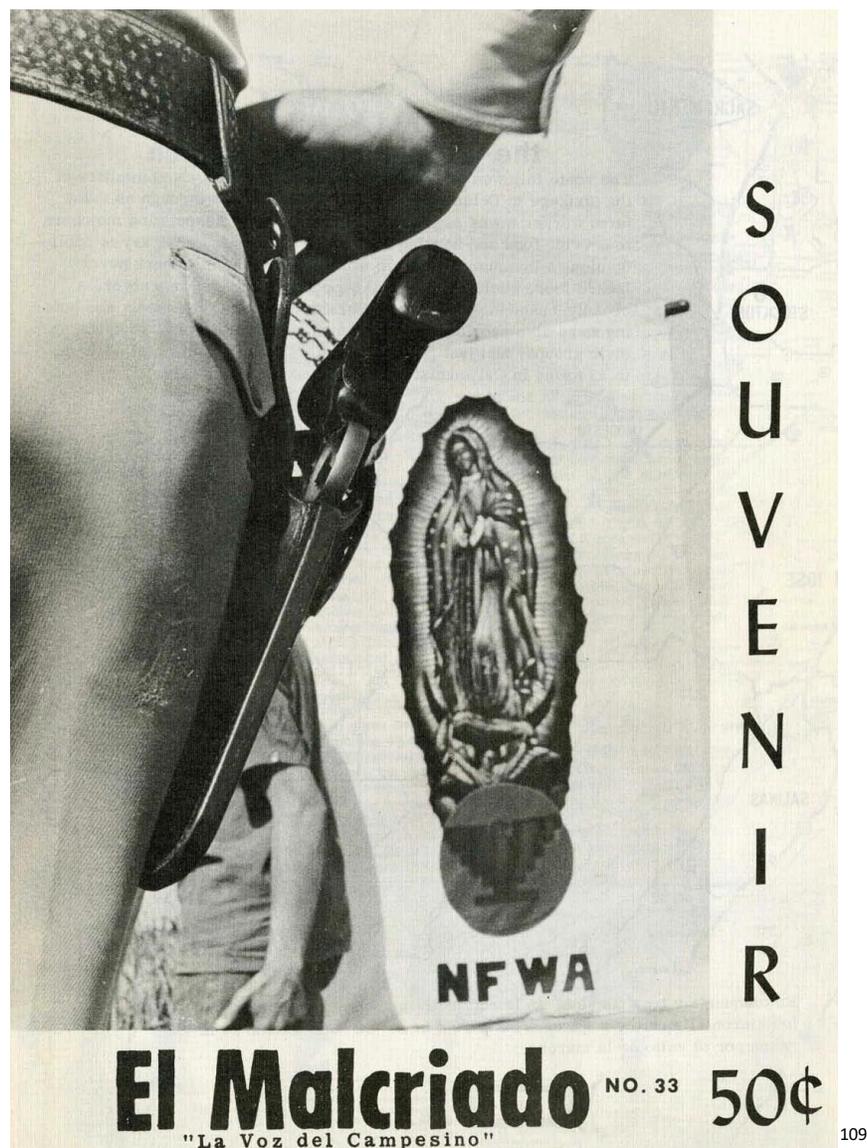
‘liberty and justice for all.’”<sup>107</sup> Instead of reverting to a passive domestic role, Mary is depicted here to be on the front line. She is Adelita; Adelita is Mary.

As the *Theotokos* (Mother of God), Mary’s motherhood takes on a universal character, and traditional practice extends her motherhood to all peoples, emphasized in the Virgin of Guadalupe’s admonishment to Juan Diego: “Am I not here? I, who am your mother?”<sup>108</sup> Naturally, then, the plights of all oppressed peoples became the concern of the Chicana, without betraying her feminine role in the patriarchal system. Meanwhile, the Chicano frequently assumed the Christ-figure: abused, scorned, and humble. NFWA President Cesar Chavez mastered this role, who re-titled his hunger strikes and marches as fasts and pilgrimages. On March 14, 1966, Cesar Chavez issued a statement for the march from Delano to Sacramento titled, “*Peregrinacion, Penitencia, Revolucion,*” translated as “Pilgrimage, Penitence, Revolution.” He outlined the cultural significance of the pilgrimage as an opportunity to request a particular spiritual intention from God.

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<sup>107</sup> *El Malcriado: The Voice of the Farm Worker*, no 33 (April 10, 1966), 13, under "Archives," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/1966/April%2010,%201966.pdf> (accessed September 18, 2015).

<sup>108</sup> Brother Michael, M.I.C.M., "Our Lady of Guadalupe," *Catholicism* (June 10, 2004), <http://catholicism.org/brmichael-guadalupe.html> (accessed November 22, 2016).



Within the Catholic Church, physical discipline and bodily mortifications take on symbolic meanings as outward signs of an internal reality. The 300 mile march from

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<sup>109</sup> Figure 7: “Mary as Adelita,” in *El Malcriado*, no. 33 (April 10, 1966), 1, under “Archives,” <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/1966/April%2010,%201966.pdf> (accessed September 18, 2015).

Delano to Sacramento became a key opportunity to exhibit these signs. Chavez chose to fast as a method to display the discipline of the movement and its people. Fasting, familiarly associated with Lent, the season of penance within the Catholic liturgical calendar, evoked a religious, social, and political response. The decision to take pilgrimage during the Lenten season has significant meaning. The faithful meditate upon the sacrifices of Jesus during this season, which culminates with the suffering, death and resurrection of the messiah on Easter. The road to Calvary becomes a particular focus during Lent, and most Catholic parishes hold meditation prayer services every Friday, called Stations of the Cross. This guided meditation leads the parishioners through the sufferings of Jesus on his road to Calvary. Mary's role as the suffering Mother of God is weaved into the Stations of the Cross, with the petitioner meditating on her presence and physical support of her Son.<sup>110</sup> The farm workers' *peregrinacion* from Delano to Sacramento was thus bursting with cultural significance for *El Malcriado*'s Mexican American readers.

*El Malcriado* reported that during the fall of 1965, NFWA leaders began discussing a cross-country pilgrimage. Later in the winter, a priest approached the association to discuss the upcoming Lenten season. Shortly after, the association decided to march on pilgrimage from Delano to Sacramento. Introducing the story of the march with a discussion of religious ritual and tradition created a sense of legitimacy to the actions, and thereby prevented the opposition from accusing *la Causa* of radicalism. *El Malcriado*

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<sup>110</sup> "A Short Way of the Cross," in *The Pieta Prayer Book*. (Hickory Corners, MI: Miraculous Lady of Roses, 2006), 15.

sought to soothe any concerns within the traditional sector of its audience by referencing the nostalgic memories of pilgrimage: “Some of the strikers from Old Mexico recalled Lenten pilgrimages they had made. One of the men amused others by showing how he walked along the bumpy, dusty roads with long swinging steps. Thirty miles a day, he bragged.”<sup>111</sup> This masculine reflection highlighted the heritage of the pilgrimage as a test of moral strength and physical discipline. Distinguishing the march as a religious ritual, a cultural tradition, and a point of pride, it thereby epitomized *machismo* and *marianismo* values.

*El Malcriado* described the decision to march as an inclusive democratic process, implicitly appealing to American ideals. Despite this inclusivity, the association clearly voted in accordance with the *machismo-marianismo* world-view. During the march’s organization process, leaders needed to allocate people to the march to the Capitol, to the picket line in the fields, and to the association’s social services in the camps and cities. Since the Mary-Adelita archetype expanded the reach of the domestic sphere, these duties were no longer exclusively male. However, “someone proposed that if wives took over the picketing, then more husbands could go on the pilgrimage. The women agreed to this.”<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>111</sup>*El Malcriado*, no. 33 (April 10, 1966), 5, under "Archives," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/1966/April%2010,%201966.pdf> (accessed September 18, 2015).

<sup>112</sup>*El Malcriado*, no. 30 (April 10, 1966), 5, under "Archives," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/1966/February%2028,%201966.pdf> (accessed October 13, 2016).

While the women's choice in the decision-making and organizational process revealed the implicit influence of feminist ideals, leading female organizers adhered to this updated version of *marianismo*. They agreed to remain as a support-base while the men went on pilgrimage across the state.

About 100 people wanted to march . . . On March 17th, 68 had been selected. Their wives and children and friends left at home marched to the city limits. Sixty-eight went on. The first night when the marchers stopped to rest, someone discovered that a seven year-old boy had skipped school, evaded his mother, and was intent on marching on. He was sent reluctantly home, and 67 marched on.

The brief synopsis echoed the experiences of cultural heroines, like Adelita, while maintaining the values of *machismo*, *marianismo*, and *familismo*. *El Malcriado* portrayed the men as active participants in the pilgrimage while the women manned the picket line. Familial protection and providence necessitated both feminine and masculine roles, and the pilgrimage provided an opportunity to extend the *familismo* to the broader community as an organizational mechanism.

Immediately following the older generation's religious recollections, *El Malcriado* reinforced their commitment to democratic ideals. They voted to march to Sacramento, and the newspaper emphasized the decision's unanimity. In addition, the article reflected the broadening readership, and the need to appeal to a younger, more liberal demographic. Their message resonated with young adults, who understood the march's implicit connections with the Black Civil Rights Movement. As activists in the South organized around voter registration drives and against disenfranchisement, the farm workers organized for a vote in the fields. This generation came of age and was socialized with the

language of the Montgomery boycott, the Selma march, and the Woolworths sit-ins. Young activists, especially the integral White and Black allies connected more tightly with the call to march than the call to prayer. *El Malcriado* carefully utilized social justice rhetoric to mobilize an increasingly politicized generation of young people.

Utilizing rhetorical methods of language and symbolism, *El Malcriado* reflected activists' movement away from traditional racial identity based on Whiteness, and toward modern sentiments of brown pride, which embraced symbols of Mexican cultural heritage and identity. The paper reveals an expansion of gender roles, and shifting male and female expectations within boycott activism.

#### CHAPTER 4: LA MUJER HUELGUISTA: WOMEN'S ROLES IN NFWA ACTIVISM

Exigencies of the strike and boycott required women and children to participate in activism. Since the beginning of the strike in 1965, The National Farm Workers Association used *El Malcriado* to mobilize feminine activism and leadership. *El Malcriado* highlighted the women's victories in *la Causa* using *marianista* values of domesticity coded within the newspaper's imagery and rhetoric to help broaden the role ascribed to women in the community. Organizers approached allies that upheld shared traditional gender norms and served as access points to resources for boycott mobilization. These values underlined experiences of birth, motherhood, and family life that also appealed to Anglo-American middle-class women.

Men occupied formal leadership roles, which entitled them to decision-making at an organizational level, delineating movement goals and expectations, and formulating the message and rhetoric of *La Causa*. Meanwhile, women's activism displayed more cooperative methods, and offered more flexibility since it was representative of, but not bound to, the NFWA's formal organizational structure.<sup>113</sup> Still, for families that remained local, the men generally stayed on the picket line or searched for alternative forms of work. This local leadership vacuum created unprecedented opportunities for women to organize. Sending both men and women to urban centers became integral to the success of the boycott. Historian Margaret Rose found that the organization had greater success when

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<sup>113</sup>Margaret Rose. "From the Fields to the Picket Lines: Helga Women and the Boycott, 1965-1975." *Labor History* Vol 31, No 3 (Summer 1990), 272.

entire families relocated to advocate and organize across the nation than did individual men. Without the support structure that the entire family unit offered, women struggled to feed and raise the children without the assistance of their husbands, and men often returned early from homesickness and culture shock.<sup>114</sup>

Expanding *marianistas*' roles outside the home facilitated the full participation of families in *la Causa*. Women attended community meetings, contacted media sources and public affair programs alongside men, while children canvassed neighborhoods and shops. *El Malcriado* reported Dolores Huerta's activities from California to Texas. Huerta, the paper reported, "spoke to unions, churches, and Mexican-American groups and got promises to help [the boycott]."<sup>115</sup> Rose explains that the "lack of a trained professional staff and limited resources contributed to the decentralized approach to the boycott which by default allowed more opportunities for women to rise to these positions."<sup>116</sup> Although the NFWA did not recruit women as primary targets for official leadership, Dolores Huerta's fierce presence as the vice president of the association led to a destabilization of

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<sup>114</sup> Margaret Rose, "From the Fields to the Picket Line: Huelga Women and the Boycott, 1965-1975." *Labor History* Vol 31, No. 3 (Summer 1990), 275.

<sup>115</sup> "Look out! Mrs. Huerta is in Texas," in *El Malcriado*, no 27 (January 11, 1966), 5, under "Archives," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/1966/January%2011,%201966.pdf>.

<sup>116</sup> Margaret Rose, "Woman Power Will Stop those Grapes: Chicana Organizers and Middle-Class Female Supporters in the Farm Workers' Grape Boycott in Philadelphia, 1969-1970." *Journal of Women's History* Vol 7 No 4. (1995), 7.

the gendered status quo, placing women not only in the public view, but also arming them with a political message.

### **Bridge Leadership**

*El Malcriado* heralded working-class women's role within the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement. The NFWA normalized women's involvement in grassroots activism, and marked their indispensability in urban organizational efforts. Prior to the farm labor strike, women most frequently participated in social justice activism through auxiliary associations.<sup>117</sup> Historian Vicki Ruiz chronicled Chicana activism throughout the twentieth century, in *From Out of the Shadows*. She discussed the rise of both working-class and middle class women like Emma Tenayuca and Luisa Moreno as labor organizers.<sup>118</sup> Ruiz explained that even at the shop floor, women felt empowered to pursue activism, and "in 1943, for example, Mexican women filled eight of the fifteen elected positions of the local [union chapter]."<sup>119</sup> Elite women like Adelina Otero Warren and Concha Ortiz y Pino, ran for political offices, though Ruiz comments on the remarkability

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<sup>117</sup> Cynthia Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women or Dogs Allowed: The Rise of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 68.

<sup>118</sup> Vicki Ruiz, "With Pickets, Baskets, and Ballots," in *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 72-98.

<sup>119</sup> Vicki Ruiz, *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 82.

of this situation.<sup>120</sup> Despite these examples, in most cases, women still oversaw traditionally feminine tasks: performing secretarial duties, or feeding the strikers or marchers.

When NFWA women participated in a leadership capacity, they frequently operated as “bridge leaders.” Church groups and philanthropic institutions offered Black and White women an opportunity to rise as professional bridge leaders. Bridge leaders utilized “frame bridging, amplification, extension, and transformation” to facilitate mobilization. Sociologist and social movement theorist Belinda Robnett explains:

*Frame bridging* involves providing those already predisposed to one’s cause with information sufficient to induce them to join the movement. The process of *frame amplification* . . . emphasizes efforts to convince individuals that their participation is crucial and that the movement’s goals can be achieved. *Frame extension* occurs when movement adherents cast a wider recruitment net, incorporating concerns not originally part of the movement’s goals but valuable as a means of expanding support. Finally, *frame transformation* is the process whereby individually held frames are altered, entirely or in part, to achieve consensus with the movement’s goals.<sup>121</sup>

Bridge leadership provided space for activist professionalization while minding traditional gender norms and maternalist expectations. The farm worker, excluded from the often White-dominated philanthropic organizations and patriarchal (and often rancher-funded) clergy, needed to bridge class and gender barriers to *la Causa*.

*El Malcriado* contained evidence that NFWA women served as bridge leaders since the beginning of the farm worker strike and grape boycott. During the first year, the NFWA

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<sup>120</sup> Vicki Ruiz, *From Out of the Shadows*, 91.

<sup>121</sup> Belinda Robnett, *How Long? How Long? African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights*. (NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), 3-10, 13.

needed national support for the boycott in order to attain the demands of the strike. Therefore, while *El Malcriado* originally circulated in local *barrios*, as a tool for indigenous mobilization, the newspaper adapted its message to appeal to a widening base of supporters, and reflected the presence and significance of women activists. During this period, the newspaper reported the achievements and struggles of women on the picket line, who would often shame the men out of the fields with the shout, “Strikebreaker, have you no shame?”<sup>122</sup>

NFWA women most frequently served as indigenous and community bridge leaders. Indigenous bridge leaders often worked alongside community bridge leaders. Though Belinda Robnett explains that in the Black Civil Rights Movement indigenous bridge leaders “tended to float among the movement’s organizations, simultaneously working with them all,”<sup>123</sup> this did not seem to be the case in the first year of the farmworker movement. During this year, the National Farm Worker Association was the primary organization within the Mexican American farm labor community in Central California. By 1965, this began to change with the rise of the Chicano Movement in the Southwest. Still, though these communities represented members of *la Raza*, indigenous bridge leadership could not have been possible without the outreach of community bridge leaders

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<sup>122</sup> *El Malcriado* no 22 (1965), 11, under “Archives,” [https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/SFSU/No\\_Date\\_No\\_22.pdf](https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/SFSU/No_Date_No_22.pdf) (accessed September 18, 2015).

<sup>123</sup> Robnett, *How Long? How Long?* 21.

traveling to these locations from the San Joaquin Valley. Community bridge leaders' primary task focused on linking communities to the movement, working through specific movement organizations.

Margaret Rose traced the story of Esther Padilla, a former social worker that uprooted her family to assist in the boycott. Padilla used her knowledge of the welfare system to acquire food stamps and health care benefits for workers; she juggled arranging medical visits for activists while lobbying on Capitol Hill.<sup>124</sup> The movement from strike to boycott offered women autonomy within a patriarchal organization, and allowed them to manipulate gender-specific roles.

In many cases, women were frequently responsible for the gender-specific tasks, like wrapping gifts for the strikers during Christmas, staying home with the children, or making food for activists.<sup>125</sup> However, the farmworker strike and national grape boycott provided women with variable participatory opportunities, and flexible roles within the movement. For instance, while members voted to have the men march to Sacramento and have the women stay behind, *El Malcriado* did not report the decision as one of gender roles. Rather, the newspaper recorded the apparent consensus of the vote, establishing a sense of equality in gender relationships. It also explained that the women agreed to remain

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<sup>124</sup> Margaret Rose, "From the Fields to the Picket Lines," 280.

<sup>125</sup> *El Malcriado* no 26 (1965), 4, under "Archives," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/adair/No26.pdf> (accessed September 18, 2015).

behind to protest on the picket line, which reinforced their indispensability to *La Causa* as well as their active participation within it.<sup>126</sup>

Women often switched between facilitating members indigenous to the movement and bridging external communities to the movement. The National Farm Workers Association extended their lobbying efforts at middle-class, reputable women's groups to mobilize support and activism of the White middle-class, and to supply the Mexican-American cause with philanthropic donations and networking opportunities. In addition, targeting reputable organizations like the YWCA and the League of Women Voters offered farm workers a doorway into elite circles of bourgeois feminism and shielded the NFWA from accusations of radicalism.

### *La Femenista*

Dolores Huerta epitomized the challenge to gender roles within the movement. As co-founder and vice president of the National Farm Workers Association, and later the United Farm Workers, Huerta raised eleven children. Activists Duane and Dolores Campbell recall their interactions with Huerta:

Duane Campbell: She was tough as nails. She used to drag me down there [to the state capitol] all the time. She was a great lobbyist. She would come to the capitol, just to go down there to twist arms, and you never knew when she was going to pop in or pop out.

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<sup>126</sup> *El Malcriado* no 33 (April 10, 1966), 5, under "Archives," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/1966/April%2010,%201966.pdf> (accessed September 18, 2015).

Dolores Campbell: And so he [Duane] had met her, but I had never met her before that, and I see this woman waddling down the capitol hall [pregnant with her eleventh child]. And it was Dolores! And she was there to lobby. She was really good at lobbying because, first of all, she's a woman and she knows about all the issues of farm worker women. And she's educated; she went to college, and she was once a teacher, so she had background. So she was not intimidated by speaking to the legislator. She was, like, in their face! And that's one of her tactics still.<sup>127</sup>

As one of the few women in *La Causa* that held a formal title within the organization, Huerta also acted as a professional bridge leader. *El Malcriado* consistently reported her activities and interactions from standing at the picket line, calling scabs out of the fields, to gathering union and club support in other states. Her achievements did not go without judgement, however. Some members of the community condemned her for leaving her children while traveling.

Dolores Huerta's positions as both formal leader and community bridge leader were integral to the strike and boycott. Her experience as an activist prior to co-founding the NFWA prepared her for her role in the association. Unlike other professional bridge leaders, Huerta was part of the NFWA inner circle; however, her status as a woman offered her unique perspective and access. Community bridge leaders in the NFWA linked urban communities to the fight in Central California via the boycott. In these cities, women created connections with feminists and middle-class white women, to whom men did not have access. They courted formal institutions via mainstream bridge leaders to access financial and political support as well as their community of White supporters. Mainstream

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<sup>127</sup> Duane and Dolores Campbell, interview by author, Sacramento, CA, April 16, 2016, transcript, Sacramento State Oral History Project, California State University, Sacramento.

bridge leaders, on the other hand, were generally White women who worked with community bridge builders to “forge ties between mainstream White institutions and organizations and the movement.”<sup>128</sup>

Shifting gender roles added to *huelguista* strategy, and simultaneously opened the door to feminists. The women’s movement created a new opportunity within the social justice movement, adding a dimension of equality to be gained. However, Mexican American women, especially agricultural workers, rarely found ideological connection with White feminists, as they later would with radical black freedom parties. Still, they extended their lobbying efforts at middle-class, reputable women’s groups. The YWCA and the League of Women Voters offered farm workers a doorway into elite circles of bourgeois feminism. Ann Israel, a New York staff director for a philanthropic organization, became one of the NFWA’s earliest allies. She “became so involved in boycott work that she resigned her position, turned over her Manhattan townhouse as a boycott house, and volunteered as a fund raiser, lining up grants from liberal New York philanthropists.”<sup>129</sup>

Historian Margaret Rose explored Mexican-American women’s organizational roles in the boycott in Philadelphia during 1969 and 1970. She identified that an “idealized maternalist argument based on female values, moral power, and the female domain of the consumer market united them [with White allies] at the same time as class differences

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<sup>128</sup> Robnett, *How Long? How Long?* 21.

<sup>129</sup> J Craig Jenkins, *The Politics of Insurgency: The Farm Worker Movement in the 1960s* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1985), 143.

tested their alliance.”<sup>130</sup> White feminism frequently encountered wary skepticism: Raza members often perceived it as an idea of White elite values for several reasons. The experiences of minority women often ran counter to those of white feminists. Since minorities experienced greater likeliness of underpaid labor, minority women were forced out of domesticity to aid male counterparts with household income. Robert O. Self explained:

Among Latina women, racialized labor markets in the Southwest and northern cities commodified their work at poverty level and ghettoized them in agricultural “stoop” and assembly-line labor and domestic work in Anglo homes. Middle-class feminists, conversely, sought to escape the prison of the household. As Dolores Huerta and Francisca Flores knew, working-class women of color rarely received anything but the worst wages at the bottom of the labor market.<sup>131</sup>

Though many labor feminists faced the double-day of remunerative work and unpaid home work, racialized markets added a third dimension to the oppression of women of color. Suburban life and consumer culture oppressed the White middle-class woman; racism and socio-economic injustice oppressed the minority woman. White feminists fought for fulfillment outside of the house while minority women frequently already worked outside the home.

Second, the word “choice” held a vastly different definition for minority women. For Anglo middle-class women, choice provided the option to not bear children. Encountering the pressures of male physicians, a culture that prided female domesticity,

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<sup>130</sup> Margaret Rose, *Woman Power Will Stop Those Grapes*, 9.

<sup>131</sup> Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy Since the 1960s*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012), 108.

and a religious clergy opposed to abortion, the middle-class feminist struggle for reproductive rights was decidedly focused on independence from the family. Minority women's right to choose, however, centered on their right to *produce* a family. Forced sterilization occurred at the discretion of doctors, who would undertake the procedure after the woman gave birth or during the course of a non-related surgical procedure. Robert O. Self explains that "by 1970 . . . hundreds of thousands of African American and Mexican American women across the United States had been sterilized."<sup>132</sup> In this context, Cesar Chavez denounced birth control and family planning as a "form of Anglo racism," and asserted that reproduction would lead to liberation out of minority status.<sup>133</sup> Other activists were less oppositional. Historian Ana Raquel Minian notes Dolores Huerta's silence on the issue and Sylvia Delgado's striking question: "Are we going to go down as saying intercourse is to make babies while in our heads we are glad that in the past lays we had, there was no pregnancy?"<sup>134</sup> With many men holding views similar to Chavez, women indigenous to *la Causa* often faced accusation as a "loyalist," who argued that abortion and sterilization rights were threats to *la Causa* and *la familia*,<sup>135</sup> or as a distinct "other."

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<sup>132</sup> Robert O. Self, *All in the Family*, 149.

<sup>133</sup> Ana Raquel Minian, "'Indiscriminate and Shameless Sex,'" 66-67.

<sup>134</sup> Ana Raquel Minian, "'Indiscriminate and Shameless Sex,'" 70.

<sup>135</sup> Ana Raquel Minian, "'Indiscriminate and Shameless Sex': The Strategic Use of Sexuality by the United Farm Workers." *American Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (2013), 70.

Alan Eladio Gomez brought forward the tenuous relationship between ideas and identity during his interview with Olga Talamante, a Chicana organizer. Adept at political organizing, many activist women became frustrated with administrative roles assigned to them; others became frustrated with the lack of recognition for their activism at the picket lines, in community outreach, marches, and other direct organizing efforts. Olga Talamante, an organizer for the UFW, described, perhaps a little bittersweetly, that “there began to be more of a feminist consciousness, as opposed to internationalist.”<sup>136</sup> Despite feminist leanings, Talamante recorded the opposition Mexican American women faced within their ranks, especially among Mexican American men. Accusing them of “going to join the bra-burning *gringas*,”<sup>137</sup> men invalidated their claim to a feminist ideology. Behind this language is the ultimatum of betraying *la Causa* and one’s race, or remaining in a position of feigned equality and ethnic solidarity. Ana Nieto Gomez explained the push-and-pull that women in *la Causa* experienced as they explored feminist ideology and ethnic nationalism. On the one hand, the Women’s Movement, led by Whites, acknowledged the oppression of Chicanas based on gender; on the other hand, these White feminists were often ignorant to the oppression that resulted from class and race. Thus, Nieto Gomez explained, “The Chicana *femenista* has continually had to justify, clarify, and educate

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<sup>136</sup> Alan Eladio Gomez, “Feminism, Torture, and the Politics of Chicana/ Third World Solidarity: An Interview with Olga Talamante.” *Radical History Review* no. 101, 167.

<sup>137</sup> Alan Eladio Gomez, “Feminism, Torture, and the Politics of Chicana/ Third World Solidarity,” 167.

people in the political and philosophical issues of the Chicana woman... They have acted at the cost of being called “*vendidas*” (sell-outs) among their own group, the Chicanos.”<sup>138</sup>

*El Malcriado* depicted early manifestations of feminist dialogue in the Mexican American community as early as 1965. Though there is no evidence that the editors of the newspaper made any conscious effort to form a Mexican American feminist ideology, *El Malcriado* broke down traditional gender barriers in their first year in circulation by blending revolutionary language and imagery to the *machismo-marianismo* dynamic. This happened as a direct result of women’s participation as bridge leaders in *la huelga* and boycott efforts. Women’s politicization became an extension of their traditional maternal role, and farm worker demands overlapped with feminist goals. Nearing the end of its first year, *El Malcriado* portrayed women as educated, politicized, and professionalized, acknowledging their influence and their connections to power. The newspaper carefully courted middle-class feminist values (though not liberal feminism) in its descriptions of women.

### **Concluding Remarks**

By 1965, activism within the Mexican American community headed toward a more radical identity. Self-identifying with the term “Chicano” signified a new politicized consciousness within the Mexican-American community. Activists moved away from the citizenship-based rhetoric of the 1930s, and openly questioned the capitalist system as

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<sup>138</sup> Ana NietoGomez, “La Femenista,” in *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings*, by Alma M Garcia, ed. (New York: Routledge: 1997), 87.

complicit in their oppression.<sup>139</sup> The Chicano Movement in the Southwest contributed to the creation of a cultural narrative and nationalist identity that the National Farm Workers Association began. The term “Chicano,” originally a derogatory epithet, took on a new meaning imbued with the power of the ancient Aztecs and the conquering Spanish. This *Chicanismo* infused the farm workers’ movement in the years to come.<sup>140</sup>

As the boycott expanded in duration and regional scope, bridge leaders throughout the nation connected increasingly diverse communities to *la Causa*. An ethnic nationalist ethos rose by the end of the 1960s, finding common oppression among the colonized villages in Viet Nam, the fields in the American South, the *barrios* in Los Angeles, and the ghettos in Oakland. In the California Bay Area, the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (so called after the NFWA and AWOC merged) created strong ties with the Black Panther Party. The BPP frequently ran boycott updates in their newspaper, the *Black Panther*. In 1972, the paper boldly declared, “We, Black people, join with the Spanish-speaking people in common struggle against a common oppression. We know, far too well, the plight of the landless and the dispossessed.”<sup>141</sup> Reciprocating the BPP’s assistance in

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<sup>139</sup> Anonymous, “El Movimiento and the Chicana,” in *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings*, by Alma M. Garcia, ed (New York: Routledge, 1997), 82.

<sup>140</sup> The gendered nature of Spanish language, coupled with an American English-speaking context have posed new questions regarding nomenclature. Modern historians, sociologists, and ethnic studies experts utilize the various forms “Chicano/a,” “Chican@,” and “Chicanx” to ameliorate previously gendered exclusivity in American norms and history.

<sup>141</sup> Lauren Araiza, “In Common Struggle,” 209.

campaigning against Proposition 22, the UFW worked with Bobby Seale during his campaign for Oakland mayor in 1973.

Women in the movement in particular, relegated to the home or ladies' auxiliaries (led by men) during the first half of the twentieth century, experienced broader opportunity in the NFWA. While bridge leadership transformed the roles of Chicanas, it also fostered an environment of ideological exchange. Not only did the NFWA place women from the Central Valley of California into urban locations like Denver, the heart of the Chicano movement, but it also recruited students and academics from universities to assist with organizing and picketing. This naturally resulted in a cultural and ideological exchange, creating an environment more amenable to the oncoming radical Chicana feminism.

The key to the United Farm Worker's success lay in the boycott. While the boycott turned the nation's eyes toward the fields in dusty Delano, the men and women in the movement experienced a cultural exchange and ideological shift from former civil rights tactics. Direct action, using non-violent civil disobedience, replaced previous methods of civic education for social uplift. The NFWA's demand for a vote in the fields and expectation of social justice revealed the oncoming shift away from the expectation that civic engagement would be the means to secure rights. That, along with increasingly cultural mobilizing rhetoric, foreshadowed the arrival of ethnic solidarity over citizenship-based identity.

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