

The Chicana and Chicano Movement, La Raza Unida, and Social Movement Partyism: Lessons for Today

*El Movimiento Chicana y Chicano,
La Raza Unida y el partidismo del
movimiento social: lecciones para hoy*

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Abstract:

In 1970 Chicana and Chicano activists in South Texas created the La Raza Unida Party (LRUP) because of the widespread racial, gender, and class inequality, a third independent political party that transcended its local presence to national reach. In this article briefly explores the relationship between social movements and political parties from a theoretical perspective and examines the rise and fall of LRUP, as well as LRUP's ongoing relevance for today.

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Resumen:

Ante la desigualdad racial, de género y de clase generalizada en 1970, activistas chicanas y chicanos del sur de Texas crearon La Raza Unida Party (LRUP), un tercer partido político independiente que trascendió su presencia local hasta tener alcance nacional. En este artículo se explora brevemente la relación entre los movimientos sociales y los partidos políticos desde una perspectiva teórica y se examina el ascenso y la caída de LRUP, así como la relevancia actual de este partido.

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Key Words:

Chicana and Chicano Movement, La Raza Unida, U.S. immigrant rights movement, U.S. political parties, partyism, social movements.

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Palabras clave:

Movimiento Chicana y Chicano, La Raza Unida, movimiento por los derechos de inmigrantes en Estados Unidos, partidos políticos estadounidenses, partidismo, movimientos sociales.

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Introduction

Decades of white supremacist violence and institutional racism, combined with a rich legacy of intergenerational activism, sparked the emergence of the Chicana and Chicano Movement (CCM) in the middle and late 1960s.¹ The CCM was incredibly diverse and eclectic, involving multiple organizations, ideologies, and actors. It was rooted in the U.S. Southwest, but protest and mobilization also occurred in the Pacific Northwest, Midwest, and East Coast.² It had a largely masculinist and nationalist orientation, as many scholars have noted, but it was also feminist and internationalist.³ The CCM also included Chicana/Latina queer organizations such as the Gay Latino Alliance (GALA) which formed in San Francisco

¹ This article is dedicated to Dr. Armando Navarro, a long-time University of California, Riverside (UCR) Professor and social justice activist, who died on March 25, 2022.

² Johanna Fernández, *The Young Lords: A Radical History*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2019; Jerry García, *We Are Aztlán! Chicana Histories in the Northern Borderlands*, Pullman, Washington State University, 2017; Leonard Ramírez, *Chicanas of 18th Street: Narratives of a Movement from Latino Chicago*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 2011.

³ Maylei Blackwell, *Chicana Power! Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 2011; Dionne Espinoza, María Eugenia Cotera, and Maylei Blackwell (eds.), *Chicana Movidas: New Narratives of Activism and Feminism in the Movement Era*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 2018; Jorge Mariscal, *Brown-Eyed Children of the Sun: Lessons from the Chicano Movement, 1965-1975*, Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2005.

in 1975 and Chicana lesbian authors such as Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, who published the foundational book, *This Bridge Called My Back*,⁴ were among its strongest voices.⁵ Latinx people, including Salvadorans, Puerto Ricans, Chileans, and other people with Latin American descent, were also involved with the CCM, along with African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and progressive White folks. Given its complexity and heterogeneity, the CCM might be considered, as the global justice movement in the 1990s was characterized, as a “movement of movements”.⁶

The CCM did not occur within a vacuum. Widespread unrest inside and outside the United States—the Viet Nam War, struggles for national liberation in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the Black Freedom Movement, the American Indian Movement, the environmental, feminist, and queer movements—all impacted the CCM. Even though these social movements produced positive, tangible results (e.g. the Civil and Voting Rights Acts in 1964 and 1965), the Viet Nam War continued, as did widespread racial, gender, and class inequality in 1970 when Chicana and Chicano activists in South Texas created the La Raza Unida Party (LRUP). Based on the “two-party dictatorship” that existed in the United States, with Democrats and Republicans both supporting corporate capitalism and militarism, LRUP activists formed an independent, third political party first on a local, then state, and finally, national level.⁷ LRUP leader José Angel Gutiérrez understood that given the U.S. winner take-all electoral system, the party could

⁴ Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, Watertown, Persephone Press, 1981.

⁵ Horacio N. Roque Ramirez, “That’s My Place!’: Negotiating Racial, Sexual, and Gender Politics in San Francisco’s Gay Latino Alliance, 1975-1983,” in *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 12, no. 2, April 2003, pp. 224-258.

⁶ Ralph Armbruster-Sandoval, “Latino Social Movements,” in John H. Moore (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Race and Racism. Vol. II*, Detroit, Macmillan Reference, 2008, pp. 249-256.

⁷ Dionne Espinoza, “The Partido Belongs to Those Who Will Work For It’: Chicana Organizing and Leadership in the Texas Raza Unida Partys, 1970-1980,” in *Aztlán*, vol. 36, no. 1, Spring 2011, pp. 191-210; Ignacio García, *United We Win: The Rise and Fall of La Raza Unida Party*, Tucson, University of Press, 1989; David Montejano, *Quixote’s Soldiers: A Local History of the Chicano Movement, 1966-1981*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 2010; Armando Navarro, *La Raza Unida: A Chicano Challenge to the U.S. Two-Party Dictatorship*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2000.

not win state or national contests, but they could and did so locally, taking control of city councils and school boards in South Texas in majority Mexican counties and districts. Gutiérrez also pragmatically claimed that LRUP held the “balance of power;” that is, with the White vote split between the Democrats and Republicans, Chicanas and Chicanos could advantageously establish an alliance with one of the two parties to press for policies that addressed housing, poverty, education, immigration, and other issues.⁸ Despite these lofty aspirations, internal ideological divisions, state repression, and persistent and rising conservatism all limited LRUP’s effectiveness and it disbanded in 1981.

Based on its relatively short duration and minimal impact in the 1970s, one could reasonably contend that LRUP was largely unsuccessful. In this article, I take a different approach, arguing that while LRUP existed for just over a decade, it precipitated change within the Texas, California, and national Democratic Party. The CCM, specifically the LRUP, produced critical victories that lasted beyond the 1970s, as its as its key activists, along with younger generations of Chicana/Latina organizers, continued the struggle for social justice into the 1980s and beyond.⁹ Indeed, as I argue below, the call for “Chicano Power,” while it has shifted considerably since the 1960s, persists especially in the immigrant rights movement and other social justice movements. Before doing so, however, I first briefly explore the relationship between social movements and political parties from a theoretical perspective and examine the rise and fall of LRUP. I conclude with observations about LRUP’s ongoing relevance for today.

Social movements and political parties

Social movements and political parties are often seen as unique, discrete entities. Social movements organize protests, rallies, and demonstrations, whereas political parties run candidates during electoral campaigns for specific positions (*e.g.* state representative, governor, president,

⁸ A. Navarro, *op. cit.*

⁹ D. Montejano, *op. cit.*

etc.). Social movements can, however, mobilize voters for political parties and parties can push for and pass reforms that its rank-and-file support. Political parties also provide movements with much needed financial resources and greater stability and legitimacy.¹⁰ Social movements, moreover, often generate leaders that become candidates for a political party.

Social movements also quite frequently initiate the development of political parties. As Goldstone notes:

Going back further back in time, in the United States all the major nineteenth and early twentieth-century social movements that spawned social movement organizations—the American Anti-Slavery Society, the Farmers’ Alliance, and the Anti-Saloon League—also spun off political parties that ran candidates in local and national elections: the Free-Soil, Populist, and Prohibition Parties, respectively. The fate of the movements was intimately tied to the fate of those parties and vice-versa.¹¹

In his book on the La Raza Unida Party, former LRUP activist and University of California, Riverside, Ethnic Studies Professor Armando Navarro further contends that “third parties, like some political movements are the products of discontent with the two major parties. They give people frustrated and alienated from those parties an outlet by which they can voice their anger and disapproval over issues or deliver an ideological rebuke to the two-party system.”¹² Navarro divides third parties into two ideal types—issue reformist and sectarian doctrinaire. Issue reformist parties focus on passing key reforms that ultimately stabilize the existing political economic system based on mass-based organizing, whereas sectarian doctrinaire parties favor radical social transformation and embrace

¹⁰ Jack A. Goldstone, “More Social Movements or Fewer? Beyond Political Opportunity Structures to Relational Fields,” in *Theory and Society*, vol. 33, no.3-4, June-August 2004, pp. 333-365.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

¹² A. Navarro, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

a smaller, cadre-based or vanguardist approach.¹³ As will be seen below, LRUP was initially issue reformist and later became sectarian doctrinaire.¹⁴

When LRUP emerged in 1970, the U.S. political-economic system, marked by welfare capitalism and Democratic control of the White House for nearly 36 years (1932-1968), was breaking down.¹⁵ Arch-segregationist and former Alabama Democratic Governor George Wallace ran as presidential candidate of the American Independent Party in 1968. His candidacy nearly sunk Republican Richard M. Nixon who narrowly defeated Democrat Humbert Humphrey by less than one percent in the popular vote.¹⁶ While Nixon called for ending the Viet Nam War, he actually expanded it into Cambodia and Laos and later resigned based on the Watergate scandal in 1974. Subsequent U.S. Presidents, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and especially Ronald Reagan, slashed the welfare state and attacked labor unions, ushering in the period of “neoliberal” capitalism.¹⁷ Neoliberal capitalism first emerged in Chile after General Augusto Pinochet overthrew, in a CIA-backed coup, President Salvador Allende, a Marxist who had been elected in 1970. Neoliberalism soon expanded throughout Latin America, sparking widespread misery and intense protests (and repression) in the 1990s and 2000s.¹⁸

These mobilizations produced what sociologist Paul Almeida has called *social movement partyism*.¹⁹ Social movement partyism has two key features, “1) an electoral opposition political party taking up a social movement cause as its own by coalescing with a movement and 2) the use of social movement-type strategies (e.g. disruptive actions and street demonstrations)

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

¹⁵ The one exception during this time period was Republican President Eisenhower (1952-1960).

¹⁶ Walter LaFeber, *The Deadly Bet: LBJ, Vietnam, and the 1968 Election*, Lanham, Rowman and Littlefield, 2005.

¹⁷ David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005.

¹⁸ D.Harvey, *op. cit.*; Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, New York, Picador, 2007.

¹⁹ Paul Almeida, “Social Movement Partyism: Collective Action and Oppositional Political Parties,” in Nella Van Dyke and Holly J. McCannon (eds.), *Strategic Alliances: Coalition Building and Social Movements*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2010, p. 174.

to mobilize party members and other groups to achieve social movement goals”.²⁰ In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the U.S. Democratic Party was largely disdainful of social movements (witness the violent police riot against Students for Democratic Society during the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968). Based on the “two-party dictatorship” that existed in the United States at that time, there was no opposition political party per se, prompting social movements such as the CCM and the Black Power Movement to create their own political parties like LRUP and the Black Panther Party (BPP).²¹ These independent third parties indicate that social movement partyism can emerge during political crises and evolving realignment between two mainstream parties. LRUP and BPP, incidentally and quite crucially, posed a substantial threat to the existing status quo, as both were targeted by federal, state, and local agencies for repression. Despite intense violence and internal schisms, LRUP’s social movement partyism continued after it fell apart, influencing and transforming the Democratic Party, particularly in Texas and California, as will be seen below.

The rise and fall of LRUP

Most studies on LRUP trace its origins to a fateful meeting that involved five Chicano male activists—José Angel Gutiérrez, Mario Compean, William (“Willie”) Velasquez, Ignacio Perez, and Juan Patlan—who all attended St. Mary’s College in San Antonio and met regularly at a local bar in 1967.²² “Los Cinco,” as they were known, subsequently established the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO), a militant, largely student-led group that challenged internal colonialism and systemic racism, particularly educational disparities.²³ MAYO organized thirty-nine high

²⁰ *Idem*.

²¹ Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin Jr., *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2016.

²² I. García, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16; D. Montejano, *op. cit.*, p. 59; A. Navarro, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

²³ A. Navarro, *Mexican American Youth Organization: Avant-Garde of the Chicano Movement in Texas*, Austin, University of Texas, 1995

school walkouts between 1967 and 1970 in Texas, losing all but one in Cristal City, site of an earlier historical “revolt” in 1963 when five Chicanos were elected as city council members.²⁴ A small agricultural town of less than ten thousand people located ninety miles southwest of San Antonio, whose high school students were 96% Mexican when the protest began, Cristal City had long been dominated economically and politically by a small white minority who were largely members of the Texas Democratic Party. Relying on Saul Alinsky’s well-known community organizing model, MAYO and Chicana and Chicano Cristal City high school students generated group solidarity through confrontation and expanded its tactical repertoire to include a boycott of white-owned businesses.²⁵ This strategic, innovative approach produced positive results, as school officials met the students’ demands for more bicultural and bilingual teachers, counselors, and administrators, no punishment for student organizers, and recognition of September 16, Mexican Independence Day.²⁶

The highly effective Cristal City protest galvanized Gutiérrez who previously drafted a regional organizing plan known as the Winter Garden Project (WGP). Gutiérrez strategically selected the agricultural Winter Garden region (South Texas) because it included four majority Mexican counties—Dimmit, Río, Zavala, LaSalle—where educational and income levels were quite low and grievances were high, making the region fertile ground for MAYO and eventually the LRUP which formed in January 1970.²⁷ Indeed, over the next two years, MAYO organizers became absorbed into the nascent third party, as it effectively expanded and “won a total of fifteen seats, including two city council majorities, two school board majorities, and two mayoralities”.²⁸

These victories produced critical, tangible reforms (particularly regarding educational improvements) for Chicana and Chicano Winter Garden

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p 117.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p 146; Mario Venegas, “Alinskyism and Tactical Dexterity: Building the Texas Chicano Movement, 1965-1978,” in *Mobilization*, vol. 26, no. 3, September 2021, pp. 323-342.

²⁶ A. Navarro, *Mexican American Youth Organization...*, p. 144.

²⁷ A. Navarro, *La Raza Unida...*, p. 29.

²⁸ D. Montejano, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

residents, sparking internal, strategic debate within the LRUP about its next move. Gutiérrez favored local organizing whereas Compean supported “scaling up,” taking the party state-wide. Compean eventually prevailed, with LRUP running Ramsey Muñiz and Alma Canales for Texas Governor and Lieutenant Governor respectively in 1972. Muñiz received nearly 220 000 votes and Canales 113 000 votes. While Muñiz received just 6% of the overall vote and did not tip the balance of power away from Democrat Dolph Briscoe who defeated Republican Harry Grover (49-45%), it is notable that 18% of all Mexican American voters across the state voted for the LRUP gubernatorial candidate.²⁹ It bears mentioning that Muñiz also qualified for the ballot, despite strenuous objections and legal machinations from Democratic Party officials, just two days before the election. LRUP, moreover, raised a mere USD 13 000 to the 2 million and 600 000 that the Democrats and Republicans respectively raised for the governor’s race.³⁰

Over the next few years, the Texas LRUP continued organizing as did other state LRUPs in California, Arizona, New Mexico, and most crucially, Colorado.³¹ Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzáles was the leader of the Colorado LRUP. Gonzáles had been involved in Democratic Party politics in Denver, Colorado for many years before he left in the late 1960s based on his assertion that the “two-party system is one animal with two heads eating out of the same trough”.³² Gonzáles later established the Crusade for Justice, a revolutionary nationalist organization, that played a pivotal role in holding the Chicano Youth Liberation Conference in Denver in March 1969. The Crusade essentially focused on reclaiming Aztlán (the U.S. Southwest, land stolen during the U.S.-Mexico War in 1848) on a local level, running candidates for office through LRUP, but it also opposed the Viet Nam War and called for

²⁹ Benjamin Márquez y Rodolfo Espino, “Mexican American Support for Third Parties: The case of La Raza Unida,” in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 33, no. 2, February 2010, p. 302.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 303.

³¹ While LRUP state chapters existed across the Southwest and Midwest, it was most active in Texas, Colorado, and California. I focus on Colorado here based on the split between Gonzáles and Gutiérrez. For a substantive overview of the geographical reach of LRUP, see A. Navarro, *La Raza Unida*.

³² *Ibid.*, 90.

wealth redistribution.³³ The Colorado LRUP was deeply involved in plans for the initial national LRUP convention in El Paso, Texas in September 1972 when one its key activists, Ricardo Falcón, was shot and killed by a white supremacist at a gas station in New Mexico.³⁴ Falcón's death, combined arrests of key Crusade for Justice activists, including Gonzáles during the Chicano Anti-War Moratorium in Los Angeles in August 1970, weakened the Colorado LRUP, which never achieved the electoral successes that the Texas LRUP did.³⁵

Ideological and personality differences between Gutiérrez and Gonzáles debilitated LRUP, sapping its strength and effectiveness. After the El Paso national convention, La Raza Unida splintered into factional disputes. Moreover, Ramsey Muñiz's (who ran for Texas Governor again in 1974 and received fewer votes than his initial campaign) arrest on drug charges in 1976 severely weakened LRUP. Muñiz's troubles, along with Gutiérrez's trips to Cuba where he visited cooperatives and praised the socialist government, enabled the party's opponents to frame it as a "revolutionary communist" organization, undercutting its support amongst middle-class Chicanas and Chicanos.³⁶ Furthermore, government surveillance, namely the FBI's Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) and two car bombings that left six University of Colorado, Boulder Chicana and Chicano student activists dead in May 1974, undermined the LRUP and the broader CCM.³⁷ Finally, the prolonged economic recession in the early 1970s and turn towards

³³ *Ibid.*, 91.

³⁴ *Symbols of Resistance: A Tribute to Martyrs of the Chicano Movement* [film] (directed by Freedom Archives), United States, PM Press, 2017.

³⁵ Three Chicanas and Chicanos, including *Los Angeles Times* columnist, Ruben Salazar, were shot and killed during the Moratorium. Chicana/o Movement activists felt that Salazar was deliberately targeted given his civil rights activism and opposition to the Vietnam War. His death was ruled accidental, but suspicions still linger some fifty years later.

³⁶ A. Navarro, *La Raza Unida*, pp. 64-65.

³⁷ José Angel Gutiérrez, *The Eagle Has Eyes: The FBI Surveillance of César Estrada Chávez of the United Farm Workers Union of America, 1965-1975*, East Lansing, Michigan State University, 2019; Ernesto Vigil, *Crusade for Justice: Chicano Militancy and the Government's War on Dissent*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1999.

neoliberalism and the New Right in the early 1980s prompted many Chicana and Chicano activists to focus on everyday struggles and basic needs.

While LRUP's rise and fall has often been interpreted as a clash between two caudillos (Gutiérrez and Gonzáles), such analyses are highly masculinist, ignoring the crucial contributions that Chicanas such as Martha Cotera, Evey Chapa, Virginia Muzquíz, María Elena Martínez, Inés Hernández-Avila, Rosie Castro, and many others made. Indeed, Cotera called Chicanas the "backbone" of LRUP, based on the numerous contributions that they made as organizers, political candidates, writers, and cultural workers.³⁸ Chicana LRUP members formed *Mujeres Por La Raza* in 1973 to "obtain leadership positions for women in the Raza Unida Party and to elect Chicanas to office."³⁹ Chicana members like Chapa were also involving in writing LRUP's founding party platform which called for the endorsement of the Equal Rights Amendment. LRUP Chicana activists were also deeply involved in the 1975 United Nations International Women's Year Conference in Mexico City and challenged the U.S. white feminist movement to confront racism and classism.⁴⁰

Chicana and Mexicana activism in Texas can be traced back to the Great Depression to Emma Tenayuca who helped organize mostly Mexicana pecan shell workers in San Antonio who went on strike in 1938. Tenayuca also co-authored (with her husband, Homer Brooks), *The Mexican Question in the United States*, a Communist Party pamphlet, in 1938.⁴¹ María Hernández was another long-time, intergenerational activist based in San Antonio who was a radio and television host, author, educational equity activist, and LRUP member in the early 1970s.⁴² Seen from this broader per-

³⁸ D. Espinoza, *op. cit.*; Emilio Zamora, "Raza Unida Party Women in Texas: Oral History, Pedagogy, and Historical Interpretation," in *US Latina & Latino Oral History Journal*, vol. 1, 2017, pp. 29-46.

³⁹ Cynthia E. Orozco, "Mujeres Por La Raza," in Texas State Historical Association, November 1, 1995, at <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/mujeres-por-la-raza> (date of access: June 6, 2022).

⁴⁰ Martha P. Cotera, "Mujeres Bravas: How Chicanas Shaped the Feminist Agenda at the National IWY Conference in Houston, 1977," in D. Espinoza, M. E. Cotera, and M. Blackwell (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 51-75.

⁴¹ Vicki Ruiz, *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998.

⁴² *Idem.*

spective, Texas Chicana and Mexican Chicana activists have long practiced “intersectionality,” challenging all form of injustice, from the 1930s to the 1970s with LRUP and beyond.

What is to be done?

When writing about LRUP and the CCM, most authors contend that both ended in the middle and late 1970s. Many assume that the party and movement produced rather limited gains, but the Texas LRUP spun off new “second-generation” entities such as Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) and the Southwest Voter Education Project (SVEP), led by former MAYO activist Willie Velasquez.⁴³ COPS and SVEP were instrumental in changing San Antonio politics, sparking the election of Henry Cisneros as the city’s second Latino mayor in 1981. Montejano contends that the CCM experienced a profound transformation in the 1980s, as it demobilized and became more institutionalized while still bringing about much-needed change for the Chicana and Chicano community. The LRUP’s “social movement partyism” and intersectional approach thus shook up the Texas Democratic Party and CCM. Montejano writes: “These pioneering activists [Alma Canales, Linda Reyna, María Jiménez, Amalia Mendoza-Rodríguez, Martha Cotera, and Irma Mireles] set the stage for a second-generation of women leaders who were electable. Some would imprint their commitment onto the next generation, as in the case of Rosie Castro, whose two sons, Julian and Joaquin, served San Antonio as mayor and state representative, respectively.”⁴⁴

Similarly, one might add that former LRUP and CCM activists played a crucial role in the massive marches in Los Angeles against Proposition 187 (a notoriously racist, albeit popular ballot measure that would have denied educational and medical services to undocumented immigrants) in 1994

⁴³ D. Montejano, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 206. Julian Castro served as Mayor of San Antonio (2009-2013) and later as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the Obama Administration (2014-2016). He later ran for President in 2020. Joaquin currently serves in the U.S. House of Representatives, having been first elected in 2013.

and the May Day protests in 2006.⁴⁵ Indeed, many of these Chicana/Latina organizers later become elected officials, flipping the Golden State from red to blue in the 2000s. Similar stories could be told about Chicana/Latina activists in Chicago who continued to organize and elect not only Latina representatives, but African Americans like Harold Washington, who came into office as the city's first Black mayor in 1983 based on a multi-racial coalition.⁴⁶

These examples indicate that the LRUP and its progeny produced tangible, positive results in the "post-Movement" era. As scholarship on the long Black Freedom Movement has shown, social movements do not have discrete temporal boundaries.⁴⁷ The Black Freedom Movement predated the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott and it persisted after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968. Similarly, the CCM began before the United Farm Workers was established in 1965 and it continued after the Viet Nam War ended in 1975. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, CCM activists became involved in the emerging Central American solidarity and sanctuary movements, particularly in Los Angeles. Catholic Father Luis Olivares declared, for example, La Placita Olvera in the city's main downtown area a safe haven for Guatemalan and Salvadoran refugees.⁴⁸ Chicano civil rights attorney and former Center for Autonomous Social Action (CASA) activist Carlos Holguín, moreover, filed a class-action lawsuit on behalf of a fifteen-year-old Salvadoran immigrant named Jenny Flores who was strip-searched and treated unjustly in a detention center in Pasadena, California in 1985.⁴⁹ The Flores case set standards for the well-being of migrants in detention centers in the United States and although the Obama and Trump Administrations

⁴⁵ Adolfo González, *Reform Without Justice: Latino Migrant Politics and the Homeland Security State*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014.

⁴⁶ Amalia Pallares and Nilda Flores-González, *Marcha! Latino Chicago and the Immigrant Rights Movement*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 2010.

⁴⁷ Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Uses of the Past," in *Journal of American History*, vol. 91, no. 4, December 2005, pp. 1233-1263.

⁴⁸ Mario García, *Father Luis Olivares, a Biography: Faith, Politics, and the Origin of the Sanctuary Movement in Los Angeles*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2018.

⁴⁹ Peter Schrag, *Baby Jails: The Fight to End the Incarceration of Refugee Children in the United States*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2020.

tried to weaken it, it still stands thanks to Holguín's continued involvement and perseverance.

The 1990s marked a period of revival of the Los Angeles labor movement as Central American immigrants mobilized, collaborating with former Chicana and Chicano union organizers that had left the UFW in the 1980s.⁵⁰ Over the next two decades, Chicax/Latinx immigrant rights activists in Los Angeles organized the massive May Day marches in 2006, constructing a powerful pan-Latino and intersectional movement that addresses race, ethnicity, citizenship, gender, and sexuality.

The immigrant rights movement has not yet called for the formation of a third political party, as LRUP did in the 1960s and 70s. The Democratic Party, on a national level, generally favors more humane immigration policies, whereas the Republican Party, particularly under President Trump, has become openly white supremacist and racist. The question moving forward is this—will Latinas and Latinos, often classified as “essential workers” during the COVID-19 pandemic, rise up and use their strategic leverage in a capitalist economy that depends on their labor or will they be pushed into silence given racial and class polarization in the United States?⁵¹ Based on the long history of Chicax/Latinx organizing (1930s-present), it is clear that the Movimiento will continue, rooted in the past, adapting to the present, and dreaming of a better future for all.

⁵⁰ Randy Shaw, *Beyond the Fields: Cesar Chavez, the UFW, and the Struggle for Justice in the 21st Century*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2008.

⁵¹ Armando Ibarra, Alfredo Carlos, and Rodolfo D. Torres, *The Latino Question: Politics, Labouring Classes, and the Next Left*, London, Pluto Press, 2017.