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Crystal City Women's Reflections and Stories of the Chicano Movement in Crystal City, Texas

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Crystal City Women's Reflections and Stories of the Chicano Movement in Crystal City, Texas

by

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to the women of Cristal, especially my Abuelas Martina and Luisa, my mom Mariana, Tias Carmen, Dora, Delfina, Maria Luisa, Luisa; and sister Carmel. For my abuelas, who didn't get to go to school, but yet their children and now grandchildren have gained PhDs, Master's and Bachelor's degrees. For my mother and tias who first told me about the walkouts and Cristal's rich history. Thank you so much for praying for me and encouraging me. For my sister who didn't always understand what I was doing but supported me anyway.

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Crystal City Women's Reflections and Stories of the Chicano Movement in Crystal City, Texas

Corina Raquel Zavala, Ph.D.
The University of Texas at Austin, 2014

Supervisor: Luis Urrieta Jr.

Crystal City, Texas has been apart of the Chicano Movement narrative since the beginning. Crystal City High School like others across the United States held walkouts to protest the lack of respect for the Mexican American culture and for civil rights for Mexican Americans in schools. Crystal City is also the home to one of the original Raza Unida Parties. This rich history has placed Crystal City in a unique position in Chicano history.

This study draws from Chicana Feminist epistemology, methodology, and scholarship to disrupt the meta-narrative that is and has been told of the Chicano Movement, and more specifically about Crystal City and its part in the Movement. By creating a counter narrative that is woman centered, this dissertation seeks to disrupt the binary of good/bad views of the Chicano Movement. This is done through the use of oral histories and testimonios of four women who were not directly in the spotlight of the Chicano Movement.

This dissertation then briefly examines what stories our four women shared with their youngest child. This was done to investigate what the author has experienced with younger generations of Cristaleños. The experiences can best be described as disillusionment of the Chicano Movement.

The major components of this dissertation are the stories the four participants share about the Chicano Movement in Crystal City, Texas. These stories are personal and touching in a way that showcases the use of Chicana Feminist methodology and disrupts the meta-narrative of the Chicano Movement and the binary of the views of the Movement.

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CHAPTER 1: LA INVESTIGADORA

Introduction

This dissertation examines the oral histories of women to show what the Chicano Movement was like for four women who were not in the political spotlight, in Crystal City, Texas, during these years (1968-1978). In order to ensure a collaborative, reflexive, and transformative research setting, they shared their narratives during *platicas* (Hurtig, 2005; Luttrell, 2009). We came together once a week for three months to discuss their personal experiences and reflections of the Chicano movement. This study is also about what each of these four women decided to share with their youngest child about her experiences. These stories were investigated in hopes of find what younger generations think about the Chicano Movement in Crystal City. In the process, we found that discrimination, schooling experiences, and political involvement were important themes. Findings from writing groups were varied and reflective and provided thick descriptions of what women experienced during these years.

Furthermore, I followed oral history research methods centered on the ideals of Chicana Feminism. This theoretical framework honors the untold histories of Chicanas and not only acknowledges their experiential knowledge but shatters the silence that often plagued Chicanas during the *movimiento*. At the core of my study are the following three questions:

1. How did women who were not politically active during the Chicano Movement experience it *(el movimiento)* while living and working in the schools in Crystal City?
2. What stories did these women share with their children? How did these stories or the silencing of the stories, influence how younger generations view the Chicano Movement in their hometown, Crystal City?
3. Using the lens of Chicana Feminism, how do these narratives continue to address the patriarchal nature of the *movimiento* and the exclusion of Cristal's women?

This chapter presents an overview of the entire study, including: purpose and significance, the use of Chicana Feminism, as well as my background and positionality. It will synthesize the use of terms and labels and provide a brief outline of Chapters 2-6: Background, Methodology, Las Mujeres, Sus Niños, and Conclusion. Because, my narrative directly influenced my work with the participants of this study, I am therefore presenting a manuscript that intertwines my narrative, the required research protocols, the oral histories of participants, and the political history of Cristal.

Purpose and Significance of Study

The purpose of this study is to document four women's perspectives of the Chicano movement in Crystal City, Texas. The stories often told of the birthplace of the Raza Unida Party (RUP) primarily focus on men and on one, or two women, who were key political figures (Navarro, 1998). There is no mention of the women who did not have key roles or participated in political activism. Academic research has also failed to explore what younger generations think of the Movement and current concerns in Crystal City.

Academic research has documented the important role that Crystal City played in the Chicano Movement (Rosales, 1997; Navarro, 1998, Trujillo, 1998; Montejano, 2010, Acuña, 2011). While I knew that the 1969 walkout that took place in Crystal City schools was a significant event, I did not specifically know its place within Chicano Movement history or that there were other school walkouts across the country and internationally. Reading further about the Chicano Movement, I noticed that there was a lack of women's perspectives and their roles in the Movement. It wasn't until I read Dolores Delgado Bernal's journal article: *Grassroots Leadership Reconceptualized: Chicana oral histories and the 1968 East Los Angeles blowouts* (1998), that I realized I could do the similar research. After reading this piece, I clearly understood what the next step in my interest of my hometown had to be. I decided to write about women's experiences during the Chicano movement in Crystal City.

It is my goal to give a different account the Chicano Movement in Crystal City, an account from a woman's point of view. This is what has been lacking in the telling of the Chicano movement until recently. Maylei Blackwell (2011) published a book titled, *¡Chicana Power! Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement*.
This book examines the involvement of women in the Chicano Movement with the intersections of gender and sexuality. Blackwell (2011) tells the rise of feminism in the Chicano Movement by women student activists who saw a problem with the call for equal treatment of Chicanos by the Movement yet faced gender discrimination by other

activists. While Blackwell's (2011) book is adding to the story of the Chicano Movement, especially in adding a woman's perspective, the goal of this dissertation is different. The goal of this dissertation is to bring to light the experience of women who were not in the Chicano Movement's leadership posts. More specifically, this dissertation is about four women who lived and worked during the 1969 walkouts and continue to live there. They share with us their experiences during this time. They also, unexpectedly, share stories of discrimination that they experienced. These stories of discrimination came unexpectedly because I was expecting to hear only stories of the Movement and stories of experienced sexism within the Movement. Admittedly, my bias was in expecting stories of valorous acts of feminism, even if the participants did not identify as feminists. This is why acts of discrimination in the schools and in the work place were unexpected when retold.

This research project is also about what these four women told their youngest child about this time in their lives. We hear from them what they know. They tell us what their opinion or view of the Movement is and its effect on the town. This dissertation shares these stories so that we may gain a different view of the Chicano Movement, specifically in Crystal City, Texas.

All of these women worked as migrant farm workers with their families and spent summers and a major portion of the school year working in the northern states of Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Tomasita and her family mostly worked in the Crystal City area. Crystal City is in Zavala County, a county in an area called Winter Garden. The Winter Garden area is mainly composed of Zavala, Dimmit, Frio and La Salle counties. From the 1930s to 1970s this area produced cotton, strawberries, beets, cabbage, onions, and spinach. Spinach was the crop that made Crystal City famous in the mid-1930s, allowing the town to claim the title of Spinach Capital of the World. The town still proudly claims this, holding an annual Spinach Festival every second weekend in November. In addition, Crystal City also has two Popeye, the cartoon character created by Elzie Segar in the 1920s, statues in the town to represent the town's title of the world's largest producer of spinach.

The significance of this study is that this is the first time that a research project focuses solely on women and the Movement at this particular region. This is also one of the first stories told by a woman researcher from Crystal. As I said before, many narratives have been told before of Crystal City, but this is the first of my knowledge to be written by a Chicana who was born and reared in Crystal City. Secondly, this is the first time that women are sharing their own stories about the Movement. The four women who you will meet in this manuscript are most likely the first to tell their story of everyday experiences during the Chicano Movement. Again women have been interviewed about the movement but never before have women written about their experiences in their own words.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this dissertation is Chicana feminism as presented by the work of Dolores Delgado Bernal, Sofia Villenas, and Gloria Anzaldua. This framework critically looks at the role ethnicity and gender play in a phenomenon

(Arredondo, et. al. 2003). In addition, the patriarchal nature of the Chicano movement has been well documented by scholars. For example, Montejano (2010) examines the role of gender privilege within the Chicano Movement in Texas. He describes how Chicanas initially countered or even suppressed "male dominance or machismo" by focusing on ideals centered on family unity (p.151). Although Chicanas tried to focus on "the goal of a raza unida," they contested their subordinate role in the movement. Montejano provides specific details of the women of Crystal. He asserts, "In Crystal City, Texas, where the Raza Unida Party would take over in 1970, the activist women organized to press for equal representation" (p.152).

Since the Chicano Movement has been traditionally examined through a male perspective, using Chicana feminism will privilege a Chicana way of knowing (Delgado Bernal, 1998). By privileging this group, it is my goal to change the point of reference of the story of the Chicano movement, specifically in Crystal City, Texas, from a male view to a female. The (re) telling of women's experiences through testimonio exemplifies a different way of knowing and telling. This difference is best framed by Chicana feminism. Chicana feminism is about a hybridity of cultures, a duality of identity, and holding multiple truths in tension. Gloria Anzaldua (1987) describes this ambiguity best by stating:

> "The new *mestiza* copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality,

she operates in a pluralistic mode- nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned." (p. 101)

This plurality exemplifies the different ways of knowing that Chicanas embody. This different way of knowing exists in Crystal City. This will be highlighted in the women's writing that exemplifies the hybridity that comes with being Chicana.

A Chicana feminist framework such as, Delgado Bernal's 1998 article, *Using a Chicana feminist epistemology in educational research* was chosen for a few reasons. The first is that it centers Chicanas in the methodology by making the theory and analysis fit them (Delgado Bernal, 1998). Secondly, Chicana feminist epistemology recognizes the different opportunities available to Chicanas. By recognizing Chicanas' opportunities this shows "human relationships and experiences that are probably not visible from a traditional patriarchal position or a liberal feminist standpoint" (Delgado Bernal, 1998, p. 560). Delgado Bernal (1998) states, "Chicanas become agents of knowledge who participate in intellectual discourse that links experience, research, community, and social change" (p. 560). Chicana feminist epistemology is influenced by other feminisms of color but remains specific to Chicanas because of the social issues faced by them (Delgado Bernal, 1998). These issues include: generational status, migration, bilingualism, and English language proficiency (Delgado Bernal, 1998).

Chicana feminist framework is useful for this dissertation because it allows for movement between different ways of knowing. The work of Gloria Anzaldua (1987,1999) tells us that Chicanas hold multiple truths in tension. These multiple truths are juggled, accepted, and kept together in a way that only Chicanas know. As a Chicana, my choice to self-identify as such, sends a clear message: I align with the ideologies of Chicana feminism. It also exemplifies my connection to the history of Cristal. Ruiz (1998) asserts, “Chicana feminism also represents a commitment to community” (p.125). For these reasons, I felt that Chicana feminism is the only acceptable theoretical framework for my dissertation. In addition, this framework allows me to keep a border crosser identity (Anzaldua, 1987,1999) as both insider/outsider and academic. This framework asserts both my experiential knowledge as a native of Crystal City and my focus as an academic.

Scholarship of insider and outsider positionalities in qualitative and ethnographic research has been vast, multidisciplinary, and international. Discussions not only surround traditional ethnographic research in anthropology but also practitioner fields such as social work and clinical psychology. Research within these disciplines has debated the investigator’s place within the research setting and questioned not only the value of insider knowledge (of a specific community) but also how the ethics of care, empathy, and power dynamics collide within the research space (Merton, 1972; Ellis, 1995; Williams and Vogt 2011; Gair, 2012; Bucerius, 2013). I understand this debate at a personal level. Although I consider Crystal City to be my home, I am also aware of my outsider status. I have not resided in the area since 1999; have not raised a family there. In addition, I’ve gained knowledge of its historical relevance through my graduate studies. The history of the Chicano Movement was not part of the formal curriculum in elementary or secondary schools in Crystal City after 1980.

Furthermore, the stories of Crystal began for me at my aunt's kitchen table. Scholars who align with Chicana Feminism such as Blackwell (2011) describe the relevance of this space in the telling of women's history. Blackwell explains, "The telling of this history begins at a kitchen table over a cup of steaming *canela* (cinnamon tea)" (p.5).

Her work also notes that oral history as a methodology is about relating to people, listening to their stories, and not assigning meaning to their narratives. This research method should be centered on respecting how women examine their own lives. We, as scholars, should not give meaning, nor believe that we are giving them a voice. Our role is to listen. She confirms:

> Oral history is a hybrid that fits somewhere in between the archive and the repertoire, depending on how the narrator narrates, how the listener listens, and how the researcher wields the apparatus of objectivity that records and captures this performance. Ultimately, it may come down to how much we listen to the embodied practice of memory and the shifting conditions under which knowledge can be shared rather than reduce that memory performance only to a transcript to be studied (p.10).

The Chicana Feminist framework is used to analyze the findings and to examine the stories the women shared with us as well as their children's reflections of the Chicano Movement in Crystal City. Chicana feminism was not mentioned to the women during our *platicas*, because this was used an analysis tool. This framework was meant for the researcher to use.

Researcher Background and Positionality: La Investigadora

There is one in every family: a historian, a nosey body, or the investigator. The one who will not stop pestering you about the past or the one who keeps grandma talking all night long? Sometimes this person is in your immediate family; sometimes it's your uncle, great aunt, second cousin, or whoever. Well, that person in my family is myself.

I was born and reared in Crystal City, Texas, and lived there until I left to attend college in Austin. Growing up in Crystal, the birthplace of the Raza Unida Party (RUP), and being born into a politically conscious family, I often heard of the events leading to the 1969 school walkouts. My mother and her sisters would often share stories about their schooling experiences in Crystal City, which often dealt with the discrimination they faced from Anglo teachers and/or classmates. These stories fascinated me. I loved sitting at my Tia's kitchen table and listening to all these wonderful stories. I heard these accounts over and over again, asking for more details and more information for most of my junior and high school years.

In the fall of 1999, I went off to college at The University of Texas at Austin. At this time, I put aside my fascination with my town's history. After graduation, and a failed attempt at a career in speech pathology, I enrolled in a graduate program that allowed me to become certified as a bilingual elementary teacher and my love for my hometown returned. Through this graduate program, I took a course on qualitative research. This research class allowed me to write a research report on Crystal City teachers and their experiences working in the school district during the 1970s. This decade roughly encompasses the time of the Chicano movement in Crystal City.

After completing this assignment, my interest in the walkout of 1969 and the Chicano Movement were reignited. Once again I started asking questions, this time of teachers who were working in the schools either during the walkouts of 1969 or after. I learned that teachers who became certified through federal programs were often asked or expected to participate in political activities for the Raza Unida Party. This piqued my interest in the participation and involvement of women in the RUP political happenings as well as women's roles in the Chicano movement.

The findings from this research project sparked an interest in academic writing and I decided to pursue a doctoral degree to further explore the roles women played in the Chicano movement. Luckily, I found the Cultural Studies in Education program at The University of Texas at Austin. After I enrolled, I started working on my new goal of writing a book about Crystal City and the Chicano Movement. A few semesters into the doctoral program, I set off to figure out the details of this dissertation. After I read and completed a course on identity and agency, the design of my dissertation began to take shape. I decided that I would conduct writing groups where I would meet with a group of women weekly. During these sessions, they would share their experiences with me. My hope was that I could coax some writing of their own so that a testimonio, or personal narrative, would result from our meetings.

This course also prompted the idea for the final part of my dissertation project. I decided to also investigate what younger generations have to say about the Chicano movement and its effects on Crystal City. Therefore, I planned to interview the children of the women in my group as well as other people in my age group, roughly 30 to 40 years old. The methodology of this study will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

It is also important to tell you who I am in Crystal City. I'm the daughter of a well-known teacher in Crystal City schools and a man who worked at the town's largest grocery store many years. The youngest of four, the little sister of Carmel, Danny, and Roel, this became important when contacting participants. I often introduced myself as, "the younger sister and daughter of so and so" and this had its advantages but also its disadvantages. By mentioning this to some, I could at least get my foot in the door and at other times, not mentioning it would help me out more. This is part of being from a small town, small town politics at its best.

Villenas (1996) illustrates what it means to be an insider and outsider while studying participants of a similar if not the same background as your own. In this work, Villenas was a doctorial student asked to investigate Latino immigrant communities and literacy practices. Villenas, a daughter of Ecuadorian immigrants, described herself as a "native" ethnographer. In this article she critiques what it means to be an outside ethnographer studying a group of which she belongs. At the time, 1996, the idea of questioning the political and personal perspective of researchers was new. Today, it is common for a researcher to state his or her positionality or perspective for the readers to see.

Villenas (1996) piece is relevant here because as a "Chicana ethnographer", she is holding intension in being 1) Chicana and 2) an academic, and 3) both insider and outsider of a community. This piece illustrates what I had to face as a native Cristaleña and an academic. This is why, at times, mentioning who I was related to could result in an interview and other times, that information was left out of conversations because my "name" as a researcher from The University of Texas would give me more access to participants.

In a small town, everyone knows everyone else; at least this is what is said. But in practicality, people know you if you are visible. For the most part, if you mind your own business and don't cause any problems, you are not well known. This being said, though, it can be difficult to move away from your past or even your family's past. In a small town, people "know" you through relations, such as who your father, cousin, aunt, uncle, etc. are, and this matters most to those still living there.

The combination of who I am perceived as in my beloved small town and who I am as an educational researcher positions me as both this insider and outsider (Villenas, 1996). I am an insider because I lived in Crystal until the age of 19. I know and love the town and its history, as only someone who has grown up there can. Yet, I have become an outsider because of my academic training. I've read and analyzed what has been written about my town, about its history. Also, although I am allowed access to certain parts of my hometown and its history, there are times where access is not attainable.

Definition of Terms

This manuscript uses several terms that must be defined and clarified. These terms are often used interchangeably with other words. They include:

Cristal or Crystal - this is the name used for Crystal City by its current or former residents. The term Cristal is the Spanish word for crystal, as in a glass. Generally, people who are either above the age of 35 and or who are Spanish dominant use the word Cristal to speak of Crystal City. Younger generations and or those who are English dominant tend to use the word Crystal. These words are used interchangeably in this manuscript.

Mexican American- a Mexican American is a person of Mexican descent born in the United States.

Mexicano/a- a person from Mexico; however persons from Crystal City often refer to themselves as Mexicano/a even though are Mexican American. This is a term used to identify people from Crystal City as Mexican American. It is very common for us to use Mexicano/a instead of Mexican American.

Chicano/a- this term is typically used as a label to emphasize and align with political ideologies of the Chicano movement. This may be a person of Mexican American decent who was born and raised in the United States. The term is not commonly used by Crystal City residents especially those who graduated from Crystal City High School before 1969, because it is seen as too political.

Gringo/a- a white person, this term has carried negative connotations. In this dissertation the term is not used in a negative way, it is used to identify a person of Caucasian descent.

Platicas- A *Platica* is a conversation. In this case it is an intimate talk, in this case meant to be reflexive and transformative and conducted with women in a home setting. These talks were held literally at the kitchen table, to build a sense of intimacy. Behar's

(1996) work, *The vulnerable observer: Anthropology that breaks your heart* gives the example of the storyteller at the kitchen table sharing of personal heartache so raw that it hurts even the ethnographer, and calls into question whether or not to keep recording or to respect the boundaries of the deeply personal.

In summary, this first chapter of my dissertation provides a synthesis of the study's research questions as well as the purpose and significance of the project that I completed in Cristal. Furthermore, it provides a discussion of my use of the Chicana Feminism theoretical framework not only to show the study's primary focus on the narratives of the participants but also to show the hybridity of my positionality as Chicana, academic, and Cristaleña. The final section of this chapter presented a list of terms used throughout this manuscript. These terms are used in Crystal City and show my connection to this community. These definitions help you in reading this dissertation in a fluid manner. The following chapter documents the important background information about the Chicano Movement at the national, state and local levels. This chapter also examines bilingual education in Crystal City.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

In this chapter, you will read about the background of the Chicano Movement at the national, state, and local levels. This includes three components at each level and the major players of each. The three components are the schools, migrant farm workers' rights, and the political climate of the movement. This chapter also explains the Chicano Movement's involvement in implementing bilingual education in Crystal City schools. The goal of this chapter is to provide the historical and political context of this study as it affected the women of this project directly. I begin by discussing the key events of the national movement to show its influence on Texas and Crystal City. The section on Cristal provides the most detail in order to document the Chicano Movement as experienced by the participants of this study.

Chicano Movement: National Level

The Chicano Movement was the Mexican American struggle for civil rights in the United States. Many historians see the Chicano Movement as starting in the 1940s with legal battles for equal access to education. The 1960s mark the height of the Chicano Movement at the national level, starting with the election of five Mexican Americans to the city council of Crystal City in 1963 with the help of the Teamsters Union (which will be explored more thoroughly in the following chapter). According to the documentary turned book, *Chicano!* by Arturo Rosales (1996), the Chicano Movement began with Reies Lopez Tijerina's call for the return of land grants to Hispanic families in New

Mexico in 1966 and 1967. This fight for land grants was part of Tijerina's grand plan to build a, "free city/state, the Republic of Chama" in northern New Mexico (Gonzales, 1999, p. 203). This idea of a free city/state later evolved into the notion of Aztlan. Aztlan is "the mythical homeland of the Mexica, was to be found in the Southwest" (Gonzales, 1999, p. 204). Rosales (1997) states, "Aztlan… gave heretofore unknown dignity to the mezzo-Indian aesthetic, which Chicanos had been conditioned to see in negative terms" (p.253).

Another influential figure at the national level of the Chicano Movement was, Rodolfo (Corky) Gonzales. He was an activist for the group Justice for Colorado in 1966. This group worked to organize Mexican American youth and pushed for social mobilization and action for the poor. Gonzales was active in the Viva Kennedy Clubs in Colorado and then became an advocate for poor Mexican Americans. He was also an advocate in the schools and launched school walkouts in Denver, to protest unequal treatment and educating of Chicano students in the Denver public schools (http://latinopia.com/latino-history/rodolfo-corkygonzalez/). Gonzales organized student groups in March 1969 in Denver at the National Youth and Liberation Conference (http://latinopia.com/latino-history/1969-denver-youth-conference/). The conference was held to discuss issues affecting the Chicano community of that time (Guevara, 2007). This convention resulted in the Spiritual Plan of Aztlan, which called for an autonomous Chicano homeland. This inspired Gonzales to form a separate political party: Colorado Raza Unida Party (Gonzales, 1999).

The national Raza Unida Party began in March 1966 at an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico (Gonzales, 1999). This group was one of the first ethnically based political parties in the country. In October of 1967, Corky Gonzales, Reies Tijerina, and Jose Angel Gutierrez met in El Paso, Texas, as a counter conference, to the one Lyndon B. Johnson was holding with other Mexican American leaders. At this conference, the Plan de La Raza Unida, "a manifesto affirming Chicano solidarity" was written (Gonzales, 1999, p. 206). Another meeting was held in San Antonio, Texas, in January 1968. At this gathering, Jose Angel Gutierrez, a Crystal City native, began voicing his concerns for the Mexican American community in Crystal.

A major component of the Chicano Movement was the farm workers fight for fair wages and better working conditions. The Chicano Movement's most iconic figure, Cesar Chavez, organized the United Farm Workers Union and led a non- violent effort to demand rights for migrant farm workers. Acuña (2011) describes Chavez and the United Farm Workers Union as giving "Chicanos a cause, symbols, and a national space to claim their presence in the country's Civil Rights movement" (p. 297). Cesar Chavez was born in Yuma, Arizona, to a farming family. During the Great Depression, Chavez' family lost the farm and became migrant farm workers. When he married and settled in San Jose, California, he became involved with the Community Service Organization in 1952. This group's main concern was the livelihood of urban and middle-class people. Chavez believed the group's efforts would best be served with farm workers issues (Gonzales, 1999).

Chavez left San Jose, moved to Delano, California, and began working as a farm worker again. Here, he organized a new union, the Farm Workers Association. This later changed to the National Farm Workers Association and finally, the United Farm Workers (UFW). The UFW focused on the family unit and women played prominent roles in its formation. Here Chavez' wife, Helen Chavez, as well as other women, such as Jessie Lopez de la Cruz, and, most notably, Dolores Huerta played critical roles. Both Huerta and Chavez were taught organizing skills by Fred Ross (Gonzales, 1999). They met while learning under Ross and working for the Community Service Organization (CSO). When Chavez left the CSO, Huerta followed (Gonzales, 1999). Together they started the Farm Workers Association, that later became the UFW (Gonzales, 1999). The credit Dolores Huerta has received as the cofounder of the UFW was not immediately shown.

A third component to the Chicano Movement and most important to this study, was the fight for equality for Mexican American children and teens within the public school system. This fight for equal education for Mexican Americans began before the 1950s. One case in particular that outlines the battle for equal schools is the Mendez v. Westminster School District, 1947. This case dealt with the segregation of Mexican origin students from Anglo American students due to language, where language became a proxy for race. This meant that, because of their language, Mexican American students were segregated (Valencia, 2008). According to Valencia (2008), "The defendant districts justified the segregation of Mexican-origin students by asserting that they based such separation on language needs and not race" (p.29). The federal case ruled that separate but equal schools for Mexican American children were unconstitutional in

Orange County, California (Aguirre, 2005). This case helped set a precedent for Brown v. Board of Education 1954 (Aguirre, 2005). Despite these court rulings, educational practices around the country continued to be unequal. The language of the law was used to further marginalize Mexican American children in the public school system.

It was this blatant marginalization that ignited the 1968 walkout and subsequent boycott of Los Angeles schools. The segregation of Mexican Americans into "Mexican schools" was part of this marginalization (Garcia & Castro, 2011). Garcia & Castro (2011) describe the emergence of these schools,

> "The term originated in the early twentieth-century in the Southwest when thousands of Mexican American children, the offspring of the first great wave of Mexican immigrants to cross the border, began to attend U.S. public schools. As they became school age, school boards throughout the region, including southern California, established separate and segregated schools for Mexicans". (p. 110)

Garcia and Castro (2011) described these Mexican schools as inferior, offering primarily vocational training for high school students, and predominately white teachers with low expectations of their Mexican American students. Students held walkouts to protest discipline procedures, a high drop out rate, crumbling schools, and a lack of Mexican American or qualified teachers (Rosales, 1996; Montejano, 2010). These walkouts prompted other walkouts in other states, such as Texas.

Chicano Movement: Texas

The school walkouts/boycott in Los Angeles inspired Texas youth. Texas youth of this time, attended “Mexican schools” like the youth of Los Angeles. Like those students, they experienced, inferior school facilities, low expectations from teachers, and a push toward vocational schooling (Garcia & Castro, 2011). The Mexican American students in Texas, like those in California experienced segregation according to language. San Miguel (2001) tells us, “The subtraction of Spanish from public education in Texas was accomplished through the enactment of progressively stronger English-only policies over the decades” (p.23). High school students organized against the inferiority of their schools and past experiences and held walkouts like those of East Los Angeles.

Montejano (2010) asserts, “Rumbles of protest were also heard at Fox Tech High School. Later there would be walkouts in Edcouch-Elsa, Kingsville, Uvalde, Falfurrias, and Crystal City. Between 1968 and 1970, MAYO would organize or be involved in thirty-nine high school walkouts” (p.61). The walkouts of Edcouch-Elsa High school happened during the fall months of 1968, the same year as the Los Angeles walkouts (Barrera, 2004). Edcouch-Elsa High School lies deep in the South Texas Valley, a community with rich farmlands. The walkouts of more than 190 Chicano students was held to protest unfair treatment by administrators and counselors who pushed students into vocational jobs or to join the armed forces after high school instead of encouraging them to attend college (Barrera, 2004). Some of the demands of the students of the Edcouch-Elsa walkouts were: no disciplinary action be taken against the protesters, the right to speak Spanish on school property, that overt discrimination against Mexican

American students be stopped, the introduction Mexican American content courses, and student control of student council elections, to name a few (Rosales, 1997; Barrera, 2004). After long court battles between the school district and the students over being able to return to school, the students won the right to return to the high school and continue their course work (Barrera, 2004). Rosales (1997) states, “With this boycott, MAYO [Mexican American Youth Organization] made its debut and successfully gained a foothold in the Rio Grande Valley” (p.219).

The student protestors were helped by Mexican American organizations, such as Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) and Political Association of Spanish speaking Organizations (PASSO), as well as Volunteers in Service of America (VISTA) (Barrera, 2004). These groups fueled the Chicano movement in the political arena of Texas. They did this by organizing students in other walkouts, as in Crystal City. These groups also helped political candidates run for office.

PASSO was formed out of the Viva Kennedy clubs in Texas. These groups provided opportunities for Mexican Americans to be involved in the political process. This was especially true for World War II veterans. Many veterans of World War II returned home to face discrimination in their hometowns. Mexican American veterans formed the GI Forum, this group organized for political and education advancement. The veterans helped with the 1960 election of John F Kennedy. After this, a group of Texas veterans met in Victoria where they reorganized the Viva Kennedy groups and formed the Mexican American Political Action (MAPA). MAPA, led by Bexar County Commissioner Albert Peña, was the precursor to PASSO. PASSO’s influence in Crystal

City was significant and helped with the voting in of Los Cinco in 1965 (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/vep01).

Chicano Movement: Crystal City

Crystal City is a rural town located on U.S. Highway 83 in Southwest Texas and sits in an area called the Winter Garden; for its long growing season helped by irrigation (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ryw02). Carl F. Groos and E.J. Buckingham founded the town in the 1900s by purchasing the Cross S Ranch and then later sold the surrounding land to farmers (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hfc17).

The Texas State Historical Association describes early Crystal City as a hub for shipping produce: "As soon as the railroad reached Crystal City, the community became a major shipping point for winter vegetables" (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hfc17). By the 1930s Crystal City had become a major producer of Spinach and proclaimed itself the Spinach Capital of the World (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hfc17). A claim the town still makes today, even though the agricultural industry has declined significantly.

According to the Texas State Historical Association, "A government report of 1941 estimated that 97 percent of the 5,500 Mexican Americans living in Crystal City at that time were migrant laborers. Making Crystal City their home base, most of these workers lived in slum conditions with poor services and limited educational opportunities" (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hfc17). Crystal City's

Mexican American population remained despite the town leadership or power being held by the Anglo minority (Navarro, 1998). Crystal City's migrant and farm labor continued and grew with the arrival of the California Packing Corporation, later the Del Monte Corporation, in 1945 (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hfc17).

Crystal City schools were segregated into Mexican schools and Anglo schools, through the use of language differences, as in California and other Texas towns (Trujillo, 1998; Valencia 2008). The Anglo minority of Crystal City had the better school as well as the more qualified teachers (Trujillo, 1998). Crystal City schools later became the site for social and political change (Navarro, 1998; Trujillo, 1998; Shockley, 1974).

Crystal City is a town rich with Chicano movement history. For many historians and ethnographers, this history begins in 1962 with the election of *Los Cinco* to the city council. Acuña (2011) tells us, "PASO's slate of candidates for the city council was successful, electing Juan Cornejo, a local Teamsters Union business agent, along with four other Mexican Americans" (p.290). Shockley (1974) describes the election of five Mexicano city council members as a revolt. His book, *Chicano Revolt in a Texas Town*, describes the town of Cristal as "unique" because of its Mexican American population, by far the town's largest ethnic group, lacked representation in local government. This organization had limited success in organizing the local Del Monte cannery before approaching the men. With the backing of the Teamsters, these five men helped organize poll tax drives, create a local Mexican American organization to support their candidacy, and take control of the city council. The teamsters taught the Del Monte workers how to organize these activities and what to do to get elected (Zamora, 2000).

At the time of Shockley's study, the city's population was just under "10,000 people, overwhelmingly composed of Mexican Americans" (Shockley, 1974, p.1). The election of *Los Cinco* in a town with a majority of Mexican Americans was momentous because of the widespread voter suppression at the time in Texas and southern states. If we factor in the year, 1963, a time of racial divisiveness across the southern U.S., the election of these five leaders stands out as a watershed event. This was the first time the Mexican American community was represented in elected positions. Acuña (2011, 2007) recounts the significance of Cristaleños by providing the following quote from Time Magazine (April 12, 1963):

> In a way, the Crystal City Mexicans did stir up trouble for themselves. They control the town's government, but the Anglos control its economy. One council-seat winner got fired from his job in a hardware store. Another found his wages cut in half by his Anglo employer. But, mindful that Mexicans outnumber Anglos in South Texas, PASO looks upon the Crystal City election of a momentous triumph. Says Albert Fuentes, the PASSO official who led the campaign: "We have done the impossible. If we can do it in Crystal City, we can do it all over Texas. We can awake the sleeping giant." On election day, the Mexicans have learned, all South Texans are equal". (p.290)

Shockley's (1974) book provides an in-depth look at why this first political revolt came about and the subsequent "failure," as he calls it, of *Los Cinco*. Within two years, *Los Cinco* had become divided by fighting within the group over who had more power. Acuña (2011) tells us, "The Crystal City takeover lasted only two years. Personality conflicts and factionalism tore the coalition apart" (p.290). They were voted out of office in1965 by an opposing political group of middle-class Mexican Americans and moderate Anglos (Shockley, 1974). Moderate Anglos were those who considered sharing political power and business alliances with middle class Mexican Americans. Middle class Mexican Americans were those who either owned a small business or had a job that they held year round, without having to be a migrant farm worker (Navarro (1998); Shockley (1974). The city manager appointed by *Los Cinco*, George Ozuna, obtained federal grants for city improvements, and the city council had no choice but to continue these changes (Navarro, 1998). Navarro (1998) explains that Anglo business owners considered these grants government handouts. Shockley tells us that the political revolt, as he calls it, was beginning to settle down and the new way of governing with both Mexican Americans and Anglos could have continued to a newer type of governing in South Texas, but there was a second revolt in the winter of 1969.

In the winter of 1969, Chicano students in Crystal City who were tired of discriminatory practices in the classroom, as well as the choosing of cheerleaders, school favorites in other school functions decided to petition to the school board. One of the petitions asked for bilingual education and new Texas history textbooks that reflected contributions by Mexicanos (Smith, 1978). When the school board refused to consent to most of their demands, the students asked for help from college Chicano activists. A walkout of junior high and high school students was organized and implemented a few weeks before the Christmas break.

For years, the selection of cheerleaders was done by the high school faculty, which was overwhelmingly Anglo, and this resulted in the cheerleading squad's always having only a single Mexican American cheerleader. [Interview with Mariana Palomo, a CCHS student between 1953 and 1957, February 12, 2013].

Similarly, when the student body voted for Mexican American students to represent class favorites such as "most beautiful," and "most handsome", the school's administration found a way to void these results and secure the election of Anglo students. School personnel outrageously claimed that movie stars selected the winners. The widespread belief among the Mexican American students was that the selection of the favorites was actually done by faculty members, not Hollywood stars. [Interview with Juan R. Palomo, a CCHS student between 1961 and 1965, January 28, 2013]. In the years following *Los Cinco*, a few Mexican Americans had been elected to the school board, just as they had been elected to city posts (Shockley, 1974). However, this only led to minor changes in the way things worked at the high school level.

The second revolt examined by Shockley (1974) happened after this walkout. This time, the walkouts and subsequent boycott of schools were supported by political organizations that were formed not by outsiders, such as the Teamsters, but by local people. Crystal City native Jose Angel Gutierrez and a San Antonio native, Willie Velazquez, formed the organization called the Mexican American Youth Organization or MAYO in San Antonio, Texas, in 1967 composed mostly of Chicano college students (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/wem01).

With Gutierrez's encouragement, MAYO went to Cristal to help with the student walkout. After the walkout, MAYO continued its work closely with the people of Cristal and this led to the formation of the Raza Unida Party (RUP) by Gutierrez. Gutierrez formed a local group called *Ciudadanos Unidos*. This organization was headed by a predominantly male governing board and collaborated to assist in the organizing of the RUP. A slate of Mexican American candidates representing the RUP ran in the 1972 school board elections, including Gutierrez, Mike Perez, and Arturo Gonzales. They ran against two Mexican American and one Anglo candidates backed by the Anglo establishment. The RUP candidates won and thus began a new era of education – and politics- in Crystal City. While this explanation is brief, it is meant to provide a context of the movimiento and not a detailed account of the process through which these RUP candidates became elected officials.

Armando Trujillo documents this second "revolt" in his book *Chicano Empowerment and Bilingual Education: Movimiento Politics in Crystal City, Texas* published in 1998. Trujillo explains the Chicano Movement in Cristal as "ethnoregional" politics, meaning that Mexican Americans and the South Texas regional system of segregation came together to create a political movement motivated by race or ethnicity. This led to changes in the city council, such as the election of more Mexican Americans and new city improvement plans such as Urban Renewal, which started with *Los Cinco* but had a greater impact in the schools (Navarro, 1998). This drive was the force behind the school walkout in 1969 and led to the RUP school board victory in 1972.

As explained earlier, the RUP's candidates were motivated by the student petitions of 1969 to push for changes in the schools. In the 1973-74 school year, under the direction of Gonzales, Perez, and Gutierrez, the school district moved to hire more Mexican American teachers and administrators at all levels (Trujillo, 1998). As a result, many white teachers left the district in the early 1970s. The board next implemented a comprehensive bilingual education program that was meant, not only to maintain students' use of Spanish, but also to develop ethnic identity through "Chicano schooling" (Trujillo, 1998, p.54). Trujillo (1998) describes Chicano schooling as the school board encouraging the Mexicano/Chicano expressive culture (Trujillo, 1998). This was done through adding cultural components to the bilingual program, such as Ballet Folklorico, Chicano themes in theatre and student art, and presentations on Mexican holidays, such as 16 de septiembre (Trujillo, 1998). This gave the maintenance bilingual program a Chicano culture component.

This comprehensive maintenance bilingual program, one of the first in the area, was met with resistance. Some parents, majority being white, with the support of some white teachers, formed a separate school, attended by a few middle class Mexican American students, that taught courses in English only (Shockley, 1974). The new private school was not expensive and was welcoming to anyone opposed to the RUP school board [Interview with Mariana Palomo, Febuary 12, 2013]. The bilingual program was not just rejected by white teachers but also some Mexican American parents and teachers who were apprehensive about the change in leadership, the change in curriculum (viewed as too radical) and the addition of new teachers (Navarro, 1998). These parents feared that the program was "extreme". Some Mexican Americans were also opposed to the way Ciudadanos Unidos ran the Raza Unida Party. The complete members of the Ciudadanos Unidos are not known but did include Jose Angel Gutierrez (Zavala, 2004). The leadership style was domineering and the students disagreed with the "continued dependence on 'outsiders' in key leadership positions" (Trujillo, 1998, p.56). These Mexican Americans decided to form their own political group, called *La Raza Libre* or The Free People. *La Raza Libre* ran candidates in the next school board election of 1974, following the election of the three RUP candidates.

Dissension continued later in the 1970s as more Mexican Americans from Cristal became unhappy with Jose Angel Gutierrez' style of leadership (Trujillo, 1998). Trujillo (1998) and Navarro (1998) do not say why Gutierrez did not hire locals, and it could be that the interviewees of these researchers only perceived that this was happening. In my research, the participants have stated that outsiders, often persons Gutierrez met while he was attending Saint Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas, were hired for leadership positions in the school district [Interviews from masters thesis]. This is what La Raza Libre had contested earlier in the decade (Trujillo, 1998).

This division continued with the formation of Los Barrio Boys, a group that began to run its own political candidates against RUP (Trujillo, 1998). Eventually, by the 1980s the RUP, which had run a candidate for governor in 1972, disintegrated. So did *La Raza Libre* and other groups and many of the members of these groups joined – or rejoined -- the Democratic Party.

Another author who documents the rise and fall of the RUP is Armando Navarro, in *The Cristal Experiment: A Chicano Struggle for Community Control* (1998). Navarro also begins by documenting the election of *Los Cinco* in 1963 and how the Mexican American majority rose to power. He explains the revolts and movement in Cristal by conceptualizing the movement as the Mexicano majority's fighting for community control. Navarro tells us that while the 1963 revolt "ended essentially in failure, the notion of community control did not end with the ouster of Juan Cornejo and other members of *Los Cinco*. For the next five years, control of the city council would remain in the hands of Mexicanos" (p.48).

Navarro describes the years between 1965 and 1969 as Mexican Americans holding city council seats and other elected positions but not challenging or rocking the boat of Cristal's Anglo economic power (1998). He also says that through the Citizen's Association Serving All Americans (CASAA), a white and middle-class Mexican American political group, economically influential whites worked to placate the Mexican American population (Navarro, 1998). However, the Mexican American community was growing conscious of its rights in schools and at the polls. The Mexican American expectations of their elected officials were also growing. By 1969, the political group that ran *Los Cinco*, Political Association of Spanish speaking Organization (PASSO) and CASAA had fractured because of dissatisfaction among the Mexican American members of both groups. The growing discontent of Mexican Americans with their political leaders, the political system's failure to meet their needs, and the physical intimidation from the Texas Rangers contributed to the walkout of 1969 and the subsequent second revolt. There is a well-documented history of violence and harassment by the Texas

Rangers toward Mexicanos or Mexican Americans in Texas since the early 1900's (Montejano, 1987). This violence was used as a way to enforce Jim Crow laws in across Texas (Montejano, 1987). These tactics were also common during the Movement in Crystal (Gutierrez, 1998).

Navarro's (1998) book focuses on the politics of the RUP, and it details the rise and fall of the party. Unlike Trujillo, he does not cover the events in the schools. Navarro does include a detailed discussion of the disintegration of the RUP with outlined alliances between different political group defections from RUP to the Democratic Party, political games, and the formation of new groups, such as the Barrio Boys. This is important to understand, Navarro (1998) states, "…Factionalism predicated on the pursuit of self interest, greed and control of the spoils were the driving forces of Cristal's politics. The deterioration of the peaceful revolution's politics also caused irreparable damage to the struggle for educational change" (p.213). Navarro further shows that by the 1980s, the RUP began to have such internal turmoil that a growing number of insiders no longer followed the leadership blindly, as they had before. The start of the new decade also brought changes to the education system, which is important to our narrative.

The educational changes that came about in the late 1980's in Texas were the changes in a new accountability system (Valenzuela, 2005). This accountably system brought about standardized testing. This push to greater accountability changed what educators and parents felt would be best for the children of Crystal City (Trujillo, 1998). These adults felt that in order to prepare these students for this new standardized testing, there needed to be a switch from a kindergarten-to-12th grade bilingual program to a new bilingual program, that only spanned the elementary grades (Trujillo, 1998). There was a change from the acceptance and promotion of bilingualism from childhood to adolescence in Crystal City students to a limiting of bilingualism.

Crystal City: The Impact of the Chicano Movement on Education

Many have looked at the Chicano Movement in Cristal through different lenses, but the main focus has always been the political aspect. This, of course, has solidified the importance of Cristaleños in the Chicano Civil Rights Movement. One of the most critical pieces to the Chicano Movement has been education (Navarro, 1998; Trujillo, 1998). This is true in Cristal and exemplified by the second revolt starting with the walkout of 1969.

For purposes of this study, we must return to before the walkouts of 1969 in order to understand what these four women participants experienced in their own schooling. Our four participants attended Crystal City schools from elementary through high school. During our weekly meetings, they shared stories of their experiences in school.

Langenegger (1993) gives us a good overall description of the schooling in Crystal City and the Winter Garden area: "The education of Mexican Americans in Texas, especially in the Winter Garden region, remained at an inferior level for the first half of the twentieth century" (p.15). According to Langenegger (1993), Crystal City schools were segregated until 1950s, and these segregated schools lacked supplies, and their Anglo teachers were underpaid. Langenegger (1993) states, "Even after the schools were integrated by court order in the 1950s, segregated primer and pre-primer classes were created for English language instruction for Mexican-American students" (p.14). Here we see that language was used as a method to segregate Mexican American students from Anglo students.

Shockly (1974) tells us that in 1960, a small group of Mexican Americans organized to end de facto segregation in the elementary schools. Up until the1950s, there had been two elementary schools in Cristal. One was known as the Anglo school and the other the Mexican school (Shockley, 1974). The Mexican school often lacked supplies and the facilities were not equal to those of the "Anglo school" (Langenegger 1993). By 1960, the elementary schools had been officially desegregated but not in practice. Integration was only partially true at the Anglo elementary, a school that still denied access to the majority of Mexican Americans (Shockley, 1974). The Mexican Americans that were allowed into the Anglo school were primarily from families that were not migrant farm workers. These families had year-round jobs in town, which allowed them to enroll their children at the beginning of the school year, when there was room for them in the Anglo school. As the migrant students gradually began to return from "up north," they were allowed into the Anglo school until the classes filled up. Those that returned to Crystal City after that were forced to attend the Mexican school, even if they lived only a few blocks from the Anglo school. One of those students still recalls with horror how, in the third grade, he was denied entrance to the Anglo school that was only three blocks from his home and which he had attended the year before, even as his two sisters (a year and three years older) were admitted. He was forced to walk clear across town to "El

Campo," the Mexican school housed in the former World War II Japanese internment camp. (Interview with Juan R. Palomo, a former migrant student.)

Each Mexican American child was given an English proficiency test before enrolling in school (Shockley, 1974). Langernegger tells us that this test was used to further segregate students. Langernegger (1993) says, "segregated primer and pre-primer classes were created for English language instruction for Mexican-American students. No Spanish was tolerated in these classes or on school grounds" (p.14). Therefore the English proficiency tests determined which Mexican American children could attend the integrated school, known as the Anglo school. This illustrates the use of language as a proxy for race in the public schools (Valencia, 2008).

Our four participants graduated from Crystal City High School between 1957 and 1962 and did not initially get to attend elementary schools that were even partially or in name only, desegregated. They attended what was called in Spanish, *cero bola*, which was pre-primer, as Langenegger (1993) explained. They all began school knowing very little or no English. Through the language submersion or sink-or-swim integration method, they all had to become fluent in English (Miller Sadker & Zittleman, 2010). The sink-or-swim integration method meant that all students were taught in English only, with no consideration for a student's lack of English language skills or the language spoken at home. The students were expected to obtain English language proficiency on their own. They would swim, and if they did not, they would fail or sink. Any maintenance of their native language, Spanish, was done at home.

As migrant farm workers, their English language skills were used to help their families, especially their fathers during interactions with English-speaking farmers and or employers in northern states. Jurkovic et al (2004) explain that family roles and responsibilities force children to sacrifice their own desires to meet the needs of the family. Jurkovic and colleagues also tell us that the acquisition of the second language, in this case, English, ensures the livelihood of the family. For our participants the acquisition of English took place in the elementary schools.

Elementary schooling for our participants is not well-documented aside from the few words Shockley (1974) and Langernegger (1993) share. What we know was expressed by our participants themselves. They shared stories of being lost in an all-English environment with other Mexican American students whom they knew from their barrios.

I've been told many stories of pre-first or *cero bola* and high first. High first was the "grade" that some students who passed the language proficiency test entered into or promoted to after they passed *cero bola* [Platicas, Winter and Spring 2010]. For example, they talked about their friends and relatives being stuck in one of those "grades" as they moved on to the next. My mother has told me of being in the seventh grade with a cousin who was two years older than her. My aunts and mom often mention relatives who left school after the eighth grade to pursue work. For example, my Tia Fina, who is four years older than my mother, told me of how she dropped out of school after the fifth grade. She shared:

> I went to school after being up North with my family. The teacher called on me to do a fractions problem at the board. I had no idea what he was talking about, so I just walked out. I pretended to be going to school for a few weeks after that, then I went to work.

Our participants also shared some stories of discrimination in high school. The close analysis of how the participants succeed at high school being that they were English language learners and from low social economic status would be the basis of another dissertation. By the time they made it to high school, they had learned English well enough to be put in integrated classes. The high school was integrated in the 1950s, if not earlier. I assume that this was because of the small number of Mexican American students who had succeeded to that level. It would not have been economically feasible to have a separate high school for a handful of Mexican American students. There are few studies to support this assumption.

Crystal City after the Movement

The 1980s mark the slow decline of the RUP influence in politics. As Navarro tells us, many RUP members went to the National Democratic Party. The 1980s also marked the decline of the once-innovative educational policies at the high school level and practices at the elementary to high school level, that the RUP school board allowed administrators to implement. An example of an educational policy implemented was a high school student representative to the school board, which had limited powers but could bring items up for vote at school board meetings (Interview with Diana Palacios, 2010). Othe policies that slowly disappeared in the 1980s were the K-12 bilingual maintenance program and the teaching of Chicano studies.

With the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 and the rise of accountability in the schools, many changes in education were about to begin. For example, in Texas, Ross Perot pushed for greater accountability in public schools through standardized testing (Vasquez Heilig & Nichols, 2013). This increased demand on administrators, teachers, and students on a standardized test that was in English, worried parents and teachers. The main concern was that the students of Crystal City schools would fail because the Spanish language was being maintained (Interview with Mrs. Hernandez, Fall 2010).

The scaling back of the comprehensive maintenance bilingual program first began with the elimination of Spanish reading classes at the high school and then the junior high (Trujillo, 1998). This was initiated by both parents and teachers who feared that the continued teaching of Spanish courses would leave the students with sub-par literacy skills in English and ill prepared for the job market. I am unsure why parents and teachers felt this way about efforts by the schools to make students bi-literate. Eventually, by the 1990s the bilingual program had become compensatory in nature and no longer a maintenance program with Spanish taught in equal time and proportions as English (Trujillo, 1998).

The 1980s in Cristal were marked with the integration of Chicano politics to be more mainstream and with movement back to the Democratic Party. It also marked a time of less progressive education. The time of a bilingual program from kinder until 12th grade were over. The acceptances of the Spanish and English languages in the classroom in all subject areas were over.

Bilingual Education in Crystal City

Bilingual education has a long and varied history in the United States. For the purposes of this dissertation, the starting point will be the 1960s, a time when civil rights were a major issue. In the early 1960s, Cuban refugees fled to Miami. Florida had set up a bilingual school in Dade County that focused on fluent bilingualism (Crawford, 1999). The school was called, Coral Way and by September 1963, school officials had separated students by language in 1st through 3rd grades (Crawford, 1999). Not much is written about what was types of bilingual programs were being implemented in other parts of the country at that time.

In 1966 a group of teachers formed an organization called the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), now based in Alexandria, Virginia, in response to the growing popularity of instruction called English as a Second Language (ESL) (Blanton, 2004). The popularity of ESL instruction across the United States was attributed to the increase of non-English speaking students in schools (Blanton, 2004). The general feel to bilingual education across the U.S, and in Texas, was moving away from English-only and direct instruction to a more flexible approach (Blanton, 2004).

Two years later, President Johnson signed the Bilingual Education Act into law as part of Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (Crawford, 1999). This law "authorized resources to support educational programs, to train teachers and aides, to develop and disseminate instructional materials, and to encourage parental involvement" (Crawford, 1999, p. 40). This law did not mandate instruction in the native language or a language other than English and, unlike the Coral Way School in Miami, did not encourage bilingualism, and the law was more compensatory in nature (Crawford, 1999). A conference held in October 1966 in Tucson, Arizona by the National Education Association brought ideas of dual language instruction into the forefront (Crawford, 1999). From this conference the political movement of bilingualism was born (Crawford, 1999).

The documentation of bilingual education across the United States is relevant to the Chicano movement because the schools were an important battleground for the movement. As we have seen and will see, the schools were the first step to gaining political power for Mexican Americans in Crystal City. This is also true for other places in the country such as California and Colorado. Bilingual and bicultural education can be seen as a validation of Chicano culture and Mexican American heritage. Navarro (1998) argues that Jose Angel Gutierrez saw the schools as the best way to begin a fight for Mexican Civil Rights. Bilingual education was among the demands made by the students and ignored by the school board, resulting in the walkout.

The 1970s saw the bilingual movement change to a more political one that was more aligned with the civil rights movement. Many parents of minority groups in the U.S. pursued anti-discrimination legislation through the judicial system. On May 25, 1970, the federal Office for Civil Rights (OCR) informed school districts that were receiving federal monies about the Civil Rights Act that outlawed discrimination in federally supported programs (Crawford, 1999). A 1974 New Mexico court case, *Serna v. Portales*, mandated instruction in a child's native language as well as instruction of Hispanic culture (Crawford, 1999). Another case in 1977 *Rios v. Reed*, mandated the Patchogue-Medford, New York School District to include a bicultural component to its mostly ESL program.

The 1974 court decision of *Lau v. Nichols*, a landmark case that many reference in bilingual education history, ordered special instruction for Chinese children who did not know English. What the Lau plaintiffs wanted was an equal opportunity for instruction for their children, requiring instruction in the child's native language (Valencia, 2008). This decision did not give constitutional protection to language minority students and did not dictate bilingual programs to be used (Crawford, 1999). This court decision led the OCR to check on school districts that served language minority students the following year (Crawford, 1999). In 1975, U.S. Commissioner of Education Terrel Bell announced what came to be known as the "Lau Remedies." These directives provided districts with guidelines to decide which students needed special instruction in their native language, which ones were ready to be out of a special instruction program, and standards for teachers (Crawford, 1999, p. 46). These "remedies" proved difficult to enforce for the OCR. A court case in Texas in 1981 ended a period of litigation on discrimination and segregation. The case heard by District Judge William Wayne Justice found that schools in Texas had segregated Mexican Americans to "Mexican Schools" and denigrated the "language, culture, and heritage of these students" (as sited in Crawford, 1999, p. 44).

In the 1970s the Crystal City Independent School District (CCISD) moved to district wide maintenance bilingual programs. Trujillo (1998) tells us "Chicanos used the 1968 federal legislation on bilingual education to implement a comprehensive kindergarten through twelfth grade maintenance bilingual/bicultural education program as an integral part of their plan for Chicano self-determination and cultural revitalization" (p. 37). The newly elected school board implemented bilingual education from the first through third grades, and ordered that instruction take place in either Spanish or English. This was later expanded to include all grades, kindergarten to the 12th grade (Gutierrez, 1998). One of the main goals of the bilingual program in CCISD was to have students graduate from high school with a proficiency in both English and Spanish (Gutierrez, 1998).

In the 1980s there was a push back to Lau remedies by the federal government because they became difficult to enforce. Even President Ronald Reagan expressed personal views against bilingual education. Reagan saw bilingual education as a way to teach non-English speakers English, not as a way to maintain their native language (Crawford, 1999). Legislators, following Reagan's lead, began questioning the validity of bilingual education, and soon moved to fewer federal mandates and more local control (Crawford, 1999). With the control moved to the local level, the authorities could choose how to fund the bilingual programs, thus undermining enforcement (Crawford, 1999).

In 1984, two House Democrats and two House Republicans drafted a bill in support of bilingual education through federal funding and amendments that emphasized teacher training (Crawford, 1999). New language to the bill in support of the Bilingual

Education Act of 1968 hoped to change the purpose of bilingual education from a compensatory or remedial program (Crawford, 1999). A compensatory program would try to make up for the student's lack of English language skills and a remedial program would focus more on "bringing students up to speed" in the English language (Crawford, 1999). The general feel of the 1980s and the Reagan administration was that of "equal treatment" of all groups by denying any special treatment to any one group, which included bilingual education for any language minority group.

This push back from federal entities on funding and implementation of civil rights was one reason CCISD cut back on bilingual education, as was the cractionalizationof the Raza Unida Party in the 1970s (Platicas, 2012) and the emergence of more Reagan-era conservative values (Trujillo, 1998), which led to changed in the school board. There was also a general desire by teachers and political leaders in Crystal City to "downplay the radical political history" and, I would argue, the bilingual educational programs (Trujillo, 1998 p. 7). The increased demand for accountability by Texas lawmakers on schools also influenced teachers' ideas about bilingual programs (Trujillo, 1998). Now, "educators in Crystal City expressed that they felt pressured to improve students' test scores" (Trujillo, 1998, p. 71). One group of teachers wanted to change the bilingual program because they felt that students were not transitioning to English fast enough and that this would hurt their test scores, since tests were in English (Trujillo, 1998). This group eventually convinced the administration and others to make the bilingual program a transitional pre-kindergarten through first grade program (Trujillo, 1998). This later changed to pre-kindergarten to third grade, after the Texas Education Agency found the district in noncompliance with the Bilingual Education Act (Trujillo, 1998). This program continued until the 2007-08 school year.

The 1990s saw states push bills that outlawed bilingual programs and services not only in schools but also in state agencies. These bills – among them California's Proposition 227 -- also attempted to change the official language of the states to English only. Proponents of the California proposition argued that bilingual education was failing students (Crawford, 1999). The proposition proposed an early exit of bilingual programs and an allowance for parents to exempt their children from a bilingual program (Crawford, 1999). Similar laws were passed in Arizona and Massachusetts, and attempted in Colorado. This trend of English-only continued into the 2000s, often accompanied by anti-immigrant sentiments.

Crystal City schools continued with early exit bilingual programs. Some Early Childhood bilingual teachers reported that they saw younger parents who were unable to read and write in Spanish themselves, and, therefore, were unable to help their children with homework (personal communication with former teacher). The district followed the trend of early exit bilingual programs that became prevalent across Texas.

Summary of Chapter

In summary, this chapter provided the political and educational history of Crystal City. The objective of this chapter was not to rewrite the history of the Chicano Movement, but to provide the historical and political backdrop to the educational journey of my study's participants. This context is directly relevant to what they experienced as

Tejanas and Cristaleñas. This background will help contextualize the events that our women speak about and the development of the movement in Cristal. Next, you will read four vignettes of our participants. You will learn about their background and hear their reflections on the movement in their hometown, Crystal City. Now that you know more about the city's educational history and their schooling experience, you can begin to understand the big changes these women witnessed in the schools.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This research study is a qualitative look at what four women from Crystal City experienced during the Chicano Movement. More specifically, this chapter presents the research questions, design, trustworthiness of the study, ethical considerations, as well as, the limitations of the study. My goal is to provide a close look at what our group meetings were like. The descriptions of the meetings will be included in this chapter to demonstrate the use of a new qualitative method. In a quite literal sense taking the research to the kitchen table-- and from the kitchen table to academia.

The use of Chicana feminism in this dissertation takes the metaphor of philosophizing at the kitchen table to the literal sense. This was done for two reasons. First, to use feminism in an authentic way, to take the archetype of the woman's place, the home and or kitchen, and repurpose it into a very real way of bringing academic research into the home. Secondly, this symbolizes the initial steps of this journey and honors the way in which I first became interested in the Chicano Movement. I want to take the research back to my aunt's kitchen table, the place of comfort and warmth, the place of first theorizing.

Research Questions

This study began with many questions and an ambitious goal of rewriting the narrative of the Chicano Movement in Crystal City, Texas. However the reality of holding large writing groups and conducting the interviews from a large participant group proved to be impractical and intimidating. The result was an intimate analysis on four women and their children's view and reflections of the Chicano Movement.

One overarching research question guided this study: What are these four women's views of the Chicano Movement in Crystal City? Under this main question are several topics that relate to their lives. These include, the walkouts of 1969, the Chicano Movement, their education before and after the Movement, and their work life. The meeting topics or agendas were developed under this large question. The meetings were open-ended and discussion often drifted from topic to topic and often involved family life. Some of the planned topics up for weekly discussion are below, however these are not the complete list of topics.

- Family influence or opinion of the Movement: What did your mother, aunts, grandmother or other older women figures in your life say about the Movement?
- Educational narrative: What do you remember about your schooling experience in Crystal City?
- Narratives of Discrimination: What types of discrimination did you face as a teenager or young woman before 1970? Did any of this change after the walkout and subsequent election of a RUP school board?
- December 1969 Walkout: Where were you? What were you thinking?
- Cultural artifact: Bring in a cultural artifact or memento from that time period- why did you choose this piece? What do you think of when you touch, smell or look at this piece?

- Your work: What type of work were you doing before the walk out/Chicano Movement? Or what type of work were you expecting to do before the walk out and subsequent Chicano Movement? How did the Chicano Movement change your expectations and or your work experiences?
- Legacy of Movement: What have you shared about the Movement with your children? Why did you share it? Do you know what your children's thoughts are about the Movement? What will you share with your grandchildren or will you share any of this with your grandchildren? Do you think I can interview your children, preferably your youngest child?

This last question/topic is central for the second part of this dissertation.

The second part of the dissertation involved the four women's children. For this portion, I interviewed each of the women's youngest child. The main question for this part was: What stories did your mother share with you about the Chicano Movement in your hometown? The interview questions for the children were left open ended and some follow-up questions were asked as I saw appropriate. First, questions were asked to establish whom we were talking to and document basic biographical information. These questions included the year they were born and whether they were the oldest, middle or youngest child. These questions ensured that I was interviewing the youngest child. The other questions were mainly about what they knew of the Chicano Movement. These included but were not limited to the following:

- When you hear "Raza Unida Party" what comes to your mind? What do you think of?

- What do you know about the Raza Unida Party?
- Have you ever heard any stories about the Chicano Movement?
- How do you think the Movement impacted Crystal City? Why do you think that?
- What do you think the greatest impact of the Chicano Movement was on Crystal City? What do you think is the worst impact?
- Have you taken history courses on the Chicano Movement?
- Where have you heard the most about the movement? Is there one person in particular that has spoken to you the most about the Movement?

The four young people I interviewed gave varied answers that you will read in Chapter 5: Sus Niños.

Research Design: Testimonios and Oral Histories

This study uses qualitative methods grounded in Chicana epistemology and methodology in order to (re)tell the story of the Chicano Movement in Crystal City, Texas, much like Delgado Bernal's (1998) work, "*Grassroots Leadership Reconceptualized: Chicana Oral Histories and the 1968 East Los Angeles School Blowouts*". By using a Chicana feminist lens, I am asserting and privileging that Chicanas have a different way of knowing (Delgado Bernal 1998; Anzaldua 1987; Villenas, 1996). Blackmer Reyes and Curry Rodriguez (2012) tell us, "Feminist epistemology influenced Chicanas and empowered them to develop the narrative format as redemption--as takers of the stories, as readers of the narratives, and as creators of the analysis" (p.526).

The use of a Chicana feminist lens will 1) (re) position women and their experiences in the Chicano movement, 2) provide a new way of telling their story through testimonio (Smith, 2005) and 3) address the perspectives of the movement held between different generations of Cristaleños. The use of a Chicana feminist lens positions me in a particular ethnicity and gender. Since I self identify, as a Chicana, being that I was born into a Mexican American family in South Texas, this lens is what would work best for this dissertation. Chicana feminism works best for this dissertation because the dominant narrative of the Chicano movement has been told from a male perspective. Being that I am identifying as a Chicana, with its own cultural intuition, this lens best fits who I am in both my identity and positionality.

Delgado Bernal's article *Using a Chicana Feminist Epistemology in Educational Research* (1998) tells us that the methodology used in Chicana feminist epistemology is concerned with "whose experiences and realities are accepted as the foundation of knowledge" (p.558). This dissertation study is centered on the knowledge shared by four Mexican American women who witnessed and endured the direct impact of the Chicano Movement in Crystal City. Delgado Bernal's (1998) work tells us that methodology is not merely about the use of qualitative versus quantitative research strategies but also about the types of questions that are asked, how they are asked, and where the starting point of the research is. What she means is that qualitative research is not just about how we choose to examine a phenomenon but also where we start to look at the phenomenon. The beginning point of the examination is important, when we are looking to create meaning of a phenomenon. In order to use a Chicana feminist methodology, the experiences of

Chicanas must be the starting point and what Delgado Bernal calls cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal, 1998). Cultural intuition, meaning that a Chicana has an intuition, a way of knowing how to look at a phenomenon from a Chicana point of view using collective experience and memory.

Delgado Bernal likened cultural intuition to the theoretical sensitivity of Strauss and Corbin (1990). Delgado Bernal tells us that theoretical sensitivity is "a personal quality of the researcher based on the attribute of having the ability to give meaning to data" (1998, p. 563). She distinguishes cultural intuition from theoretical sensitivity by explaining that cultural intuition includes the researcher's collective experience and community memory. The concept of collective experiences and community memory is specifically important for this research because it examines the collective memory of a group of four women and their children. This research is based on the collective memory of the Chicano Movement in Crystal City, Texas.

Blackmer Reyes and Curry Rodriguez (2012) address memory's role in testimonio. They discuss testimonios having both a disadvantage and advantage, in that the narrator can cast the testimonio in a way that makes them seem better than what it was allowing the narrator to have redemption (Blackmer Reyes and Curry Rodriguez, 2012). These authors argue that testimonio can have a psychoanalytical value. They state, "Fundamentally, however, the objective of testimonio includes the knowledge that reflection and speaking lead, eventually to liberation" (Blackmer Reyes and Curry Rodriguez, p. 527, 2012). As for testimonio in educational research, Blackmer Reyes and Curry Rodriguez (2012) tell us, "From these endeavors come documents, memories, and oral histories that can be used to recast and challenge pervasive theories, policies and explanations about educational failure as a problem, not of individuals but of systemic institutionalized practices of oppression" (p.527). From this statement we can understand that testimonios form oral histories, which then challenge pervasive theories and explanations. In this dissertation the pervasive theories and explanations are present in the dominant male-centered narrative of the Chicano Movement.

Research Tools

The research tools for this study include testimonios and oral histories. Theoretical backing for testimonios can be seen in Linda T. Smith's book *Decolonizing methodologies, research and indigenous peoples* (2005). Smith's (2005) definition is, "Indigenous testimonies are a way of talking about an extremely painful event or series of events. The formality of testimony provides a structure within which events can be related and feelings expressed" (p.144). According to Smith (2005), testimonios are used by indigenous groups to express difficult times, an example is "I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman In Guatemala" (2009). If we use indigenous to include *mestizas*, as Anzaldúa (1987) would have us do, we can further theorize that testimonios are a part of a Chicana epistemology. According to Blackmer Reyes and Curry Rodriguez (2012) "Testimonio allows the narrator to show an experience that is not only liberating in the process of telling but also political in its production of awareness to the listeners and readers alike" (p. 527).

In *Telling to live: Latina feminist Testimonios* (2001) a group of Latina scholars and feminists came together to "engage our difference, face-to-face, and work to find common ground" (p.1). Luz Del Alba Acevedo and colleagues (2001) tell their own stories. They share stories of their mothers, their experiences in the academy and schooling, stories of empowerment, of desires and passions, and other experiences. Excerpts from this book are used as an example of the type of testimonio I used to stimulate the writing groups. This work helped the women of my study recognize that they are not alone in their feelings. This book also provided an example of types of testimonios and writings. The objective of writing these testimonios is to acknowledge Chicanas' way of knowing, writing, and to validate them as producers of knowledge and writers.

Blackmer Reyes and Curry Rodriguez (2012) tell us that personal narratives used in Chicano studies have come from "the practice of testimonio as a legacy of reflexive narratives of liberation used by people thought the world" (p.525). Blackmer Reyes and Curry Rodriguez (2012) also tell us that Chicanas in particular have taken to the work of Patricia Collins (1991) by the use of personal theoretical insight. The use of testimonio and personal narrative as a way of knowledge-making has a deep political and conscienticized reflection (Blackmer Reyes and Curry Rodriguez, 2012). The authors' state:

> "testimonio is not meant to be hidden, made intimate, nor kept secret. The object of the testimonio is to bring to light a wrong, a point of view, or an urgent call for action. Thus in this manner, the testimonio is different from the qualitative

method of in-depth interviewing, oral history narration, prose or spoken word. The testimonio is intentional and political" (Blackmer Reyes and Curry Rodriguez, p. 525 2012).

Indeed, this dissertation is both political and intentional. It is political in that choosing to take and privilege the position of a Chicana researcher is not easy and/or done with light consideration. It is intentional because I purposely choose to study about the women who were not in the political spotlight, women who had not been seen as political activists.

The second research tool is oral history. Oral histories were important to this study in order to create vignettes of each woman. Oral histories as research tool provided "access to information that is not written down" (Mertens, 2005, p. 278). Mertens (2005) says, people involved in conflicts may not feel comfortable to write about an argument or disagreement. However, some people will feel comfortable talking, discussing with a researcher one-on-one about past disagreements. Conducting interviews that led to brief oral histories were held outside of our group meetings so that another level of thick description could be reached, as well as an intimacy where each participant could elaborate on what was first discussed at our meetings.

Oral histories also have limitations. First, oral histories are often taken from the "survivors", those that were there to tell the story (Mertens, 2005). This is especially true here because the women interviewed were women who are still living and still reside in Crystal City. A second limitation is that this was a small group consisted only of women. I did not invite men to our writing groups. Oral histories also have the limitation that the stories told are based on someone's own memory (Mertens, 2005). The human memory can be changed and subjective to what that person believes to be true.

One of my main inspirations for this dissertation was Dolores Delgado Bernal's 1998 work, "Grassroots Leadership Reconceptualized: Chicana Oral Histories and the 1968 East Los Angeles School Blowouts". In this article, she conducted oral histories with women from the 1968 high school walkout. She states, "In my own attempt to transform lived experiences into history, my primary method of data collection is the oral history interviews of eight women…" (Delgado Bernal, 1998, p. 115). Like Delgado Bernal, this dissertation is my attempt to turn the lived experiences of these four women into history; a history of what ordinary non-activist women experienced into history.

The Setting and Participants

The site, Crystal City, Texas, is central to this research project because it was the hometown of the Raza Unida Party, and a key city in the development of the Chicano movement in Texas. As mentioned in the previous chapters, this is where all of this study's participants reside as well as my hometown. Reentry to the site required me to spend several weeks there conducting the writing groups. Time not spent in writing groups was spent in interviews with the participants.

There was purposeful selection of participants. The first participant selected was my mother. I chose my mother for several reasons. First, she had told me so much about the Chicano Movement while growing up. Secondly, I feel that her story as a teacher for Crystal City schools was important to tell along with the stories of the other participants, in order to paint a different story of the Chicano Movement in Crystal City. Also, she helped in finding the other participants as well as collecting other information. The final reason is that she was a member of the other political group that formed, the Raza Libre.

My mother gave me the phone numbers of potential participants and I called them. At times she spoke to them first. This undoubtedly gave me access not afforded to outside researchers. My mother also allowed us to use her home to hold the weekly *platicas*. This gave me, quite literally, a home base to work from while in town.

Data Collection and Analysis

The primary research tool was the formation of a writing group. The ultimate goal of this writing group was to have the participants create testimonios. We worked on creating a safe space for sharing experiences and writing testimonios. Writing groups were conducted weekly for three months for no more than two hours at a time. At first, we gathered at Cristal's library, and then we switched to my mother's home. Each writing session started with a discussion on a pre-selected topic. Topics included childhood memories, high school years, the movement, as well as, the women's elders perceptions of the Movement. In addition, I shared a quote about language from Anzaldua (1987) in order to prompt conversation and better understand their ideas of Chicana feminism.

During each session, the participants of this study had independent time for writing or revising previously written work. After this, women shared their narratives with the group, and further discussed the main points that came up. After a participant read her work, the group commented on the writing and offered helpful suggestions to further develop the work. At the end of each session, I closed with positive words of encouragement. In between sessions, I typed up each of the participants' contributions and gave them a copy of their work for the following session.

A second method used to solicit testimonio writing, was to ask participants to bring in a personal memento from that time (Chicano Movement) to one of the sessions. The memento could include a cultural artifact such as a political button, a newspaper clipping, or a photograph. The women were asked to describe their memento and to share why they chose that piece to bring to the group. Once they shared their reasons, they were asked to write from that memory-- essentially, to write about what that cultural artifact meant to them. In addition to discussing the women's artifacts, we used other archival photographs from the Jose Angel Gutierrez Collection at the Benson Latin American Collection. From this collection, I chose pictures of the elementary schools from Crystal City that were used for grants by the school district to improve facilities. Other copies were made of Jose Angel Gutierrez' papers such as letters sent to him by people upset with him. Papers, letters, and pictures were chosen that I felt were relevant to our previous discussions.

I also showed them pictures from Rosales' chapter "The Youth of Aztlan", in his book *Chicano! The History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement* (1997). This strategy was used to initiate conversation and further testimonios. This method comes from *The writing of Canícula: Breaking boundaries, finding forms* (Cantu, 2003), where Cantu uses creative non-fiction in writing her book. Cantu (2003) tells us:

> Because I did not have photos with me as I wrote, I was able to confirm the theory of how memory actually frees the past and photos freeze the moment. When I went back to Laredo to look for the photos and complete the text, I found that the narrative proved the tenuous nature of memory and apparent rigidity of a photograph." (p. 103).

In this text, she describes using photographs as an aid to write her story, it is in this same sentiment that I hope to use photographs in the writing groups.

Each woman was interviewed individually in order to complete the oral history component of this dissertation study. These women were interviewed in depth to collect their life histories and provide more details about their experiences. These interviews supplemented the testimonio narratives. My goal was to ensure that the writing groups would be "organic" in development and, in that sense, additional information was secured via these interviews. In addition, a second group of younger Cristaleños, children of the women, ages 25 to 40 was interviewed to explore their perceptions of *el movimiento*.

The Meetings/ Las Platicas

As mentioned earlier, the meetings took place on a weekly basis. The meetings were held in my mother's home every Sunday for three months. At the time of these meetings, I was living and working in San Antonio Texas. The drive to Crystal from San Antonio is about two and a half hours. On my way home I would stop at the last big grocery store in Uvalde, Texas. There I would purchase supplies for to make dinner for the ladies.

I would try to buy things that would be different for the women, food that they could not easily get at the local restaurants. One time I bought premade lasagna, with salad, and garlic bread. Another time I chose meatloaf with macaroni and cheese. I also tried to include a dessert that was different. These ranged from tres leches cake to ice cream cake.

This was important for two reasons. The first is that it was my wish to make these women feel special for attending my meetings. Having grown up in Cristal, where the food menu hardly consisted of anything other than Tex-Mex, bringing these types of food made the meetings special.

Second, I wanted to create a comfortable space. The meals provided an opportunity to provide that comfort. It was through my own cultural intuition that I decided to bring meals to share with the women. Also my lived experience of having grown up in Cristal, provided me with knowledge of what it feels like to have something different, even for an hour or two, can mean.

The concept of insider/outsider comes into play again. I am at once an insider because having lived in Crystal, I can appreciate a different or special meal cooked by someone else and at the same time an outsider, by simply deciding on a different type of meal to make, such as meat loaf or lasagna. I am an insider because I was able to use my mother's kitchen to prepare the meals and to hold the meetings. Yet I am the outsider because I had to purchase the ingredients in the larger town of Uvalde and take them to my mother's kitchen.

Analysis

The data collected consisted of written notes of meetings, written short stories and audiotape of interviews and meetings. The short stories were revised for grammar, stylization, and coherency. Once the stories or short written pieces were revised, they were returned to the women for their approval. This continued until each woman approved of the final story or were no longer able to participate. The stories that were most complete are in the following chapter. The meeting notes and audiotape were used to build a complete vignette for each woman. The interview audiotapes were also used for this purpose.

The audiotapes of the interviews of the children were used to construct a nuanced view of what they thought of the Chicano movement. Follow-up interviews were conducted if information was missing. These audiotapes, along with the questions, were used to find themes in the responses. The themes found were used to write up the children's reflections.

Various themes came out of the conversations we had as a group, in interviews, and follow up interviews. The themes chosen were those that resonated most with the dissertation topic. The themes from the meetings and writing are: discrimination, schooling, the movement, and La Raza Libre political group. Discrimination and schooling were chosen because the Chicano movement was about the equal treatment of Mexican Americans in the schools and in life. There were questions asked specifically to document the women's reflections of the Chicano Movement. From these reflections, the theme of each woman joining the Raza Libre group came about. The themes for the children's interviews were taken from the questions asked to each child.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was created in this study by securing five of the eight tenants discussed by Glesne (2006) in his book, *Becoming Qualitative Researchers*, *An Introduction*. The first tenant was prolonged exposure to the four women (Glesne, 2006). I met with the women once a week from January to April 2010. Our meetings lasted one to two hours long. This time included writing, discussion, and joining in a meal that I prepared for them. The second was triangulation or multiple methods of collecting data. For this dissertation, writing groups and individual interviews were used. Clarification of researcher bias is the third tenant and was achieved by my own reflection about the research. This will be presented more fully in Chapter 6. Member checking or the sharing of drafts of the writing with the participants was also done. Drafts of this dissertation prior to any publication will also be shared with the women so that member checking is achieved. The last tenant was rich description. This last method of trustworthiness will be seen in Chapters 4 and 5, which are about the women and their children.

Ethical Considerations

This research involved minimal risk and participation required sharing information in a group context, privacy was not a concern among the participants. Limits to confidentiality were carefully articulated during the consent procedure. During the time of signing consent, participants were advised that any memories shared orally or in writing within the group were to remain with the participants and “stay” at the meetings. Privacy of the participants was otherwise maintained by keeping the meeting times to no longer than an hour and a half and the dates and times of the meetings were only made available to the participants. Each participant had her own notebook to write in, this notebook was only accessible to the researcher and the participant. Each notebook was collected at the end of the meetings and labeled with a number at the time of transcription. Confidentiality of information given by the participants was maintained by keeping all information collected labeled by number and kept in a locked cabinet in my office.

Paper data, such as consent documents, transcriptions, and participant writing notebooks, were labeled with a pseudonym and kept in a locked file cabinet. The confidentiality of the research data was maintained by labeling each audio file by session number and participant pseudonym. Audio recordings were listened to for research purposes only and by the researcher and her transcriber. Audio files were stored in a locked cabinet in the office of the researcher. Once the files were analyzed and transcribed, they will be stored for up to two years for the possibility of future research by the researcher.

A master key file that contains the participants’ real names and the assigned pseudonym and number label is kept in a separate file cabinet from all paper data and audio files. The keys for both cabinets were stored in a desk that had a locked drawer. The master key file will be destroyed after two years.

Summary of Chapter

In conclusion, this chapter used Chicana Feminist epistemology which was chosen because I self identify as a Chicana. Chicana Feminist epistemology was also an appropriate choice because of the subject matter: Mexican American women who experienced the Chicano Movement. The methods used were testimonios, platicas, and oral histories. The testimonios were solicited from the platicas, which were held weekly for three months. The oral histories were written from in depth interviews, which resulted in vignettes of each woman.

The weekly *platicas* were a form of writing groups where the women and I met, shared food and stories, and worked together to write personal testimonies. These testimonies were based on our conversations that were solicited by different weekly topics. The weekly topics ranged from school experiences to experiences with the Raza Libre. The testimonios that resulted from the platicas were written and are in the following chapter, titled Las Mujeres. These testimonios are narrative in nature and short. As you will see the women's testimonios vary in length and depth.

CHAPTER 4: LAS MUJERES

During our weekly meetings, I came to know and understand my participants in a different way. In the beginning, I knew them simply as teachers, church members, and community leaders. After several writing sessions, I got to know their stories more than I had imagined. I learned what schooling was like for them, the discrimination that they experienced, and what the Chicano Movement meant for them. The four women I have grown to know and care about are: Angelina, Tomasita, Martina, and Raquel. The following section provides a brief description of each woman:

> **Angelina**, a retired teacher in her middle 60's, was secretary at the junior high school during the 1969 walkout. She is an avid gardener and loving grandmother. She joined our group after being encouraged by Raquel.
>
> **Tomasita**, also a retired teacher, was employed as secretary to the district's superintendent during the walkout. As the matriarch of her family, she is the glue that keeps her clan together. She was encouraged to join our group by Angelina, because of the position she held in 1969.
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> **Raquel,** my mother, is a retired teacher who was teaching at the time of the 1969 walkout. More significantly, she was part of the teacher group that initiated the move towards more innovative curriculum and instruction within the elementary setting. New programs included a dual bilingual education program and new

ways of teaching reading. Raquel received training on bilingual programs from other school districts in Laredo and would then implement them at Crystal City schools.

I also credit her for recruiting the other women to participate in this study, even allowing us to use her home weekly.

Martina has held multiple community roles in Crystal. She is a retired municipal judge, a former teacher's aide during the walkout, and a school board candidate against the Raza Unida Party (RUP) during the 1970s. She was the second recruit of the group. She shared with us artifacts that she kept from that time period. She brought copies of *La Verdad,* a local alternative newspaper that was published in Spanish and English and publicized the social impact of the RUP in the community. She also shared gifts that were mailed to her while by her high school sweetheart while he served in Korea. These artifacts brought many fond memories to our group.

The next section includes a vignette about each woman with selections of their writing. Each narrative begins with a short description of where the women were working at the time of the December 1969 walkout and some information about their family life at the time. We also learn about who the women are today. Their written narratives are centered on two main topics, discrimination and their experiences of the walkout and the Chicano Movement in Crystal City. First, participants address the discrimination and the childhoods, adolescence and adult lives in South Texas. Second, they explain how the student walkouts and the Chicano Movement in Crystal City impacted them. Each vignette ends with a short reflection of what I thought of each woman's story. I will discuss their writing further in chapter 6.

Angelina

Angelina is a former teacher in her mid 60s. She graduated from Crystal City High School in 1965. Angelina was briefly a waitress at a local pharmacy after graduation. In 1969, she was the principal's secretary at the junior high school. During the December 1969 walkouts, Angelina's workload increased dramatically because she had to pick up the absentee slips during every class period and then report these absences to the principal and the superintendent. This routine was repeated throughout the school day and it consumed her schedule during that time. Angelina also had additional responsibilities. For example, she had to answer phone calls from parents who wanted to make sure that their child was in school or to say that the student did not have parental permission to leave school or "walk out".

Angelina was born and educated in Crystal City. She described her extra curricular activities as being very limited due to a very strict father. She also spoke of missing the beginning and end of the school year because her family depended on migrant farm work for their livelihood. In order to accommodate growers' needs for labor in northern states, migrant parents were forced to withdraw their children from school weeks before the end of school and not enroll them the next fall until weeks after school had started.

A majority of families from Crystal City have been or are migrant farm workers. This was especially true from the 1940's to 1970's. When people in Cristal talk about "up north" we innately understand that this means migrating to northern states such as Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and Wisconsin to work the potato, sugar beets, cucumber fields-- and whatever else was available in agricultural work.

Once the Raza Unida Party (RUP) was on the school board, many federal programs were brought to the school district. The most successful was the Career Opportunities Program, or COPs. The COPs program gave teacher aides the opportunity to attend Laredo State University to complete a bachelor's degree in education. The program paid for the tuition and fees and the cohort also received a small stipend. The cohort worked during the week as teacher aides.

After participating in the program, many of the cohorts joined the faculty at the local school. The training was hard on most of the student teachers because in addition to adhere to a grueling schedule, students were also expected to help in the political arena, as Angelina's experience will show. Three women from the participant group, applied but only Angelina was accepted. My previous research shows that COP members participated in political canvassing in Laredo, Texas, while they were attending classes at Laredo State University (Zavala, 2004).

Angelina's memories of her fellow COPs participants are that they were a dedicated group, very responsible. She described them as, "one of the best groups I have worked with." Their responsibilities included working four and a half days as teacher aides and completing coursework. On the half day they would commute to Laredo, attend classes, return to Crystal in the middle of the night and then were ready to work by eight the following day.

Angelina had some positive experiences during her time in COPs. She recounted being proud of having the second highest grade point average of her graduating class. Angelina still values the many good friends she made, with whom still keep in touch. She graduated from COPs in the summer of 1974 then moved to California with her new husband. After a short time in San Diego, Angelina moved to Beeville, Texas.

Not all of Angelina's experiences were positive while in COPs. She mentioned that COPs participants were asked to do political canvassing in Laredo's barrios throughout the summer of Ramsey Muniz' 1972 campaign for Texas governor. By "asked", Angelina meant that the question had one answer-yes. Yes, to walking in Laredo's barrios, where the average summer temperature is well above 100 degrees Fahrenheit and continue to be high until November. Angelina reflected on the situation, saying, "it never really occurred to us to say, 'you know what, I don't want to do this' or 'do we really have to?'" From speaking to Angelina and other members of the COPs cohort, it becomes apparent that the RUP planners or leaders assumed that cohort members were willing to do things for the party. This assumption by RUP leaders could have been made because they thought the cohort identified ethnically with the party and therefore felt a need to show their loyalty. Another possibility is that the RUP members assumed the old adage of "I scratch your back, you scratch mine" would hold true.

My conversations with Angelina, the women of the group, and other women from this age group, led me to conclude that the party asked many favors of the COPs cohort, as well as, from other school personnel. During my previous work for a master's thesis, a participant told me that not only was the cohort asked to canvass in other towns but also to contribute financially to campaigns. At this time, I learned that one teacher was asked during instructional time to donate to a school board campaign. When she refused, her principal began to treat her differently during evaluations and staff meetings.

Even though Angelina graduated at the top of her class in the COPs program, she was convinced she would not get a job in Crystal City schools. She explained that she had heard of others getting interviews during the spring semester of 1974, months before graduation, but she was not interviewed. Angelina said, "they had seen us join with the Raza Libre Party, and one of us was a candidate for school board or city council. So we just concluded that we were not going to get hired."

The Raza Libre group formed shortly before the 1974 elections by a group of people dissatisfied with the Raza Unida Party (Interviews 2010-2012). Angelina became a member of the group soon after the group formed. She joined because she did not like the way she was treated by the Raza Unida Party. She explains that they, the Raza Libre group from the COPs cohort, had decided to apply at other school districts. Even though Angelina got married and moved to California, she says, "It did bother me, that I was not going to get hired."

Angelina was disappointed and believed that she was not hired because RUP school board members did not consider her to be loyal to the party. Angelina and the participants thought that the social connections gained through RUP offered benefits such as leadership roles for new projects and better employment options. However, neither Angelina, nor the other women of the group, gained these benefits. It is unclear why exactly. However, after speaking to the women, it can be inferred that it was because the women did not did not actively participate at political rallies, give monetary donations willingly or place the party's bumper stickers on their cars (Trujillo 1998). In other words, they did not play by the rules of the Raza Unida Party.

The women expressed a strong belief that many of those who were hired or promoted often did not merit the opportunities and were under-qualified. Angelina's disappointment can be attributed to this. In her opinion, it was unfair for under-qualified people to receive employment simply because they were loyal to the party. Merit, such as her high grade-point average, was not given importance.

The women often expressed that the loyalty of those who belonged to the Raza Unida Party was rewarded by jobs. What the woman viewed as loyal can be interpreted as subjective, in that we do not really know who was favored and who was not. We also do not know what made these RUP followers loyal to the party.

When our meetings began in the spring of 2011, Angelina is a retired teacher and spends her time with her grandchild and gardening. Her personality came to life during our meetings. She was the jokester of the group, adding humor to our sometimes-serious talks. She is also one of the younger members. Angelina is the poet of the group. She enjoyed writing for herself as well as for the group. She shared three pieces of her writing with us. Her creative side definitely had a way of showing through. She wrote this poem a few months before our meetings began:

My Yellow Pears

My Yellow Pears
the fruit of my early years
delicious, soft,
yellow

these pears were great
juicy and yellow
dad always saw that we had fruit
bought at the corner grocery store
later in life
in a far away commissary
the fruit section sells
red apples, yellow bananas,
green pears,
green pears?

these pears are different
not soft but firm
not juicy not dry
but they are green
difficult to notice
but they are delicious

it then dawns on me
the yellow pears were old
thus the color and softness
but that's what the local grocer sold
that's what Dad bought
with lots of love
for his little ones

in my mind forever
delicious, soft,
yellow
My Yellow Pears

Angelina shared this poem with the group at one of our meetings. Many of the women could identify with it. After she read this poem to us, the women engaged in a lively conversation about what was available to them as young girls. Here Angelina shares that she did not know that the yellowing pears were mature and thought that all pears were eaten that way. The women in the group had similar experiences because they all grew up in relatively the same economic level.

The purpose for including this poem is two fold. First, it shows Angelina's creative side and her willingness to write. Second, it shows how Angelina saw the world. She has a different perspective having grown up as a poor migrant farm worker. She has worked in the fields and harvested the land. Because all the women of the group share this experience, this piece was chosen to show what it was like to grow up as a poor migrant farm worker.

During our group meetings, conversations often turned to the topic of discrimination. The women confirmed that the history of discrimination in Cristal was the root of the movement. As noted in Chapter 2, academic research points out that the second wave of the Chicano movement in Crystal City had to start in the schools because power within the schools was held by the white minority (Navarro, 1998). The group often spoke about the discrimination they faced while they were in school. Since this became an informal focus, I began to probe the women on the experiences they had with discrimination. As time progressed, I asked them to write two narratives, one about the discrimination they faced, and another to recount an experience within or with the Chicano movement in Crystal City.

Angelina shared a story about the discrimination she faced while working up north with her family as a migrant farm worker. She told us that at one point she was asked by her father to interpret for him a conversation with the farm's owner. The farmer was quite rude to her and commented; "I didn't know they had schools down there for you."

This story was chosen because it touches on children translating for their non-English-speaking parents and also on the area of education. It shows that at an early age, these women were asked to carry on the task of translating for the adult members of their families. This places the child in a position of power above the parent even as the parent remains the caregiver and provider. The issues of child translation came up once or twice in our weekly meetings.

This story also illustrates the discrimination the women faced as they grew up, in this instance as migrant farm workers. The women and I did discuss discrimination they faced in our meetings. So this short story illustrates one experience for Angelina.

Angelina's second writing is about her experience as the secretary to the principal at the junior high school, before the 1969 walkouts. She gives us her perspective of what it was like to see the principal spank children, mostly Mexican American boys. Her candid narrative gives us a look into what it was like to be a Mexican American secretary for an Anglo principal, and to witness and feel racism.

The Secretary

In the late 1960's, I was the school secretary at Sterling Fly Jr. High School. There were many dull moments with the routine of picking up of absentee reports every hour from every single classroom. I was also in charge of handing out the free lunch tickets to students before lunch. Finally, there was the never-ending paddling of the C-In-Conduct students at the end of every six weeks.

I happened to work under the supervision of a principal who was considered by many to be a mean and racist man. He paddled many Hispanic boys, but always prefaced it with an explanation of the consequence. I thought of it as the calm before the storm, as I'm sure the boys did, but he may have considered the explanation a humane way of handling the discipline.

What stood out to me then - and still holds a cloud over my head today – is that I do remember there were much fewer Anglo boys ushered in for this almost ceremonial event every six weeks.

Could it be that the Anglo boys were better behaved in class? No. Kids were kids. Was it because the teachers favored them, and most of the teachers were Anglo? Growing up, that was all we heard.

"Behave in school because los gringos aren't going to cut you a break," everyone – young and old, repeated the warning often.

Or could it have been that the parents of Anglo students were the business, school, and the law enforcement leaders of our community at the time? Surely the *administrators of the time could expect those parents to come in droves if their beloved sons were spanked? No doubt about it.*

So at the end of the six weeks, there would be an office filled with students waiting for their consequence for earning a C in Conduct on their report card. The principal dutifully administered the paddling to all who were there, but all the students there were mostly Hispanic young men.

I knew many of the boys and their families. No, the parents weren't community leaders. These parents were working in the fields at the very moment the boys sat in the office.

These boys worked on the weekends in those very same fields to help contribute to their families' income. These families didn't even consider going to school to ask about their children's behavior and whether it warranted such a harsh consequence. Hispanics didn't question the status quo then. Besides, there was no time for that. Raising a family and making ends meet took precedence over a child's education.

Even the boys themselves didn't argue about the fairness of the situation. They probably didn't even tell their parents about the paddling that waited for them at the end of the six weeks. Because even though they were kids and would make the mistake of misbehaving, they knew better than to trouble their parents with trivial matters such as getting a paddling at school.

I recall when a very attractive Hispanic lady who was married to a rich Anglo rancher came to the office. (It's funny; I recall believing that all ranchers were rich. Compared to the Hispanics in our community, they were, but they probably were just *middle-class if their incomes were compared to other ranchers in the rest of the Winter Garden area.)*

The previous day, the principal sent the woman's daughter home for wearing a very short skirt. When she arrived, she announced – as bold as she could be – that if the principal wanted longer skirts, he was going to have to buy them himself as she could afford no more new clothes.

Not to be outdone, in the same tone, the principal let her know that if her daughter was to return to class, it was going to be wearing longer skirts and that was all there was to it. The young girl soon returned with longer skirts.

Not even being married to an Anglo gave her advantage in that situation. She didn't even argue. She simply left. There is something to be said about our people accepting our place in the hierarchy of things and learning to be respectful and submissive despite everything.

These two incidents vividly stand out in my mind when I think back to the time I worked with that principal. Was he a racist or just mean? As I look back I have come to realize that he was simply a strict and fair man. Many Hispanics then thought differently from me. As I recall, he was one of the first administrators to get fired in the spring of 1970 just when Hispanics were finally coming into power politically.

This story was chosen because it shows what Angelina's experience was while working for the school district before the Raza Unida Party took over the school board in Crystal City. This is important because it shows what it was like to work for an all white administration as a Mexican American. This story also demonstrates what it meant to be a young Mexican American female working for a white male, while interacting with young people who were also Mexican American like her.

The story tells what its like to see young Mexican American men being disciplined by an older white male in a position of power. While this can be seen from an outsider, what is most interesting is that Angelina has been reflecting on this for herself. It has been over 40 years since Angelina experienced this. Yet, this is the story she decided to share with us. At the end of the story, you see her reflecting on whether or not the principal's spanking young Mexican Americans was a form of discrimination or part of the job as vice principal. Angelina does not see the vice principal as racist, but rather a stern man doing his job. Yet he was one of the first Anglos to be fired once RUP took over. It also adds how the Chicano Movement influenced Angelina's thinking over time.

The final story Angelina shared with us is her encounter with the rival political group to RUP, the Raza Libre party (Free People Party) and details why she joined the Raza Libre. One reason was that RUP party leaders pressured her to politically canvas in other cities. Angelina said that her small involvement in the Raza Libre Party "raised the eyebrows of the school leaders."

Joining the Raza Libre Party

After seeing many instances in which I disagreed with the new personnel at CCISD, I felt encouraged to join the Raza Libre. It was a group that wanted a future without the oppressive ways of the past. I felt it had a similar agenda as La Raza Unida but with an understanding and an acceptance of opposing views.

I was tired of the "you're either with me or against me" attitude. Wasn't this what we'd been struggling with for years? La Raza Libre, I felt, was "libre" (free). It allowed us a difference in opinions.

My involvement with Raza Libre was simple. I talked to people about our candidates-- no one forced me and I forced no one. This was the complete opposite of when "they" made us campaign for Ramsey *Muniz in his unsuccessful bit for the governor's position. We walked the streets of* Laredo *(hot even in late October) in the unpaved streets of the barrios. No one asked if we wanted; we all knew we'd better.*

This involvement, however small it was, raised the eyebrows of the school leaders who had brought the government program, which helped me with my education. This program allowed 50 young people to study for their bachelor's degree by paying the tuition and paying a small stipend as we worked all week as teacher aides.

This led to often being at work and looking up from where I was helping a student and I had eyes focused on me. It was either someone anxious to please the establishment by spying on me, or the principal watching me. Even the superintendent was there once!

As the graduation of the first group of COP students in August 1974 approached, rumors started. Rumors were that some of these graduates were not going to be hired to teach with the CCISD. We soon found out who they were as they were the only ones not interviewed for a teaching position. I was one of them. Because I was getting married in August of 1974 and was leaving for California*, this was not a problem as it was for my other two or three friends.*

Interestingly enough, when I returned to Texas *the next year I was interviewed for a teaching position in a small town close to* Corpus Christi*. The superintendent interviewing me had been fired in* Crystal City *as soon as the new school board took over in Crystal. He asked if I knew he'd been in CC; I said I did. Subject closed. I got the job and I never saw this superintendent in the halls "spying" on my work.*

When I asked Angelina to write about her experience in the Chicano movement, this is the story she chose to share with us. The story tells why Angelina chose the Raza Libre party. She explains what it was like to deal with the Raza Unida Party and expresses how she felt the Raza Unida administration often polarized staff by making them choose either all the school leaders' ideas and agendas or to be completely against them and for the "gringo"-- essentially a sell out. This is what was important to Angelina and why she joined the Raza Libre. She did not feel like a sell out and did not want to blindly follow a political party. She wanted something more moderate in views and also wanted to be able to make up her own mind.

It also tells what it was like to meet again with a former Anglo principal from Crystal City. The person did not rebuke Angelina for being from Crystal City, the man simply mentioned it and moved on. She was not singled out or "spied on." He did not use his position of power to intimidate her. Perhaps there was nothing at stake for him, but human nature could have easily taken over and the man could have denied her employment out of spite. Angelina appreciates that the man simply mentioned it and moved on with the interview. She tells us that she didn't feel intimidated by the administration over political ideas.

This story allows us to understand why Angelina chose to join the Raza Libre party and gives us a better understanding of what she experienced during the Chicano Movement. It tells us that while the movement was inspirational and stirred social consciousness, there were also negative experiences that impacted her view of the movement in Crystal City.

Angelina was the group's most prolific writer. As I mentioned, she enjoyed writing for herself, not just the group. I don't doubt that the other members of the group also enjoyed writing, but some felt insecure about writing and others had things happen that prevented them from continuing with the group. Life's circumstances and struggles, such as an ugly divorce for one member and emerging medical problems for others, hindered our sessions and impacted the availability and productivity of the group.

Tomasita

Tomasita is a retired teacher. Prior to entering the teaching profession, she worked for the State in the health and human services department in Zavala County for several years. She is a woman in her late 60s who spends most of her time helping her three daughters with their children. Tomasita graduated from Crystal City High School in 1961. After high school, she worked as a maid for a short time to pay off a debt, she says. Later, she became the secretary to the superintendent of the Crystal City Independent School District and witnessed the 1969 walkout from this vantage point.

Tomasita was born in Crystal City and attended its schools from "cero bola" to the twelfth grade. "Cero bola" was also called pre-first; it was the schools' attempt to bridge the language gap for Mexican American students whose primary language was Spanish.

Tomasita described elementary school. She told me about starting cero bola or pre-first grade at the age of seven and a half. She did not know any English except for “be excused,” which her mother taught her in case she needed to use the restroom.

By the time Tomasita was eight she was still in “cero bola,” until a teacher noticed that she could read. The teacher then moved her to the third grade and gave her books to read over the summer break. Yet, when she began the third grade, that teacher scolded her and asked her, “What are you doing here? You don’t know what a sentence is, you don’t know anything.” Tomasita saw this as a disservice, because she felt she could have been taught more in “cero bola.” Much later, when Tomasita became a teacher, she saw similar situations with students in other classrooms. She felt that the students she would receive in the second grade were underserved. This compelled her to try to teach them to the best of her ability, she said, and to fight for them as much as she could.

Tomasita’s experiences in high school were similar to those of the group but she did not mention anything that happened directly to her. She struggled through high school but graduated. In high school, she took a course that would prepare students for secretarial work. She must have done well enough in this class to get noticed because after completing high school, she was hired as the superintendent’s secretary.

During the walkout, she witnessed the effects that the formation of the Raza Unida Party (RUP) had on Mr. Billings, the superintendant. Tomasita even received threatening phone calls to her home because she was working for a gringo. She said, "Llamaban a mi mamá, y le dicían cosas. (They would call my mother and tell her things.) They would call during the day to harass my mother. They would tell her that I was going to lose my job and that I was a sell-out." Tomasita told us that this is the reason she left her job. She hoped that a job outside of the school system would be less political. Even though Tomasita was not directly involved with RUP, as Angelina was forced to be, she had negative experiences with the party. Not only did she receive threatening phone calls during the walkout, she also faced fierce confrontations when she arrived or left her work at the district offices. During these tense times, she was pregnant with her second child and was encouraged by her husband to leave her job. Tomasita tells more about this in her own words in a written piece titled, "We are survivors, so we still struggle along."

Tomasita also experienced negative effects from the RUP while she worked for the county health department. She tells us of an experience she had while traveling around the region as part of her job, which involved visiting clinics and providing education for healthcare workers on preventative care. On one occasion, a woman asserted that abortions were being performed at the new clinic in Cristal, established by La Raza Unida. Here, Tomasita directly encountered the negative perception and opinion of Crystal City that had begun circulating – with the help of La Raza Unida detractors, both Anglo and Mexican -- around South Texas from the early days of the Movement's existence.

The reputation of Cristal began to sour after the Raza Unida delegation, led by Jose Angel Gutierrez, visited Cuba in April 1974. Newspapers in South Texas ran negative headlines about the visit. For example, the Alice Echo News ran the following headline: *Raza Unida Wants to Create Little Cuba in South Texas* (Navarro, 1998). It is also common knowledge that whites, both in Crystal City and in surrounding towns, labeled the town's Mexican American population as troublemakers. Later we will see how these negative characterizations of the town and the Movement continued and impacted the next generation of women, such as Tomasita's daughter.

While Tomasita worked for the state, she also began to take classes at a nearby junior college and, eventually, after more than 10 years, earned a bachelors degree from Sul Ross State University. She went to college on a dare from a former boyfriend, who thought she wasn't smart enough to enroll. Tomasita was determined to complete this degree to prove him wrong. Along the way, she befriended a white woman who often took courses with her. Oftentimes they were the deciding factor for the class to "make." Tomasita's friendships with the white superintendent and later with her white college classmate may have contributed to her cautious reaction to the RUP and the Movement in general. She felt uneasy with race relations that marginalized any community and expressed that this sentiment guided both her professional and personal life. It was important for her to see individuals for who they were and not as representatives of an entire ethnic group. For example, she often questioned her husband's ideas of the African American community. On one occasion, she countered his concern about her friendship with a black staff member at the superintendent's office. Her husband felt it was wrong for her to share a lunch with her. Tomasita remained firm in her desire to make friendships based on personal attributes and not race.

Although she believed in what the RUP stood for, Tomasita did not actively participate in the party or political events, primarily because she was working for the school district when the party first started forming. She feared she would lose her job if she spoke against the all-white administration.

Working for the school district is something all four women had in common. All of them chose not to be active in the RUP. In addition to Angelina, one other woman joined the Raza Libre group, because she shared the others' view that the leaders of RUP used their powers to coerce other members of the group. The women in the group chose to stay as politically neutral as possible because they feared losing their jobs and being harassed. This observation will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

I did ask our group to write about a time they experienced discrimination and about an experience with the Chicano Movement in Crystal City but, as I explained earlier, life can get in the way. Tomasita is very involved in her children's lives. She is the matriarch of her family and often took on the role of sole caregiver of her grandchildren. She spent a lot of time helping her grandchildren and children with their day-to-day lives and often put our writing tasks to the side.

This prompted me to choose a piece that she wrote about her experiences as secretary to the superintendent and as a state employee, in which she describes her feelings about the movement. I gave a title to this narrative because Tomasita did not title her pieces. I titled it, “We Are Survivors, So We Still Struggle Along,” because she often spoke in our meetings with conviction about being survivors.

We Are Survivors, So We Still Struggle Along

From October 1964 to June 8, 1970

I was a secretary for the superintendent, Mr. Billings. I was there when they had the walkout. I was pregnant with my second child. I was harassed by a lot of the Mexican American people – Jose Angel’s followers. I myself believed in the movement but I did not participate in the actual walkout because I was older and I was the secretary.

My mom would get upset because people called the house and tell her that I would lose my job because they would replace the employees. I would get physically ill, ending up in the emergency room very often because of the stress. My husband broke the picket line once to get me home because I felt bad. My mom would tell me the gringos were right, that they knew what they were doing.

The movement opened up doors for all of us. Some of us learned to defend ourselves and speak up.

In looking back, it was a hard struggle. At the time I was a college night student in Eagle Pass. The classmates were awful as they outright ridiculed me because I was from Crystal City. There was a very young teacher. His name was Joe Ruiz, and he would encourage me to not drop the class because they (the other students) did not know any better. I would defend myself as best as I could. On June 8, 1970, I left the Crystal City School District. My former boss, Mr. John B Lair, told me about an opening for a state *job. I took the test and got the job. I had seen first-hand how politics could make you or break you. I had seen Mr. Billings and the other superintendent get physically ill from all the harassment from the people. I did not want any part of that any more.*

When I went to work for the State, I traveled from county to county and worked at different courthouses, where people were rude and insensitive. They would make derogatory comments about my people and Crystal City. They would comment that the clinic that Luz Gutierrez had helped to open was practicing abortions. I would respond, "Did you have one? Since you know so much about the clinic." I worked at the local Zavala County clinic. Once, Dr. Dorothy Wainland Brown and Jose Angel Gutierrez had a misunderstanding and she never came back to the clinic. At that time, her patients lost out.

I saw good and bad come from the walkout. The good was that we woke up and tried to better ourselves, got educated and learned to defend ourselves. A lot of people from Crystal City started college and got degrees and came back to give to the community.

On the other hand, some people without formal education became directors and with a degree from Lincoln Juarez University were given a great job. Others with a GED got into directors positions. Maybe I'm jealous, but when I spend 20 years at night school and paying blood, sweat and tears to obtain a degree to be able to get a job while others without effort were recouping great rewards….

The white people left and the two hospitals closed down.

We are survivors so we still struggle along. Some people are ashamed to say they are from Crystal City but I am proud to say that we are still here and this community taught other communities to open their eyes. Y que dispierten los Mejicanos y no se vuelven a dormir.

Tomasita expresses that it was difficult for her to be attacked verbally, first by other Mexicanos who saw her as a *vendida* (sellout) for continuing to work for a white superintendent, and then being attacked for being from Cristal by Anglos outside of Cristal. It is easy to see how these experiences have affected Tomasita emotionally and influenced her reflections about the movement.

Tomasita often stated that the Movement was good and how it opened the Mexicano's eyes to the oppression they suffered under by the Anglos. However, we also see how the Movement impacted other town's view of Cristal. Tomasita remains proud to be from Crystal City. She will never be ashamed nor will she deny the benefits of the Chicano Movement.

Tomasita's second piece is about the recollections she shared with her grandchildren and children about the movement. This was a topic we covered during our meetings. Tomasita's style of writing is short and a bit fragmented but it offers realness to this form of oral history. She shares a very real way of thinking about the movement. While Angelina expressed her experiences in a graceful and poetic way, Tomasita's manner of writing is more realistic.

Talking About the movement

I have talked to my children and grandchildren about the walkout --the difference it made in our lives. People were cruel if you did not belong to the Raza Unida Party. People would yell at you when you were going to work. To this day I find a way to not walk in front of all the politicians.

My daughters and I have discussed the pros and cons of the outcome. We discuss why people left, the lack of jobs in our community and why no one wants to come here. I feel that the jobs that shut down were for the chosen few. The jobs that remained were labor jobs at Del Monte and some of our people retired from them.

As for the stores closing, well once we make a dime instead of nickel, we all shopped out of town because there was more variety and better prices. During 1960 to 1966, I worked at a local department store, Longoria's Dept Store. The only people we sold to were the Hispanic people who worked in the fields or the ranchers. None of the other people bought there if they could afford to go to Eagle Pass or Uvalde. When it closed down, only two or three people lost their jobs. This goes back to what I say that our own people did not support the Hispanic-owned stores.

In 1970 – 1972, Jose Angel talked about creating a man-made lake to attract the snowbirds from up north and also to create jobs for people from Crystal City. He had suggested people open stores and maybe a hotel or two to attract tourists, but his idea was not supported and never developed. I still feel that would have been a hit, as was the Centro de Salud. That clinic has helped thousands of people. They provide services for a lot of people in Crystal City, La Pryor, and Batesville. Lately, they have the school-based *clinic that helps a lot of children in our school system. I know that they hired people that help them in the elections and people with only a GED held administrative positions. Still this clinic has flourished. I am proud to say that I served on the board from 1984 to 1993.*

Change is good but change brings fear and we needed a change, thank God for those who dared – Los Cinco that paved the road for the movimiento to come six years later.

Crystal City is the place I call home and I will 'till the day I die and I will be buried at Benito Juarez Cemetery because, as I recall, we had two cemeteries – one for the white people and one for Hispanics. And, like I have told my family, bury me where I want or otherwise I will have to walk over to Benito Juarez because we were not allowed at Edgewood.

One of the important things in this piece is, "Change is good but change brings fear". Here, Tomasita confirms that she felt fear, and in various ways, the other women expressed fear also, whle the Movement was beginning and in the middle of it. Tomasita had many questions. For example: what would happen to my steady job if I side with RUP? What will happen to my job and my new found family stability if I side with the Gringos and the RUP does take over?

Having reached the first rungs of the middle class ladder, this change was frightening. It was a threat to these women's new position in the middle class. They no longer had to work in the fields, and their children would not have to do what they did as children -- travel thousands of miles to work in a field harvesting produce. For Tomasita, this meant no longer working in the cotton fields or the packing sheds. What would happen to their newly found stable jobs with the Chicano Movement?

As is seen in her writing, being from Crystal City is very important to Tomasita. She has a strong sense of self, as a Mexicana. Tomasita took the Chicano Movement ideals and really made them part of who she is. She self-identifies as a Mexicana, and makes this a real part of who she is and what she believes her town is about. To her, Cristal has come to embody what it means to stand up to oppression. The town also represents what it means to be a strong Mexicana. She expresses this to her children and her grandchildren in the stories and conversations she has with them about the Chicano Movement in Cristal.

Tomasita also lives this. You can see that in her determination to complete her undergraduate degree, even though it took her 20 years to complete. You can also hear this in the way she speaks. She is a strong Mexicana from Cristal, and she expressed this beautifully in our weekly meetings.

Tomasita was the philosopher of the group, often speaking about the movement in Meta and critical terms. She often said, “nos abrieron los ojos” (They opened our eyes). I took this to mean, she saw the movement as a force that allowed Mexicanos to think of themselves in a different way, allowing for self-empowerment. As a result of the Chicano Movement, they could see themselves as equals to the whites of the town. Yet, for Tomasita, speaking about the movement was not just about the good it did for society as a whole, she could also see how it harmed the psyche of the town. Tomasita could see how ugly the politics had gotten, and how that same ugliness can be seen in today’s politics of the town. This ugliness is also evident because it complicated the situation of the women who already had established jobs, such as Tomasita in the schools. As "eyes were being opened" toward consciousness, there was a fear of the unknown and what would happen after the Movement and whether this would help or hurt them. Tomasita had no way of knowing if the Movement would affect job security, her friendships with whites such as her relationship with Mr. Billings, and the overall stability of the town's economy and politics.

Martina

Martina is a retired municipal judge. Prior to that, she held different types of jobs, such as housekeeper, factory worker, and secretary. At the time of the walkouts, Martina was working as a teacher aide at the elementary and middle schools. She worked there when the COPs program began and applied for the program but did not get in. Martina remembers this by telling us this short story:

I saw the, Career Opportunities Program (C.O.P) as an opportunity of getting an education because there was no way for me to get a college degree. Since my sister-in-law was the director, I thought for sure I would get in.

She told me the reason I was not accepted into the program was that my husband earned a good income. But I felt hurt because at that time there were a lot of favors being done for people under the table. I felt if she had wanted to, she would have found a way to lie about my husband's income. There were other people that were not as smart as me *that were accepted. There were even members of the same family allowed into the program.*

While it could have been that the COP program was only able to help those who could not pay for college at all. Martina knew she could not pay for college either. She had grown up as a migrant farm worker and she did not have a year round job. Martina was hoping to get a year round job through COPs. She was looking to move up, and it seemed unfair that others were chosen over her.

Of the group, Martina was the most politically active. She ran for several political offices during the 1970s. The first was for school board under the Raza Libre Party. She decided to join this group because she did not agree with RUP's way of changing the schools. Martina tells us,

My reason for going against RUP was because I felt the way the schools were being run now were the same as when the gringos were in power, especially the hiring of some personnel in the school. They were people that had no high school diploma; some were alcoholics that slept on the job. Certain ladies were hired as visiting teachers that were not high school graduates; it all depended how their families help when election time came around.

Martina's comment points to two familiar reactions to the movement from the participants. First, she noted dissatisfaction with the administration of the schools. She was unhappy with the choices for school leaders and/or teachers. Secondly, she felt that it was unfair for others to benefit from their social networking, even those who were unqualified or poor employees. This was a recurring theme throughout our conversations.

Martina and the other women often mentioned similar sentiments when speaking about the movement. Even though they felt that it benefited the overall well being of the people of Cristal, they also felt that not everyone had access to the new resources. The women felt there was an unbalanced gain of opportunities for some in Cristal.

This is not to say that when the Anglos were in power, that there was a balance or even shared opportunities. When the Anglos were in power, there were still poor Anglos who were left out. But what Martina and the women are saying is that the Movement was not fair or good to all Mexicanos. The RUP did play favorites and rewarded those considered to be "loyal" people. The Movement was fast paced and didn't have a set system to reward those who were more qualified.

Martina runs for office

In one of Martina's writings, she tells us why she chose to run for a position on the school board on the Raza Libre ticket. She also tells us about a fundraiser that was held for her campaign. She shared:

Running for political positions felt like I could make a difference since I have always been an outspoken person. But, I didn't really think what I would have gotten into if I had gotten elected. I don't remember who I ran against, but after all was said and done it was an enjoyable time because I met a lot of people and it felt good that people trusted me with their vote.

I remember one fundraiser we had. We were making tamales, my sisters, my mother, and friends helped make them. A fundraiser we had was at the house of the *mother in law of a member of COP program and they were cooking the tamales outside on a fire. They were boiling real fast; my mom was so surprised that they came out very good. Of the three political positions, which I ran for, I never won. Two things I remember, my mom told my sister that she wished I had won so I could get it out of my system. I also wish I had won so I could have done it for her. One of the last positions I ran for, I remember telling my husband that I had lost, he asked me, how I felt. I answered, "I had a good time"; he said, "That is what counts".*

Martina ran for political office because she felt she had something to offer all people. During our meetings, she shared that her confidence was rooted in her ability to speak her mind and stand up for not only herself but also others. When she did not win, she felt disappointed; she truly wanted to accomplish this in order to make her mother proud. Yet, she later realized, that with the help of her ex-husband, she at least made the effort to run and that was what mattered most.

Martina did not write as much as the other women. She and her ex-husband began a difficult divorce process midway through the completion of our group sessions. This made it problematic for her to write and attend meetings. I understood this and did not push her to write or participate.

When speaking about the Movement, she often spoke in terms that were critical yet credited the Movement for what it brought to the Chicano community. Martina often said, "This opened our eyes; that we were equals as the gringos". She also said, "After the movement I felt very comfortable speaking up at meetings in commissioners court, city hall, and school board meetings and speaking for other persons that couldn't do it".

Martina felt empowered by the Chicano Movement saying, “By realizing that I’m as human as them (Whites). And it didn’t matter that I didn’t get educated, I feel very comfortable with who I am and at peace with myself. I can speak my mind”.

This very powerful quote by Martina shows us that the Chicano Movement in Cristal was the starting point for her increased consciousness. The Movement as Tomasita says, opened their eyes—“nos abrieron los ojos”. The Chicano Movement became a turning point in the awareness of civil rights, equality, and equity for the Mexican American people in Crystal City. While this statement and others made by her and Tomasita point to the uplifting qualities of the movement, there is more to the story. Tomasita and Martina are saying that the Chicano Movement they experienced was not all good with a central male figure coming in to save the day, and it was not all bad or harmful as more conservative Latinos or Anglos believed.

The complication is visible in Martina’s critiques of the Movement. Martina’s critiques about the Movement were mostly about the abuse of power that occurred. First, as mentioned earlier, she felt that RUP administration showed preference to those whom they felt fully participated in party activities. In a form of social networking, those who demonstrated loyalty, gained benefits. Through this social networking, Martina witnessed how people less qualified than her, got jobs she applied for just because they were someone’s *compadre/comadre, amigo,* etc. (your child’s godparents, friends).

Second, she was bothered that Jose Angel Gutierrez had lied about his upbringing to the media. Gutierrez was the son of a doctor and never had to work up north, as he claimed in a television interview (Platicas 2011 and Gutierrez, 1998). Martina called him out on this at the courthouse, where they both worked at the time, after she viewed the TV report. A short shouting match ensued. These are Martina's words about the fight:

When I went to work at the courthouse the next day, I saw Jose Angel across the hall in another office. I shouted at him, "Te aventaste Angel, Te aventaste a noche. (You did great Angel, You did great last night.)" He raised his head in a boastful manner. I continued, "¡Qué mentira dijiste anoche, que ibas pal' norte?! ¿Cuándo fuiste tutú al norte? (What a lie you said last night, that you used to go up north? When did you go up north?"

Jose Angel: " Yo fui a North Dakota con tu primo costroso" (I went to North Dakota with your stinky cousin) .

Martina: "¿Con mi primo? Yo fui a trabajar con mi primo, tú no! (With my cousin? I went to work with my cousin, not you!"

Jose Angel: Lo que pasa contigo es que me tienes envidia. (Your problem is that you are jealous of me.)

Martina: Lo único que yo envidio es tu educación, lo único que me falta a mimí". (The only thing I envy about you is your education, the only thing I am missing.)

Martina does really feel that all she is missing is an education, something she did not have the opportunity to pursue. She is confident in herself and in her abilities.

The significance of this encounter speaks to two things. First, Martina felt confident with herself to call out the county judge as a liar and she did this at work, in front of many people. She was confronting the person in power for the Movement.

Second, this is important because Martina was calling out Gutierrez for claiming a common experience that many had in Crystal City, as his own when he did not, in fact, worked in the fields. Martina knew this because she and Gutierrez were classmates and neighbors, and Gutierrez was a close friend of one of Martina's cousins. Gutierrez was the son of a doctor, and even after his father passed away, his mother managed to keep the family in Crystal City year round. Because he attended school the entire school year, Jose Angel Gutierrez was able to be one of the few Mexicanos able to participate in certain extracurricular activities, such as the debate club and the honor society.

While Martina did not write very much, due to her complicated divorce, she began our meetings sharing many stories. Her way of speaking was very self-revealing, candid, and personal. Martina and Tomasita were the two regular churchgoers of the group. They both attended weekly mass as well as evangelization meetings. I think this influenced how they spoke about the Movement. They spoke in positive but reflective terms. Martina and Tomasita spoke passionately about the Movement, often saying "*nos abrerion los ojos* (they opened our eyes)."

Raquel

Raquel is a retired teacher of 38 years. She worked in the schools before and during the walkouts and subsequent RUP takeover of the school board. Raquel has insight into what schools were like when they were run by an all-white administration and then an all-Mexicano team.

During the walkout of 1969, Raquel was teaching in the elementary schools and therefore did not witness students leaving class. She also did not participate in any political activities at this time for fear of losing her job. She kept neutral as much as she could. Raquel did have one reactive moment in which she secretly placed a newspaper article in a white co-worker's mailbox. Raquel wrote about this, in a piece titled "The Little Red Hen and the Big White Rat".

The little Red Hen and the Big White Rat

Many changes took place in the school system when Raza Unida took over. I have to say that from the start, I didn't approve of some of the changes. There were two changes that are very vivid in my mind. The first was that Jose Angel and his school board mandated that all the textbooks be put away and the teachers make up their own course materials. He said that the textbooks were not relevant to Mexicanos. For example, all the characters in the reading books were blonde and white skin, and lived in beautiful two storied homes. I agreed with that fact, but I knew we could not write our own material, especially the bilingual curriculum materials.

The second change was the resignation of the white administrators and teachers. Jose Angel Gutierrez brought in administration from the valley who pretended to be "Raza", but actually were as coco as coco could be (that is, meaning that these persons were brown on the outside and white on the inside, like a coconut). Any teacher who applied was hired and as you may have guessed many cuckoo teachers showed up. A lot *of them were rejects from valley school districts. There were many more wrong doings that I can write about later, if you want me too.*

The white population and the few Mexican American friends that were on their side had a lot to say about the big turn around in the school district that Jose Angel Gutierrez had made. From the start, they wrote letters of opposition that appeared in the Zavala County Sentinel. They also expressed their opinion to interviewers from newspapers around the state. Raza Unida members retaliated by also writing letters to the newspapers. Their main argument was, 'it was your fault; if we had not been discriminated against so much this would have never happened'. Early on a letter appeared in the Zavala County Sentinel that went something like this:

Once there was a little red hen that owned some land. She went to ask the other animals to help her prepare the land to grow wheat. None of them wanted to help. They made up stories about being sick, having company, it was too hot, and it might rain. So the red hen prepared the land by herself. Next, she went to ask each animal for help in planting the wheat seeds. Again, no one wanted to help her. Then, she asked them to help with the care of the field, but they gave her more excuses.

A few weeks later she asked them to help with the harvest, no one came; they had more important things to do. Then she asked them to help her with baking the bread. She got no help. When the other animals smelled the good aroma coming form the little red hen's house, they all came and asked to help her eat it.

The hen said, "you did not help in preparing the land, you did not help me to plant the wheat, you did not help with tending the land and you did not help with the harvest. I did all those things. I will eat the bread by myself."

The writer of the letter went on to say that the red hen was a hardworking responsible American and the other animals were the Raza Unida people who refused to work, yet expected the white people to give them what they needed. When the story came out in the paper, the whites were thrilled and we were furious. At one point I saw a white teacher cutting the article and using the school's laminating machine and film to preserve the article.

The following Thursday, a man, submitted a story that he called "The Big Fat White Rat". It was all about how the big rat was exploiting the other animals by making them work long hard days for pennies. When the harvest was finished, the animals asked for bread. The white rat paid them a few pennies and proceeded to eat the bread alone. The writer then explained that the other animals were the laborers and the rat was the gringo who had no compassion for them.

When I saw this story of the big white rat, I decided to give that teacher a taste of her own medicine. I cut the story out of the newspaper and put in her mailbox, with a note attached that read, "Here is another article for your collection, Laminate it, too". Later I heard that she took the story to the principal and was crying about it. She said that she had never said anything negative or racist to anyone and she could not understand why someone would put this in her mailbox.

What she failed to see is that by cutting the Little Red Hen article out she was doing something just as racist as making remarks. I have kept my involvement with this incident to myself. As far as I know, no one knows that I was the one who cut out the "Big White Rat" story and placed in her mailbox.

This story shows that Raquel was being politically active at work in a covert way. She did not out right say to the woman ', "why don't you laminate this second story?'" but rather secretly making her aware of another point of view. This was a risky move by Raquel. She could have easily been found out and been punished by her superior.

Here Raquel is standing up to microaggressions she must have experienced often at her work place. A microaggresion as described by, Daniel Solorzano, Miguel Ceja and Tara Yosso (2000), are subtle unconscious forms of racism. Raquel was one of a few Mexican American teachers at the elementary level. As such, when she began working for the school she was given a large class, about 30 plus students, of only Mexican American children and placed in the auditorium without books or a written curriculum. Perhaps Raquel saw this as a golden opportunity to make a statement without being disciplined. She took advantage of this moment and made a big statement, yet subversive, to those white coworkers.

Like the other women of the group, Raquel stayed as neutral as possible at work until the RUP won the school board elections. By neutral, I mean she was not overtly siding with the Raza Unida Party at work before the 1972 election. She was not speaking for the RUP or even talking about the party at work. When RUP won in 1972, she voted in elections. She did gain some training from the all-*Mexicano* administration and was able to gain certification for specific areas, such as Early Childhood. Although Raquel benefited from the many grants the RUP school board brought to the district, she also witnessed others benefit from social and political connections. This is when she saw another side to the RUP, and began to see how power can corrupt even well intentioned people.

Influenced by friends and family, Raquel helped the Raza Libre group, but the group did not last long. She helped with fundraising activities, such as making food for candidates who ran under this party. She herself did not run for a political office. Raquel was the only woman of the group to have been a teacher during both the white administration and Mexicano administration. She kept neutral during both times for fear of losing her job. Looking back, she now understands that there was no need to have that fear. Keeping neutral means that Raquel did not vocally support the RUP before the elections for fear of retaliation by the white administration and continued this at the beginning of the Raza Unida Party's time on the school board. This was because she had just gotten a job as a teacher, where she no longer needed to be a migrant farm worker, and feared losing this job. Raquel had no way of knowing whether or not the RUP would continue its efforts in changing Cristal and be successful, which meant the Anglos would again be in power at the schools. She did not know what the outcome of this change would be and feared losing her new position in the middle class.

Raquel did not speak of discrimination by the white administration and she did not speak of directly being affected by unfair social networking practices from the RUP either. When we did talk about discrimination, she spoke of her high school days.

Being ignored: From IQ tests to Class favorites

When I was a senior, a group of people from Sul Ross University came to give all the seniors an IQ exam. I'm sure our English teacher told us why it was being done, and gave us pertinent information. However, I don't remember any of it today.

We all took the test, no questions asked. We were told that if we wanted to know our IQ, we could ask for it at the counselor's office. As far as I know/recall, only one Mexican American went to find out.

After the results were in, our teacher said that she wanted to retest one student from each class. In our class, one Anglo and I volunteered by raising our hands. Without even looking my way, she turned to Nova and said, "Nova, you may go to room # tomorrow to take it."

What I felt at the time was anger, not with Nova or the teacher, but with myself. I thought to myself, "Why did you volunteer? Why do you think that she would suddenly change her attitude towards us Mexicans?"

"We are in a class with the Anglos, but we don't count," I thought. Especially this one teacher rarely acknowledged us. None of my Mexican classmates ever made any comments about this incident, but I am sure they felt the same way because of talks we had about choosing class favorites.

When I was in high school the faculty saw that we, the Mexicanos, were steadily becoming the majority and we naturally started picking more Mexicanos for class favorites. So the teachers changed the rules for picking class favorites. For homecoming queen, the young lady needed to have parents that graduated from the high school, so *that automatically excluded a lot of us Mexicanos. For things like most beautiful they would claim to send the student pictures to movie stars, for their selection. We knew darn well that this was a lie that the faculty had fabricated to keep our kids (the majority) from selecting one of their own. This continued until 1968/69 when the students started to vocalize their dissatisfaction with this and began the petition.*

Raquel said a lot here. She told of her history, as well as a Mexicano view, of what high school was like for her. Raquel told us what it was like to be in a class with white students and to be overlooked by the white teacher. Also, what it was like to not be chosen for class favorites although the student body may have voted for Mexican Americans. This was the discrimination she and the other women faced in schools. This was the discrimination Mexican Americans faced in Crystal City schools before the Chicano Movement. As Mexican American students began to recognize this they organized and signed petitions, but were unsuccessful on their own. This is when MAYO came in to help.

Raquel also speaks to the use of IQ testing of Mexican Americans in the 1950s. While much can be said about how this testing could be used for labeling Mexican American students there is another point to make here. What is more important to address is the disbelief in her ability, as well as her classmates, to score well on these tests. As far as Raquel knew, only one student went to the counselor to see his or her score. They had an internal understanding that they would not score well on the test and should not go see how they did. This speaks to the internalized oppression that many Mexican Americans felt at this time. This can be seen when Raquel states, *I thought to myself, "Why did you* *volunteer? Why do you think that she would suddenly change her attitude towards us Mexicans?* Here Raquel is stating her own views of herself, of her people. She saw, at that time, that she was less than her white classmate, Nova, and less than any white person.

This is where the Movement, "*abrieron nuestros ojos*" as Martina and Tomasita say. This is what the women have been trying to convey. The women are saying that the Movement was good in bringing them to a consciousness of their internal oppression and in educating some. But the women are also saying that along with this good the Movement had its problems. The Movement was not either or, all good or all bad, but rather nuanced in what was happening with the people both closely involved and at a distance.

Raquel goes to college

Raquel went to college with help from the vocational rehabilitation agency because she was born with a physical disability. This gave Raquel an opportunity that the other women of the group didn't have. Because of this, she was the first in her family to attend college. First, she attended South West Texas Junior College, eventually receiving a bachelor's degree from A & I University in Kingsville.

Raquel's first intention was to pursue a degree or certification in nursing, but studied education. All of this was new to her and her family. She somehow navigated all this without their help. Raquel never mentioned how she managed to transfer to A&I or how she changed majors. She did speak of how hard it was to leave her family to live and study at a town farther away and bigger than Cristal.

Raquel explained how she worried that her younger siblings would not get along without her. She worried about her mother, who was often left alone with the children when her father would leave to be with his mistress. Raquel also worried about fitting in at the dorms where she stayed with several other Mexican Americans. She worried about dressing well, knowing that she did not have as much money as the other women in her dorm.

Not only was Kingsville a three-hour drive from Crystal City, Raquel did not go with classmates or close friends. She depended on rides from other Mexican Americans from Crystal City, but these women were not friends and often had more money than she did. She often had to leave her family when they were up North working in the fields to attend college. This weighed heavily on her because she knew her family could use an extra hand to earn more money.

Raquel worked hard at school, but had to stop very close to graduation so that she could earn money and went to work for Crystal City schools. After she began teaching, she completed her coursework over several summers. When the RUP school board took power, she was able to pursue further certification, for early childhood, with the help of the grants the new administration brought.

Raquel appreciated these opportunities. She, like Tomasita and Martina, reflected on the Chicano Movement in Crystal City in similar ways. They saw the way the Movement benefited the town, especially the schools. But they also saw the negative effects of social networking and the power struggles that plagued the RUP and was apparent in other Movement activities. Raquel reflected on the Movement in positive terms much like Tomasita and Martina. She told of how good the Movement was for the town's Mexican American community, because "many of us got an education". But she was also critical of political and social connections and power over regular people who had already been put down by whites. Raquel is explaining that many Mexican Americans were already being put down by the Anglos before the Movement, only to be put down again by the Mexicanos now in power. She was stating, again, that while the Movement helped many, others were not helped due to their (perceived) lack of loyalty to the RUP.

Raquel added a lot to our group. She had insights to how the school curriculum changed over time; this helped me in my understanding of what schooling was like before my school years and prior to the 1969 walkouts. Raquel wrote more than the other women and, along with Angelina, seemed to engage more with group meetings.

As we have read, these women were not new to difficult situations. They had experienced them throughout their lives. During the time of the Chicano Movement they were forced to stay politically neutral in order to keep their jobs, even though they agreed with the tenets of the Movement – -equality and fair treatment. In their decision to stay neutral, they risked being called "vendidas, (sellouts)" an insult that was easily applied to anyone who even appeared to side with the Gringo. By staying neutral, the women were using their own agency to stay invisible to either side. Staying invisible to both the

Gringo and the Chicano, these women were trying to hold on to what they had in fear of losing it all by picking the "wrong side".

These trying times weighed on these four women heavily and, in a way, left them disillusioned with the Movement. By disillusioned, I mean that the women have thought critically about the Movement and its results, such as placing unqualified (in their opinion) persons in high positions. The fear of being called a *vendida* or sellout also hurt them. They did not understand how their own people could call them a sell out, if they ethnically identified with and believed in the RUP party and Movement.

This fear of being called a *vendida*, kept them from sharing their stories. Raquel, for instance, had never told anyone the story about the "Little Red Hen and the Big White Rat". Martina had never shared her experiences with her children. It was not until we started meeting in these writing groups that they allowed themselves to share these heartfelt stories that they kept them to themselves and now revealed to how emotionally bound they were to the events of the Movement.

Overall, the women were helpful and continue to be. They were eager to share their stories. They also helped in a way that was unexpected, when one of our topics was about what memorabilia they had saved from that time. Martina brought two plastic bags full of newspapers and clippings. After the meeting she gave them all to me. I was hesitant to take them, but she insisted, saying that her boys would most likely not take them. Later, when I interviewed two other women, they let me look at newspaper clippings and books they too had kept. One of these women let me keep a lot of her items, even mailing me more things to keep. She too said that her sons would most likely not be interested in keeping such things. The other woman allowed me to look at her materials but asked for them back, saying that one of her sons is interested in these memorabilia.

Analysis

Now that the women's stories have been shared, its time to analyze what has been said further. There are three points to consider that come from the women's stories. The first is that.

The first is that the Chicano Movement was neither all good nor all bad. There were subtleties to the Movement that many Chicano history books have not captured. By studying these four women, who were not visible members of the RUP or even visible within the town, we can see that the Movement was not as grandiose as many of the Chicano texts portray the Movement in Cristal. This is one reason the dissertation was written to show that, viewed through the eyes of an insider -- from a woman's point of view, -- the "narrative" of the Movement is different from those of Chicano history books.

Their narratives also show that the leadership of the Movement had its favorites, its *compadres* or *comadres,* who gained favors. Also seen is that the RUP chose people who were loyal to the party. This put many out of favor with the party, so they did not gain from new job placement or job training as others did. While this was upsetting to the participants of this study, they dealt with it in their own way and primarily opted to stay neutral.

Keeping neutral does not mean, that the women did not choose political sides at all. Rather, that on order to ensure their own economic well being, these women kept as politically neutral as possible before the election of the 1972 RUP school board and right after for out of fear of losing their jobs. These women held jobs at the schools at the time of the walk out. They all had their own families, with small children at home. While their household had two incomes, they could not afford losing their jobs.

The work environment for these women was not a "traditional work place" for Mexicanas from Crystal City. This meant that the women's job security was not secure. If they took one side and the other won, would they lose their jobs?

This was a tough situation and not one to take lightly. So the women chose to stay as neutral as possible. They did not openly join the walk out or attend the RUP rallies. They chose not to be too friendly to the white administration at work or in public. We can see the women remain torn about this to this day, as demonstrated by Angelina's questioning the character of her boss: racist or a strict but fair disciplinarian?

Another example can be found in Tomasita's writing. She had a good friendship with her boss, the superintendent. This is where Tomasita saw the emotional toll the walkout and the Movement was taking on the man and expresses sympathy for him. However she recognizes above all that the Movement "opened their eyes" and brought a consciousness to the Mexicanos of Cristal.

Tomasita also had a good relationship with a white girlfriend, which gave her a view of the subtleties of the Movement. She expresses her gratefulness of the Movement in that it brought consciousness to many even as she recognizes that there was unfairness within the Movement. Tomasita did not think that all Gringos were bad, nor does she believe that the white man is the savior. She sees the grey subtleties.

The third significant point is that they are all tied by one thing. The three women were all members of the Raza Libre Party. The women joined the small party at relatively the same time. They knew each other from that time.

The small Raza Libre Party ran candidates in the school board and was formed by a group of teachers, teacher aides, and concerned parents (Interview with N. Jaimes, 2012). Trujillo (1998) tells us,

> "Politically, this group saw themselves as advocating a moderate orientation between the militant Chicanos on the one hand, and Anglo-sponsored Mexicanos, with diplomatically oriented acculturated world views, on the other. In general, Independents [Raza Libre] regarded the new bilingual/bicultural education program as extreme and further cautioned against breaking all ties with Anglos."

Trujillo (1998) calls the Raza Libre political views as moderate in orientation. This ties with the women in our groups trying to keep neutral. Just as the party was trying to find a middle ground on the issues of education, the women were searching for a middle ground with their jobs.

The Raza Libre Party has not been written about as extensively as the Raza Unida Party, probably because of its size, compared to La Raza Unida, because it never won any elections and because it was relatively short-lived. Another reason may be that the idea of a group of Mexicanos going against the Raza Unida Party does not fit the greater accepted narrative of the Movement.

The idea that the bigger narrative of Chicano unity in the Movement might be disrupted is what this dissertation is about. The principal goal of this dissertation is to document the subtleties of the Movement and give voice to those in it who were not the public eye.

The next chapter centers on the women's children and provides a look into the generational impact of the Movement in Cristal in order to explore the discourse that surrounds it today. I will examine the stories of the Chicano Movement that the children heard from their mothers or other family members, as well as their opinions of the Chicano Movement. My goal for this chapter is to further document what the children's reflections, understandings, and stories shared about the Chicano Movement in Crystal City by their mothers.

CHAPTER 5: SUS NIÑOS

Introduction

In this chapter, you will meet our four women's children. You will read about the stories they heard regarding the Chicano Movement in Crystal City and what they know about it. Their stories are important because little has been documented relevant to the long-term impact of the Movimiento in Crystal. These stories vary from very informed to not-so-much, but on the whole, the level of knowledge about what happened in their hometown during these turbulent times was minimal. From the stories of this younger generation of Cristaleños, I hypothesize that there are four reasons for their not knowing about Crystal City's rich political history.

The Children

First, these women did not think their children were interested in hearing about the Chicano Movement and therefore did not share what they had experienced. The second reason is that, as teen-agers these children tended to compare Cristal to other towns in the area, and could see the town's less-prosperous economic situation. Among the things they perceived was Cristal's reputation as a place of troublemakers -- and sometimes "communists." Finally, as time passed, younger generation of Cristaleños became less interested in political movements in general and the history of the town in particular. These four reasons combined to create a negative view of the Chicano Movement in Crystal City by some younger generations.

I attempted to interview the youngest child of each of the women because I wanted to speak with the child least likely to have attended schools during the 1970s, the decade during which the movement was most prominent. The women's children ranged in age from 25 to 35. They have varied careers and lives. One of the four children returned to live in Crystal City after a few years living out of state. The others live in other Texas cities.

Angelina and Angel

Since the vignettes started with Angelina, I will begin with her child as well. Angelina has two adult sons. The son I interviewed, whom I will call Angel, does not live in Crystal City but in a much larger city in Texas, pursuing a career in music. Angel has lived away from Cristal since he left for college in the fall of 2001. Of the three children interviewed, he is the only one with a bachelor's degree from a liberal arts university. He majored in music. Angel is in his mid 20s, and was not born in Crystal City, or in the closest hospital in Dimmit County. (Most children from Cristal are born at Dimmit County Memorial Hospital because there is no hospital in Crystal City.) Because Angelina's husband was in the military, Angel was born in Fort Smith, Virginia. The family spent time in many places outside of Texas, and even outside the country.

Angel went to Crystal City schools from the first grade through high school. He describes life in Cristal as, "very much typical of a small town, and small community." He describes the town's residents as living there their entire lives.

What Angel was describing is familiar to me.I know from experience that small towns can seem,very enclosed and even sheltered. But a closer look will reveal that small towns have many of the same problems as larger communities, from illegal drug use to underage drinking.

Living in a small town can also mean that many people know your business. So even though, as a teenager, you think you are getting away with partying, someone knows about those parties. People also know who is dealing and using drugs. People know whom you are dating, who is having an affair, who is gay.

Angel is somewhat knowledgeable of the Chicano Movement in Crystal City. He describes what he knows about the Chicano Movement, starting with the walkout. He explains that this is almost always the first thing people say whenever he says he is from Cristal. He did not elaborate on the walkout, such as what led to it or who participated, other than to say that it was a walkout by high school students. He tells me that he doesn't know the full story but that, "I just know that early in the 1960s the Mexican population that were in school at the time were fed up with what was going on and decided to stage a protest in the form of a walkout to what was going on."

When I asked Angel what he knew about the Chicano Movement in general, he said, "I have to admit, I'm a little unsure there." He says that he did not hear very much about the Movement in high school and did not take a course in college in which the movement was discussed. Speaking specifically about the Raza Unida Party (RUP), Angel first explained what the word "Raza" means to him and then explained where the party came from. Raza, as used here, is meant to describe the Mexican American population in Cristal. In a wider context, it can also mean the Hispanic people and the pride within our own group. Angel said, "You know, Raza in general, the Mexican population, the pride in that, but to me it directly came from Crystal City. I think of that, where I grew up." Here we can infer that Angel is uninformed about the RUP and what significance it held at the national level as one of the first ethnically based political parties in the United States. Angel also did not talk about RUP's candidates for city elections or school board elections, or that the party also ran candidates in other Texas counties, and even had a candidate for Texas governor.

Angel heard about the history of the Chicano Movement from his mother. When speaking about the history of the city, he offered an analogy as to what it is to know about the Chicano Movement and be from Cristal. Angel said, "Its like if you live in Hawaii you don't really need someone to mention Pearl Harbor to you, it's all around you." What he did not say was what his mother went through during in the Movement. Angel did say he knew that his mom was the secretary at the junior high school but could not tell me of any stories she may have shared with him, stating, "I mean maybe but I'm not sure when and where…Off the top of my head no." Angel was not aware of the accounts of discrimination that Angelina shared with us.

Despite his limited knowledge, Angel describes the overall impact of the Chicano Movement on Cristal in very positive terms. He believes the walkout helped out "society as a whole" and allowed for more educational opportunities. He listed mostly things tied to education, such as finding ways to pay for education and obtaining higher education. His words echo Angelina's words from our group meetings. As noted earlier, the group's consensus is that the Chicano Movement helped Crystal City people obtain and succeed at a fair education. All this is understandable, considering the Movement started in the schools.

Angel saw the Movement as a good thing for the town, describing the Movement as bringing notoriety to Crystal City. He added, “We were able to shake things up and get people to notice us”. He also describes the Movement as people fighting for what they really believed in. “I believe it was a good thing, it brought a lot of pride to the town, ” he said. As we can see, although he did not seem to know very much about it, aside from the walkout, Angel learned enough to have overall positive thoughts of the Movement. It is significant that Angel identifies with the movement in his use of the pronouns, “we” and “us,” even though he did not grow up during this time, . This positive attitude toward the movement was also evident when I asked him if younger or high school students should learn about the town’s history in schools. He said yes, saying that its important for younger generations to know about their history, and that this could keep the different generations closer to each other.

I see that Angel’s lack of knowledge of the Movement political details, or even of discrimination before the movement -- discrimination his mother faced, -- is the result of Angelina’s not sharing only a little of these stories with her children. During our meetings, the women told me that they did not share many stories of the movement with their kids. Martina and Angelina thought it was because they had boys who were not interested in talking to their mothers, but Tomasita said that she did not tell her daughters because she assumed they were not interested. When I followed up with Angelina about what her son said, she said that it wasn't because the stories were hard to tell but rather that "before I knew it, he was grown up, then he moved away for college and has never come back." She spends very little time with him. I also asked Angelina if she would have shared more stories with Angel if he had shown an interest and asked more questions and she said that she probably would have. But because their children showed little interest in the Chicano Movement, these women did not tell their children their stories, and so the children know very little about it.

Martina and Martin

Martina has three adult sons, the youngest in his mid 30s. He, like Angel, no longer lives in Crystal City but in a much larger Texas city and has lived outside of Cristal for 13 years. Martin*, works in manufacturing and is raising a son with his wife. His wife is Hispanic and not from Crystal City, but from a major city, north of Crystal City. Martin, like a majority of Cristaleños was born in the neighboring county's hospital. He attended Crystal City schools from kindergarten until high school graduation. After high school Martin attended some college but did not complete a degree.

In stark contrast to Angel, Martin described life in Crystal City as not diverse, meaning that the town is overwhelmingly Mexican American. He expressed bitter views about the Movement, hinting that the white flight that took place after the Raza Unida took over caused the town's economic decline and its lack of racial diversity.

What he knows about the Movement is limited to the events after the walkouts, but he knows a bit more details about the time before that. Martin heard about the movement and walkouts mostly from his mother. He also heard some mentions of it from a high school teacher. He said he had not read or heard about the Chicano Movement at the national level. Martin's knowledge of the Chicano Movement did not expand through college courses. He had no knowledge of the Movement other than what he heard at home and at school.

Martina told him about events and experiences she had in high school with discrimination, which was sometime before the walkouts. Martin told me what he knew about events that prompted the walkout, such as discriminatory practices at the schools. He spoke about the selection of class favorites: "From what I heard, the teachers would send the pictures to a movie star to pick the prettiest or whatever, and of course they picked the white kid." He said these practices, "slowly and eventually led to a revolt, where the Mexicans were tired of being oppressed." From these statements, we can conclude that Martin did see that the movement was beneficial in overcoming oppression and discrimination in schools and in Crystal City society, but his previous statements indicate resentment toward the Movement. This resentment can be seen in his statement about the lack of diversity in Crystal City. His reasoning for the city's economic decline also confirms his resentment. He felt that white flight has had a lasting economic impact on the town.

I asked Martin what comes to his mind when Raza Unida Party is mentioned, and he immediately mentioned Jose Angel Gutierrez. He then went on to talk about his feelings of the party and the Movement:

> "Honestly, resentment. In a way, I have bitterness, because I look at other towns that surround us, Carrizo Springs, Uvalde, those towns are prosperous. Those towns do well. They have good economies. They have a variety of cultures and diversity. Then you go to Crystal City and 98 percent of the population is Hispanic, and half a percent is white and the other is whatever is left. And I actually have a little bit of resentment. I mean, I know that they did it for the better and all that. In my opinion, it actually brought the town down, as far as political, economy, growth and development for the town and the people in the long run. If you go back now there is nothing to survive, unless you work for the city or Del Monte (Del Monte is the caning factory in town that employs a great number of people in Crystal City)."

Clearly, in Martin's view the Chicano Movement was the catalyst for Cristal's economic struggles beginning with the 1980s recession and continuing until today.

While there are many factors to Crystal City's economic decline, white flight is one of them. Martin is implying that the Chicano Movement caused white flight, which led to the economic down turn in Cristal. People from my generation or younger often express this sentiment. What Martin and others do not understand is that while white flight did take money away from the town, it also took other white privileges that are not readily seen by many.

Martin acknowledges that the Chicano Movement in Cristal had a positive impact for his mom, but not for himself because he does not consider himself a political person. Martin told me that the Movement helped his mom get a job as a municipal judge, something that would not have been possible if the White establishment had stayed in power. As for the Mexican American population in Cristal, he says that, “It helped people realize that the white people weren’t doing the Mexicans right.” He says, “It did help them, but not me personally.” I take this to mean that he did not make a connection between the Mexican Americans’ benefitting from the Chicano Movement in overcoming discrimination and his own life.

What could have led Martin to these mixed feelings about the Movement? I believe there are two factors to this. First, while Martina did share stories of discrimination with her son, she may have not stressed that the Movement was not the only factor in the town’s economic downturn. Factors leading to the economic downturn of Crystal City were the recessions of the 1980’s, the migration of people – younger people, in particular -- to cities (a phenomenon seen in small towns across the country), and the decline of farming in the area. Secondly, Martin has interacted with others from neighboring towns, such as Carrizo Springs, and believes that the economic downturn was caused by the stronger activism of the Chicano Movement in Crystal City.

When I asked Martin if he knew that his mother ran for the school board against an RUP candidate, he said, “I probably heard it but didn’t pay much attention.” As Martina suspected, her sons did not show much interest in her political involvement. Martin did say that he asked his mother about the Chicano Movement, but that his questions mostly dealt with the things leading to the walkout. He did not ask her about her running for office.

I asked Martin if he thought teen-agers and young children should learn about the Chicano Movement, including the RUP. He said that they should and added that younger generations should also learn about the Movement because "they don't have the right direction, they don't have discipline in any facets of their lives. And in Crystal they need to learn where their history came from and learn why we are where we are now. Maybe it will challenge them in a positive light and help them accomplish more, dream for more. It will help them come back and make the town a better place." This is an interesting contrast to the way he views the Movement's impact on the town.

Over all, we see that Martin knew details of discrimination before the walkouts, which his mother experienced first-hand, he did not know more about the Movement after the walkouts. I followed up with Martina about what Martin told me and asked her why she did not share stories of her political involvement, such as running as a candidate against RUP. She said, "I never really talked about any of my political things with my sons because I didn't think they were interested. There is a lot I don't tell them about my life." I also told her that Martin did not have a very positive outlook of the Movement, and asked if she had told her sons about that. She said the only one she has spoken to about that is her oldest son. Martina said that the discussion usually ends in an argument because he does not agree with her about the positive impact of the Chicano Movement in Crystal City. When I asked her if maybe she didn't tell her sons about her political involvement because of the nepotism she experienced, Martina said, "Well, yeah, that happened but I mostly didn't tell them because I didn't think they were interested." Martina told me that when her sons do read or hear about something she did in her past or about something that happened to her from others, often from her younger brother, her sons tell her, “I didn’t know that, how come you didn’t tell me?” Her answer is, “I didn’t think you cared.”

If Chicana epistemology is used to analyze Martin’s views, it can be said that he has internalized that being white is better than being Chicano. It can be inferred that Martin equates that the white way of running the town could have benefited the town more than the way Chicanos ran the town. While this can be troublesome for the Chicana centered way of knowing, it is important to recognize that Martin illustrates the main point of this dissertation. That point being that while the over arching story of the Chicano Movement is told from a male protagonist point of view, the reality is that the Movement was not a binary of good and bad but rather a delicate continuum. By telling the experiences of women not in the RUP spotlight, using a Chicana feminist epistemology, we see that the Movement was not seen completely positively for these women in particular.

Tomasita and Cristela

Now we turn to Tomasita. Tomasita has three daughters, the youngest, whom I spoke to, is in her mid 30s and recently moved back to Crystal City to rear her own children. I will call her Cristela. She knew the least about the walkouts and Chicano Movement, which is interesting considering how passionately Tomasita spoke of the Movement’s outcomes but understandable once we know what she did hear about the Movement.

Cristela, like Martin was born in Carrizo Springs. She attended elementary through secondary schools in Cristal. Later she moved out of state where she met her former husband. She has vocational school training and no college education but is a registered medical assistant. In the past five years she divorced her husband and moved back to Cristal to raise her three children with the help of her family. Cristela described Crystal City as a "small community, tight knit, everyone knows a little about everybody."

Cristela told Tomasita during our meetings that she wasn't told anything about the Chicano Movement in high school. Tomasita seemed a bit shocked about that. So I was excited to hear what Cristela had to say in her interview. One of the first things she said when asked what she knew about the history of Crystal City was, "Communist Cuba". Cristela was talking about how some people refer to Cristal as Little Cuba because of a visit to Cuba by Jose Angel Gutierrez and other RUP leaders in the 1970s. Cristela said, " I guess… learned that through school…[in reference to the town's history she said] spinach festival, I guess that's it." Here, she shows either a complete lack of knowledge about the Chicano Movement and its impact on Cristal, or that she doesn't want to talk about the Movement at all.

The next thing I asked was, when you hear the words, Raza Unida Party, what do you think of? Cristela answered:

> "The old high school, really not much. Just what my mom told me growing up, that she used to be the secretary there at the high school. I guess she was pregnant with my sister, and I don't know, I guess they were picketing. And my dad went to take her out of harm's way."

She is referring to the story Tomasita told the group about her days working in the high school during the walkouts of 1969. What this shows is that Tomasita did pass along a story of a difficult time to her daughters. However, we will see that other ideals or knowledge of the Movement did not get told.

Cristela continued to tell me that she didn't know very much about the Raza Unida Party, other than that "I think they wanted equal rights." She also admitted to not knowing very much about the Chicano movement. Cristela was also not told any other stories about the Movement from her mom or anyone else.

When asked about what feelings come up when the words Chicano Movement is mentioned, she said, "Um I guess they made way for more Chicanos to participate in spaces that were only for white positions. Where they had started with a Mexican cheerleader…just trying to open up ways for future Chicanos." Cristela says the movement, "opened doors for a lot of people."

As far as negative impacts from the *Movimiento* in Cristal, Cristela mentions the label of "Little Cuba." When I asked where she learned about that label, she said she had heard about it at school. Cristela could not say exactly who told her this.

I asked Cristela if she had read or heard anything else about the Chicano Movement. She said she has wanted to go see a play by a theater group in Dallas, titled "Crystal City 1969." Diana Serna Aguilar, an original walkout participant, is a sponsor of the theatre group called Cara Mía. The play was first put on in December 2009, the 40th anniversary of the walkout. The play's creators and sponsors went to the annual Spinach Festival to promote the play but were not met with great enthusiasm. Because of the distance between Crystal City and Dallas, many of the Cristaleños who wanted to go were unable to attend. Cristela's interest in the play shows that she is interested in the history of the walkout even though she does not show much knowledge of the walkouts.

We ended our conversation on her thoughts about teaching younger generations about the Movement. Cristela says, "Yes, I feel that [it should be taught] either through Texas history or other classes to get more information, because, really, I feel kind of ignorant (about the Movement)."

Much of what Cristela tells us about the Movement is what we have heard from Tomasita. So we see that of the three women, Tomasita spoke the most to her children about the Movement. When I followed up with Tomasita, she told me that she was the one who initiated conversations about Crystal City's history with her daughters because, as she puts it, "I wanted them to know how things were." Tomasita has shared that her older daughters would repeat things related to the Raza Unida Party when they were playing, because this is all they heard adults talking about. By the time Cristela became old enough to ask questions about the Movement, interest in it had already faded, so people her age asked fewer questions and parents thought their children were uninterested.

Although all three of the women's children support the teaching of the history of Crystal City schools, we see they each have different reasons. For Angel, it's to improve knowledge and to create a bond between generations. Martin sees this as a way to motivate a disenfranchised youth to do be more productive and to gain direction in life.

Cristela sees that her lack of knowledge of the history could have been improved and sees that learning about the history of Cristal can only help younger people.

What can be seen from the children's stories is that they did know about the Chicano Movement in one way or another. They may have not known all the details about the discrimination faced by their mothers during their adolescence. The children may have not understood the complexities of the Movement and its effects on Crystal City's reputation. They did however know the major catalyst of the Movement, the walkouts. The children were not sure of how much they really knew but when it comes down to it, they did know something. This knowledge was acquired through different places, one source being their mothers. The public schools were most likely a small source. Their fathers may be another source of information, but since this dissertation is privileging a female perspective particularly the children's mothers, the influence of their fathers was not examined.

Corina

Finally, we come to Raquel. Raquel being my mother, the extent to what I know about the Movement is different than what Cristela, Martin, and Angel had to share. What follows are my answers to the same questions I asked Cristela, Martin and Angel.

When it comes to knowing about the Chicano Movement in Crystal, I know quite a bit. I learned a lot about the history of Crystal from my mother and her sisters. My mother and her sisters were older than the women who participated in the walkouts, such as Diana Garcia Palacios or Severita Lara, and were not involved in the RUP. They were starting out their families and did not become politically active in the Chicano Movement.

I refined this knowledge when I entered graduate school. As stated in chapter one, I was a very nosey teenager and asked my mom and aunts about the walkouts. I also asked them about their high school experiences, which was in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The stories I heard about the Movement themselves were limited. I mostly heard stories of discrimination before the walkouts. The stories are very similar to the ones Martin told me. I had been told about "movie stars" judging student pictures for most beautiful contests and homecoming queen, things like that. So the knowledge of the actual movement came from reading books about it in graduate school.

When it comes to the Raza Unida Party there are mixed feelings for me. I see how beneficial the party was in changing up the political party system in Crystal City, the state of Texas and other states in the U.S. I respect how the party was able to inspire Mexican Americans to vote and to use their voting rights to change things for themselves. But I've heard stories of nepotism and favoritism from my mother and from the women I interviewed for my master's thesis work.

Finally, I am for educating younger generations about the Movement because I am writing about it here. Growing up in Cristal, I have seen a decline in the knowledge about the Movement in younger generations, first with my classmates, then with younger cousins, and finally with my nephews. I also see there is a lack of interest in today's young people. It seems that they are not asking questions of older people or reading about it. There definitely have not been any classes at the high school level on this topic that I've seen.

From speaking to Martin and Cristela, classmates, and others close to my age, thirty-something's one person has been influential in telling the story of the Chicano Movement to younger Cristaleños. That person is Severita Lara. She was a high school biology teacher and also a librarian at the high school for many years. Since Mrs. Lara is well known for her involvement in the walkouts she often got questions about it from her students. Mrs. Lara took these opportunities to tell her students about her experiences as a 1969 student walk out leader. Unfortunately since her retirement, those stories are going silent.

My experiences. No but really, what are you doing Corina?

I would like to share my experiences in completing this research. As I've said earlier, I've been interested in Cristal and its history for a long time. I have felt that there was something missing in the stories told of Cristal. I knew that the stories of "ordinary" women needed to be told. The conviction to pursue this research was not difficult to attain, but completing it was quite another story.

As mentioned earlier, the realization that the story of Cristal needed to be told from a woman's perspective came from Delgado Bernal's work (1998) "Grassroots Leadership Reconceptualized: Chicana Oral Histories and the 1968 East Los Angeles Blowouts". This article provided an introduction to the theory and methods to be used in this dissertation. The realization that the stories that came from our weekly platicas were so powerful did not come until much later.

There has been a deep struggle within me while completing this research. This can be broken down into three pieces. The first is going “home”. The first time I left home to work at a summer camp, my sister Carmel told me, “You can never go home again.” Those words have always stuck in my head. They have become a truth that I have had to come to accept while conducting this research.

While yes, I was at home, spending nights and preparing meals at my mother’s home, but I was not in my home. That place has ceased to exist. My childhood home is now the home of my father and a cousin. And my mother’s house is not the home I grew up in. My childhood home is a place to visit, to collect your things, and to help with the up keep.

Not only did I not feel a part of the home I was staying at, I no longer feel a part of Crystal City’s community. This is the second piece, leaving Cristal and coming back to study it. As an Insider/Outsider researcher, it was difficult coming back to Cristal. Each time I made a phone call to reach out to a participant or a potential participant, I feared that the person at the other end of the line would remember me as the rebellious teen-ager. I also worried about whether the person liked my mother, father, siblings or other family members and whether or not this would influence their willingness to talk to me. Was I enough of an insider to get these people to participate? Paired with the insider is the outsider: would I be rejected because I am studying my hometown and pursuing a PhD? While many did view my pursuit of higher education as a positive thing, what if they didn't? I could have very easily been seen as a sellout who left her community and was using it's rich history for her own gain.

The third piece is actually putting this to "paper." The actual writing of the dissertation was a large piece of the struggle. Constant fears that this manuscript was not good enough entered my head as soon as my laptop opened. What if I said the wrong thing? At times, this fear became daunting and definitely prolonged the process. It has taken me over four years to complete this work.

Part of writing this dissertation became difficult in the fall of 2012. On November 23, 2012 my oldest brother committed suicide. The event shook our family and devastated his four boys. It was difficult to continue writing after this. Even as I write these words its hard not to tear up.

The question of, what are you doing Corina, came threefold. First, it would come from my family, in that they did not fully understand why I was pursuing a PhD, and much less as to why our own hometown. This question was again asked by participants or community members, what are you studying Corina? Then when I explained my reasons, I got responses such as, "Well, I don't remember much" or "I don't know if you can use what I say." Many simply ignored my phone calls or the notes I left in their mailboxes. The last piece comes from within, what am I doing? Will this be good enough?

Analyzing their words

Now we will move on to review Martin, Angel and Cristela's stories. Each of these stories exemplifies the three reasons why younger generations have a less-than-positive view of the Movement. In Angel's narrative, we see that a lack of interest in the town's history is present in the younger generations. In Martin's comparison of Crystal to other towns in the area, we note a negative view of the Movement's effect on the town. Finally, in Cristela, we hear about the negative connotations of Cristal. If we are to look at each one by age, we see that Cristela, the oldest, has a positive outlook on the Movement but still sees the negative labels people have placed on Cristal. Martin, in the middle, sees the town in negative ways but knows a lot about the discrimination his mother faced. Angel sees the town in much more positive ways, and he is the youngest of the group.

From speaking with Martin, Angel and Cristela, one can see the difference between the attendance of a liberal arts or four-year university and some college and its effect on how the Chicano Movement and its history is viewed by younger generations of Cristaleños. From this limited information, I think that if people in their 30s or younger have a more positive view of the Chicano Movement's impact on Cristal it is most likely due to the attendance of a four year university. However, if the person did not attend a liberal arts school or four-year university, but instead attended a technical school or received an associates degree, he or she tends to view the Chicano Movement's impact on Cristal in negative terms, placing blame on the Movement for the town's lack of economic growth. My analysis of this information is limited by the fact that I only talked to three people and gathered additional informal data from high school classmates. Until further research is conducted with persons in the 25 to 40-age range, a conclusion on whether educational attainment affects views on the movement cannot be made.

What these interviews do tell us is that the passing of stories; either in writing or through oral history, to younger generations was limited. This is due to the women's view of their children's lack of interest in the Chicano Movement, Cristal's history, or the women's past. Also, we see that even though the women imparted stories of personal discrimination to their children, they did not tell them more about the Movement in general, perhaps because women like Martina experienced nepotism and disregard from the RUP. Again here, I caution that the limitation is the small number of people interviewed. Further research on the age group of 25 to 35 year olds may reveal similar results.

Conclusion

What we have learned from this chapter is that the children of Martina, Angelina, and Tomasita, while interested in teaching younger generations about the Movement, lacked an extensive knowledge of the Movement and its positive impacts. I attribute what they did not know or appreciate to their lack of a liberal arts or university education. In my opinion, attending and engaging in college courses that acknowledge your own history, and the importance of a little town like Cristal for an entire community of people- Mexican Americans in the United States, was not only eye opening but also empowering. Old notions of racial hierarchy are deconstructed and internalized oppression no longer have control over us.

The information that they do have comes from their parents. They revealed their experiences with discrimination as a way to protect them from similar situations. To me,this is a component of parenting: making sure that your children have the tools to face life's probable challenges. Conversations with this younger generation also allowed me to build another connection to the participants of this study. By getting to know their youngest child, I have come to know Martina, Angelina, Tomasita and even Raquel, a little more. From this, we are seeing that the Chicano movement in Crystal City had many participants, many of them unheralded.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This dissertation documents the personal, educational, and political journeys of four women from Crystal City, Texas. Most importantly, it examines how each of them navigated and confronted the events that led up to the Chicano Movement in this city, as well as, its direct impact on their lives. These four women shared their own writings with us and told the stories that they have chosen to pass on to their children. The youngest child of each of the women in turn, told us what he or she had heard from their mothers about the Chicano Movement. What we learned were honest accounts of experiences of discrimination and of eventual consciousness-raising, with the help of the Movement, in their own lives. We heard of the nepotism within the Chicano Movement that alienated these women and of discrimination from their youth that remains unforgotten.

Martina, for instance, described what it was like to run for a position in the school board against the RUP in an opposition party called La Raza Libre. Angelina recounted how she felt after not being hired to teach even after completing an alternative certification program funded by the district, because she was seen as lacking loyalty to the party. Tomasita told us of harassment she endured when out-of-towners who perceived Crystal as a place of troublemakers verbally attacked her. Finally, we heard from Marina who slyly confronted white teachers who were upset with what they understood as the Movement's goal to fuel trouble with "Mexicans."

The purpose of this dissertation is to add to the meta-narrative of the Chicano Movement, and include the voice of women who were not part of the political forefront during this period. In addition, this study also brings a new generation into the discussion of the Chicano Movement: The children of the *Mexicanos* who experienced the movement first hand. This manuscript forces us to consider the long-term impact of the *movimiento* by examining the stories that these women passed on to the next generation of Cristaleños. In this chapter, I discuss my findings, include some personal reflections on this research, as well as, connect my work to other research. Lastly, I will briefly note the limitations of this project and close with some conclusions from this research.

Findings: Las Mujeres

First, lets discuss what we have found. In terms of the women's participation in political activities, we found that their participation varied. Martina was very involved and even ran against the RUP. We also saw that Tomasita was not as involved. These women were active observers of the Chicano movement in Cristal, and paid attention to political gossip and events.

Each was aware of who was running for political office and against whom. They witnessed alliances being made and broken. They observed how things were going but they were not the type of women to be in the forefront of the RUP party or Movement.

They did not speak at rallies or willingly canvas for candidates. Three of our women never considered running for political office, much less against the RUP machine that was gaining ground in Cristal. Only Martina ran for office, and that was because she did not agree with the direction the schools were taking under the RUP.

While the women were paying attention to the political happenings, they were quietly speaking their minds at home with their families. They did this until they were forced to speak up in more public spheres. This is most evident in Marina's story of cutting out an editorial from the local newspaper and placing it in the mailbox of the white teacher who was against the Movement. We also see this in Tomasita's story of "telling off" people from out of town who would tell her that the clinic in Cristal was for abortions. The women became vocal when they believed it was necessary but it was not something they did publicly, such as making speeches at political rallies, as some women did during the Movement. Las mujeres' way of speaking out became subversive. The women spoke out in ways that were not in the public sphere but at a micro level, in their homes and at their workplace.

We found that discrimination was something that women discussed, even though discrimination was not necessarily the focus of this research. When the women were encouraged to write about their experiences, discussion often drifted to the way things were before the RUP took control of the school board and then city council. Each woman shared a story of discrimination from her past. Angelina told of discrimination in the fields as a migrant farm worker. Raquel shared her experiences of being discriminated against in high school with testing.

These experiences have stayed with the women to this day. They shared these stories with us because they see them as important to their history. I believe that the Chicano Movement, with the Raza Unida Party and the Mexican American Youth Organization, raised awareness about social practices that had been seen as "normal" for many in Cristal. This is not to say that all Cristaleños were not aware of the discrimination, but I do believe that the Chicano Movement gave these four women the opportunity to see that they were equal to the Anglos. Tomasita and Martina said this many times in our meetings. They expressed that the Movement, "nos abrieron nuestros ojos." Martina told us, "We saw that we were like everybody else, we were like the Gringos."

We also learned from the women that they did not share with their children much of their stories from this time. Each woman told only very little to her child about the Movement unless she was asked or prompted. The women's explanation was that they simply did not consider telling their children about what they experienced. It wasn't intentionally forgotten, just not thought about, primarily because they did not think their children were interested. Since their children did not press for more stories or ask many questions, the women assumed they were uninterested.

Their failure to tell their stories to their children could also be attributed to their disillusion with the Movement, partly as a result of the criticism they experienced for their limited participation in it, and partly because they saw what happened to other participants in the years following the decline of La Raza Unida. The 1980s saw many Mexican Americans move back to the middle in terms of political activity. Many of them who had belonged to La Raza Unida, or flirted with it, moved back the Democratic Party. The changes in schools reflect this shift too. The schools moved from an inclusive K-12 bilingual education model to a late-exit model and then to an early-exit model.

Also apparent in the schools was the changing view of schools as political arenas (Trujillo, 1998). The 1980s saw the Raza Unida Party become less politically vocal and eventually it dissolved into the national Democratic Party. Gone were the rallies. Gone were the boycotts. The political pageantry faded away. Eventually the main political figure of the RUP, Jose Angel Gutierrez, left Cristal.

As stated earlier, our four women did not share many of their stories with their children because they did not believe their children were interested. This happened at the time of their youngest child's upbringing. The three children we spoke to were born during the late 1970s and so grew up in the 1980s, a time when the women saw the former RUP leaders shunned. I think the timing and the negative experiences the four women had led them to not think of telling or sharing their stories about the movement with their children.

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When we spoke to the children we found something a bit different. They did not think to ask their mothers about the Movement. They knew information about the Chicano Movement from listening to adult's conversations or hearsay. This manuscript highlights what they know of the Movement. The children, however, did not know other things about their mother's experience such as Martina's running for school board in

1972 or Tomasita being subjected to slurs when she traveled the area. This leads me to conclude that there are two reasons for the children's knowing so little of their mother's stories.

First, the schools were no longer political arenas and -- secondly– that the town's overall disillusionment contributed to their lack of interest in the movement. The gradual end of political engagement in the schools is important in the continuation of the story of the Chicano Movement in Crystal City to younger generations because it was the schools that RUP leaders selected as a site of political change. As we saw, the school walkout and ensuing school boycott of 1969 were among the chief catalysts for the Chicano Movement in Cristal. The schools continued to be a site of political activity through the 1970s up until the ten-year anniversary. In the 1970s, the high school had a student representative on the school board. The students were seen as active agents in change and often attended political rallies. I would say that the last stand of political activity was the school-sanctioned walkout of 1979, which was held to commemorate the 1969 walkout. The schools even published a diary of the walkouts written by Jose Angel Gutierrez.

The loss of the schools as a political arena, the mothers of our group not sharing their personal experiences with their children, as well as, the shift of power away from RUP, led to Martin, Angel, and Cristela not having a comprehensive view of the role of the Chicano Movement in Crystal City. While the children did know a bit about the movement, significantly, not all their views about the Movement were positive. Martin, especially, had a negative view. He expressed doubts about the Movement's success in promoting Cristal's economic development. Cristela best illustrates how the schools were no longer a political arena. While she shared a story of how some students watched a short video at schools about the walkouts, not much else was taught about the movement. Whereas in the past, high school students would have been involved in political activities, the 1990s was no longer a time for that. Finally Angel, while knowledgeable about the Movement and the walkouts, did not have extensive knowledge about his mother's involvement in activities against the RUP.

What we learned from the women and their children is that while the Movement had positive impacts for our women in terms of consciousness-raising, there was a disconnect with their children's generation.

Researcher comments

One of my goals for this dissertation was to uncover what everyday women experienced during the Chicano Movement while living -- and continuing to live -- in Crystal City. My second goal was to see what stories of that time were passed on to their children. These two goals seemed easily attainable at the beginning, but as time passed, I recognized limitations to my approach.

The first was that while I am a Cristal native, returning home to conduct research was something that has not been experienced by many others from Crystal City. While there has been much research on Crystal City and the Movement, most of it was done by outsiders – non-natives. It was not until recently that research on Cristal has been done by Cristaleños. This would include another woman who is still working on her dissertation or thesis at Baylor University.

Other researchers have described what I'm talking about as insider/outsider positionality. The work I most connect with is that written by Villenas (1996) and her work with immigrant communities as a researcher and community educator. Villenas (1996) spoke about her position as a researcher from a large university in immigrant communities; a community much like the one she grew up in Los Angeles. She spoke about the difficulty she faced as a researcher who, in order to conduct research, had to interact with officials who made false assumptions of Latino immigrant communities. The false assumptions and even stereotypes she faced about her own community pulled on her because she had to work within the academic research parameters. The problem Villenas (1996) confronted was that although she was once a part of an immigrant community, after being educated at a white male- dominated university, she could not contest her position as both an insider and outsider.

So my experience as being from Cristal but having gone to study at a major university to pursue a bachelor's degree -- and now a doctorate -- put me in this insider/outsider position. While having grown up in Cristal and knowing what it is like to be from there, to know what surrounding areas think of us, was challenging within itself. It would have been easy for me to fall into the same type of thinking that Martin had, or to know of the movement but not know enough, like Cristela and Angel. But for some reason I did not. I pursued graduate school and to top that I decided to study my hometown.

Once I returned and recruited women for my study, I felt simultaneously intimidated and at ease. I was at ease because I was home, spending nights at my mother's home, seeing my nephews and my siblings. But intimidated to call up these women who knew me, who knew my past and yet didn't. They knew me in high school, and to some respects I was still 16 or 17 years old in their eyes. However, they also knew that with my name came the identification as researcher from The University of Texas at Austin. This new label changed things.

Then came the questions of what will be recorded or what will be written about me, with concerns of speaking "on the record." I was no longer Corina Zavala, hija de Daniel y Mariana Zavala, hermana de Carmel, Danny y Roel. I was someone from the University. I became the outsider. Yet they knew my family and me; was I really that big of a threat?

I felt connected and yet not. I knew people, but could I really call them on the phone and ask for an interview? I became intimidated and lacked persistence in making contacts- and the realness of being a researcher came to life. Yes, I had read the books and read articles, but now I had to do my own research. This was where the rubber met the road, and I had the wrong set of tires.

I began contacting women to be part of my writing groups in the fall of 2010. Some women I contacted did not return my calls, my emails, my handwritten notes, even phone calls from my mother. Others came, then realized I was going to be sharing their writing and didn't come back for a second meeting. A few came to a few meetings but then got intimidated by the task and stopped coming. All this resulted in a limited number of participants.

Once the meetings started, and we really began discussing the women's experiences, some conflict arose. They did not trust that I knew what had happened during that time. My confirmation of my academic expertise of the Chicanos Movement did not help either. I recognized this and tried my best to step back to acknowledge my position. I let the women lead the conversation, and this helped build trust. Another thing that built trust was my willingness to listen to the four women. It would have been easy for me to tell them what I read, and holding it as truth, but that would have built animosity. Keeping an open mind was difficult; that I cannot lie about.

A final last reflection I would like to make concerns the interaction and reconnection with family once you do go home to conduct research: Having decided to return home to conduct research meant that I would have greater interaction with family. This became truer to me because I was spending nights at my mother's home when I traveled to Cristal. My mother would also have visitors at her home, mostly family from out of state or out of town, which meant that I became a host to others in a home that was no longer my own.

Conducting research at home also meant that I took on other family responsibilities, such as taking my older parents to doctors' appointments and older family members to do grocery shopping. Other responsibilities included: bringing home cakes and other goods not easily available in a rural town like Cristal, impromptu baby-sitting, and driving nephews to or from school. All are things that can be enjoyable but yet can wear on you when all you want to do is finish this interview or write this one thing up but have to stop or reschedule to do something for your family.

Relationship of findings to previous research

This research builds on previous research by establishing a greater understanding of what women, not directly in the spotlight, have experienced in the Chicano Movement. The stories our women shared were intimate and personal in nature. This side of the Movement has not been seen in other research but is necessary to build into the narrative of the Chicano Movement. The inclusion of less vocal participants of the Movement is important because the movement was not accomplished by a few in the spotlight.

This work, like that of Delgado Bernal (1998), includes women into the narrative of the Chicano Movement. Delgado Bernal's work was about the 1968 Los Angeles blowouts. She focused on the women as grassroots organizers. While this work does not focus on the women leaders in Cristal, it does focus on women, which is what Delgado Bernal focused on. This work connects to other research on the Chicano Movement that chose to include gender and gender analysis.

The findings of this research connect to other findings in that it sees that women had different experiences during the Chicano Movement compared to males. This view had not been studied in Crystal City. Reflections of the Movement in Crystal City have mostly come from male participants. While the two sexes lived and worked for the Movement, both prospectives have not been covered fully. This research allows for a more complete look at the Chicano Movement experiences.

Most important, this study's findings relate to previous research in that a closer look into the schools as a political arena is explored. Trujillo (1998) discussed in his findings that the schools were a main transmission of Chicano politics. Navarro (1998) also tells us that the schools was seen by Jose Angel Gutierrez as an opportune place to start a peaceful revolution. The schools were a good place to start consciousness raising. From this point, my work hypothesizes that once the schools no longer were a place of political awareness, the idealism of the Chicano Movement began to fade in the view of the people.

Implications for future research

Future research should include the look at later generations of Cristaleños who grew up in Cristal after the Movement died down. A specific group to be looked at would be people who graduated from Crystal City High School from 1980 to 1989. This would be an interesting group to study because its members were in schools at the height of the RUP control of the school board. This group would have seen, although at young ages, the full implementation of the peaceful revolution in the schools. They would also have seen its slow decline. However, in general, a wider analysis at outcomes within Cristal's schools would be fruitful in gaining the perspectives of younger Cristaleños and their ideas of the Chicano Movement.

Future research should also include a much larger scale of life histories of women in Crystal City. This study was intimate in nature and only included a small group of women willing to share in a writing experience. Future studies should focus on life histories of more women who lived and worked in Cristal during the 1970s. This larger-scale study could look at two groups of women. One group could be women who lived and worked in Cristal during that time and stayed in Cristal until now or at least another

15 years. The second group could be women who lived during the Chicano Movement in Cristal and then decided to leave Cristal -- who did not spend older adult years in town. What could be found is a totally different view of what the Movement meant or its long-term effect on Cristal. Their perspective on the benefits of the Movement would also differ.

Yet another group to look at would be the children of Cristaleños very involved in the movement, such as Jose Angel and Luz Gutierrez. Luz Gutierrez did not grow up in Crystal City. What would a child of a Chicano Movement leader think of Cristal today? Did they ever go back? What are their views of a place where they may have been born or spent part of their childhood? Another group to include here would be children of people who went to Crystal City to help or work for the RUP and be apart of the Movement. Some of these people met their significant others there or had children there, what effect did the Movement have on those people and their children.

An important theme touched upon here but not fully conceptualized is that all four of the participants were a part of the Raza Libre Party. This small and short-lived group has only been discussed in Trujillo's (1998) work and here. A more developed and in depth study of this independent group deserves its own work, its own study.

Lastly, future research should include an intimate look at key women players in Cristal's political movements. While Severita Lara, a 1969 walkout leader, has been interviewed many times and a young adult book has been written about her, other key women players remain unheard of: Diana Garcia Palacios, Luz Gutierrez, and Diana Serna, to name a few living key figures. Unfortunately, some women who would have been wonderful to speak with passed away, among them Virgina Muzquiz and Elvirita De La Fuente. An in-depth look into these women's views and reflections would prove a wonderful addition to the story of the Chicano Movement in Crystal City.

Limitations of findings

One the limitations of the study is the small number of participants. Again, the study was intimate in nature and did not include many participants. A much larger scale study would have gained a greater scope of women's stories, but would not have yielded such personal writings. A larger group of interviews of women would have been beneficial in creating a more inclusive narrative.

A second limitation is the limited interactions with the children of the women. Each child was interviewed two times. This allowed for follow-up questions to clarify statements. The limited number of interviews however, did not give us a more personal interaction with the children. The interviews were limited due to time limitations. More interviews with the children could have resulted in more in depth knowledge of what the children's lives were like and what they attributed as positives having grown up in Cristal.

The final limitation was that, except for a short conversation with former journalist Juan Ramon Palomo, a Crystal City native who offered a bit of historical perspective, I did not speak to men. Men were not included in the writing sessions. The women's husbands or ex-husbands were not interviewed. The only men included in this study were the children of Martina and Angelina. Interviews with the women's husbands could have resulted in more insight as to how many stories of the Chicano Movement were shared or not shared with their children. Also a joint interview with the husbands and the women could have resulted in something entirely different. However, my focus of this study was to work specifically with women. I wanted to resist a male-dominated retelling of the movement and focus on everyday women's ideas.

Conclusion

We learned several significant things from this intimate study of four women and their experiences during the Chicano Movement in Crystal City, as well as, the stories they shared with their youngest child. We learned that the women's participation in politics during the Chicano Movement varied. We learned that the women dealt with discrimination during their young years that has stayed with them until today. The Movement affected the way the women reflected on these experiences. It allowed for consciousness raising that affected the way Martina, Angelina, Tomasita and Marina reflected on the Movement and how or what stories they shared with their children.

The children, Martin, Angel and Cristela, had varied views of the Movement and its effect on Crystal City. We saw that Martin perceived the Movement as a negative period and he associated it with negative economic effects on the city. Angel could see the benefits of the Movement because he saw how it raised expectations of Mexican Americans and, to an extent, educational attainment. Finally, we saw that Cristela was almost in the middle of both Martin and Angel. She could see how the town benefited but also associated a depressed economy to the Movement.

From previous research we see that as the schools were no longer a political hotspot for transmitting political ideology, the children of our women saw the Movement in a much different way. We also see a relation between the schools as the start of a peaceful revolution to the ending of that revolution. A move from inclusive bilingual education to a more compensatory model in the 1980s was a piece to the puzzle that was the coming apart of the Movement in Crystal. Another piece was the transition of power from the Raza Unida Party to persons who had grown tired of the Movement. With this piece goes the changing of Raza Unida Party members back to the National Democratic Party.

Finally, we were able to read Martina's, Angelina's, Tomasita's and Marina's personal stories of the Chicano Movement in the town where they were born and raised, where they saw history happen. We were privileged to read their words about discrimination. We got to share their her-story.

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