

## Chapter Four: Beyond perceptions: Different paths for Chicanos and Mexicans

*Yet even as we speak, there are those who are preparing to divide us, the spin masters and negative ad peddlers who embrace the politics of anything goes. Well, I say to them tonight, there's not a liberal America and a conservative America- there's the United States of America. There's not a Black America and White America and Latino America and Asian America- there's the United States of America.*

*-Barack Obama*

In 1980, Rodolfo de la Garza believed that Chicanos and Mexicans would be interacting increasingly due to increased migration and Mexico's oil boom.<sup>213</sup> The oil boom ended two years later, but the Mexican migration wave certainly did not wane. In 2005, twenty five years later, accompanied by a deepening economic integration between the United States and Mexico and the sequelae of September 11<sup>th</sup>, the shape of the Chicano-Mexican relationship and possibilities for a coalition demonstrate that these groups, despite having similar roots, are taking very different paths. This study set out to affirm that because of differing agendas, Chicanos and Mexicans will not be able to work together towards a common agenda solely based on their cultural commonalities. As ascertained by interviews with leading scholars and government officials as well as a questionnaire on Mexican- Chicano perceptions and relations, neither side believed a strong bond would soon arise.

By conducting interviews with scholars and government officials from both sides, it was hoped to gain the bigger picture from those who are aware of the political as well as academic stance. The bigger picture showed that while the treatment and understanding of Chicanos has greatly changed throughout the years, both in the U.S. and

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<sup>213</sup> Rodolfo O. de la Garza, "Chicanos and U.S. Foreign Policy: The Future of Chicano- Mexican Relations," *The Western Political Quarterly* 33 (December 1980): 571.

Mexico, this group is more aligned with fulfilling their needs within a U.S. scope than with dealing with Mexico, a country they occasionally visit, and where they may even have some family left. Chicanos and Mexican migrants have historically not been seen in a positive light as demonstrated in Chapter Three, and although the Mexican understanding of this group has improved, Chicanos do not need a positive image in Mexico- they are more concerned with living their lives and getting ahead in the U.S.

The questionnaire's objective was to obtain first hand opinions by Chicanos and Mexicans, despite the limitations that came along with the samples. The interviews and literature research had already provided the bigger picture, and it was hoped to obtain the perspective of both these groups to specifically identify where the misunderstandings and misconceptions lay. As many, such as Lorenzo Meyer, had already pointed out, middle class Mexicans, whom have limited personal connections to migration, have a highly indifferent or uninformed view of Chicanos. The findings from the questionnaires revealed that in order for Central Mexicans to have a more informed view of Chicanos, it was necessary to have an understanding of Mexican migration as well. Aside from knowledge of migration, it was found that the participants still need to learn more about the intricacies of life in the United States as part of a minority, the reality of Chicanos. The majority of Mexican participants associated Chicanos with Mexican migrants, and thus felt they had lower economic possibilities and education. As is true with any other ethnic group in the United States, Chicanos are growing in heterogeneity. Additionally, Mexican participants felt it was in the hands of Chicanos to form a coalition, even if the Mexican government or NGOs put forth an effort to do so, because of the difficulties in maneuvering within U.S. politics. These participants felt that because Chicanos are a part

of the U.S. political system and know it better than a Mexican NGO or government, a coalition would only be beneficiary and acceptable if Chicano participation was involved. Others outright refused to join forces. Further research would be necessary to ascertain whether those who live near the border have a more realistic view of Chicanos, but for now, the hypothesis that Mexicans in central Mexico have either an uninformed or indifferent view of Chicanos has been supported.

The Chicano side revealed similar misconceptions. The participants in the study revealed that while they do visit Mexico and may even have some family remaining in Mexico, their view of the Mexican middle class and/or those who have not migrated is heavily clouded by their contact with migrants. Chicanos were more sympathetic to the plight of Mexican migrants than to the political and social problems that Mexico faces. When asked about forming a coalition with Mexicans, the majority of Chicanos agreed, but without an understanding that to be Mexican does not mean being a migrant, and it became clear that the fostering of such a relationship involved a series of intricacies which Chicanos did not fully understand. Consequently, both group's responses to the questionnaire made it clear that there are many misconceptions to be worked out before their common interest in migrants, and seemingly only common interest, will force them to acknowledge and work through their differences.

In order to situate these findings within the context of the theoretical framework laid in Chapter One, we return to Shibutani's symbolic interactionism approach to social psychology. As was explained in Chapter One, Shibutani holds that: "what characterizes the interactionist approach is the contention that *human nature and the social order are*

*products of communication.*”<sup>214</sup> Communication is vital, and while geographical distance does not define a relationship on the social distance continuum, Chicanos and Mexicans do not have the necessary means by which to create a primary relationship, albeit with a few exceptions. By virtue of their birthplace, Chicanos and Mexicans develop a huge gap in their relationship- “a man’s personality- those distinctive behavior patterns that characterize a given individual- *is regarded as developing and being reaffirmed from day to day in his interaction with his associates.*”<sup>215</sup> If neither group has much social contact with the other, the case of the participants included in this study, they will not take each other into account in the formation of their reality. While they are separated by geographic distance, the lack of efforts for both groups to learn and understand the other is the element which creates the distance they now share. This idea was reflected in the questionnaire’s findings: just as Chicanos are not aware of the workings of life in Mexico- including political, social, economic, cultural issues- aside from that which they associate with migrants, Mexicans are not aware of the same issues in Chicano life. This is further cemented by Shibutani’s understanding of social interaction:

If the motivation of behavior, the formation of personality, and the evolution of group structure all occur in social interaction, it follows logically that attention should be focused upon the interchanges that go on among human beings as they come into contact with one another.<sup>216</sup>

Within the social distance continuum, Chicanos and Mexicans face several barriers to move their relationship from the secondary pole to the primary pole. First, according to the questionnaire’s responses from both sides, there are still too many misunderstandings and misconceptions between both groups which stand in the way of

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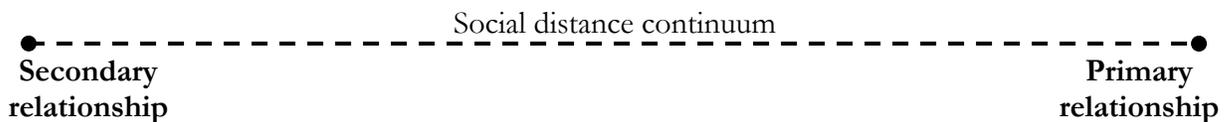
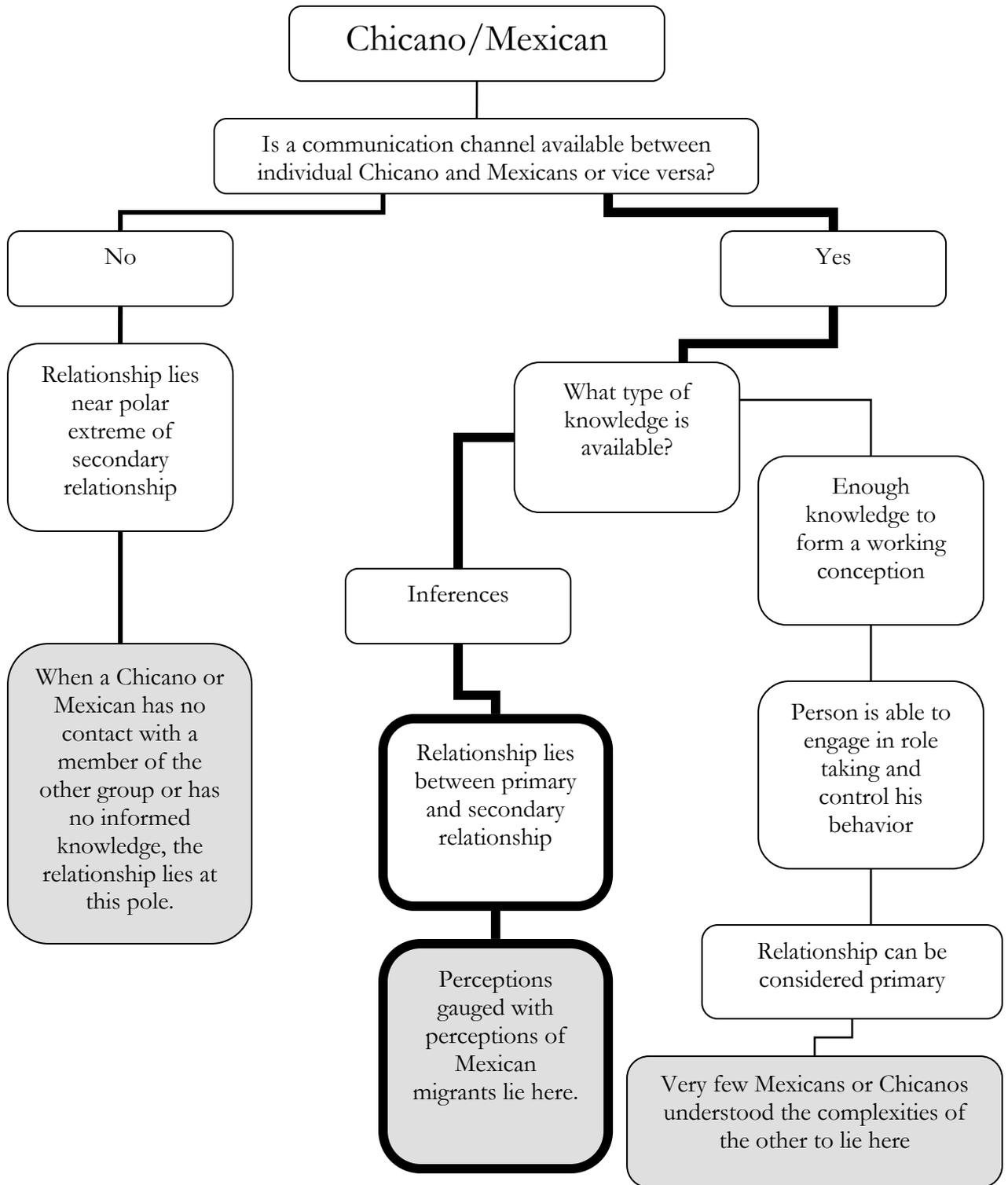
<sup>214</sup> Shibutani, 22. Emphasis in original.

<sup>215</sup> Shibutani, 23. Emphasis in original.

<sup>216</sup> Shibutani, 23. Emphasis in original.

creating a successful alliance. Second, as Chicanos are integrated into the U.S., the American Dream and their needs within the United States take priority. Mexico becomes a part of their past, sometimes to be esteemed, other times forgotten. Their present needs within the country take priority, and as a community that has not been acknowledged on a national level, their efforts must be concerted there. Mexican politics also become a barrier in that only until recently has the government wanted to take a more proactive role in migration issues- not a forte considering Mexican migration has been ongoing for over a century.

The Mexican understanding of Chicanos is linked through migration, and without an established knowledge of it, it is highly likely that an understanding of Chicanos will not be complete for many years to come, if at all. Thus, the creation of a coalition between Chicanos and Mexicans is entirely up to Chicanos. Mexico can no longer decide where the relationship will go. The Mexican government has only recently shown an interest in embracing, even acknowledging the successful Chicano, and much to its chagrin, it was too late. Jorge Bustamante advocated in the 70s for an *encuentro* between both groups, but few listened. Figure 4. illustrates these points.



**Figure 4.** The Chicano- Mexican relationship stands at a point between the primary and secondary poles according to Shibutani's interactionist approach. Created by author.

A coalition will not be established based solely on cultural commonalities between Chicanos and Mexicans because too many misconceptions and misunderstandings among them stand in the way. While it would not be beneficial for Chicanos to have the aid of Mexicans, neither would the aid of Chicanos be helpful for Mexicans. Even though Chicanos are the principal group openly defending the Mexican position on the issue of undocumented Mexican migrants, this may not be a sufficient reason for Mexico to seek closer ties with them. Mexico has established its own ways to deal with migration issues, and for the time being, the right to vote while abroad seems to be the most far out the Mexican government is willing to go for the moment. Chicanos, through organizations like National Council of La Raza, take action to defend the rights of migrants, but solely on their grounds. Business wise, a closer relationship has been built, considering the implementation of NAFTA in 1994, but because of economic interests it is only logical to have done so regardless of whether common roots are shared. Because Mexico in general still does not understand Chicanos, it is highly unlikely that it will turn to them for help in dealing with migrants or any other Mexican issue. Furthermore, because Mexico is still learning to deal with American politics and lobbying, as demonstrated by President Fox's failure to gain any ground on migration reform, it is highly unlikely that it will consider Chicanos as allies. Thus, the area in which Mexicans might consider creating a closer link would be through cultural and educational opportunities.

While it is doubtful that most Mexicans are willing to take a step towards a growing understanding of Chicanos, some Mexican organizations have made efforts increase Chicanos' knowledge about Mexico. The most effective and comprehensive

group has been the Fundación Solidaridad Mexico-Americana, established in 1994, seeks to promote the knowledge and understanding between Mexicans and communities of Mexican origin in the United States. Additionally, they strive to bolster educational and commercial opportunities of both communities through their corporate memberships. Of particular value and innovation is their effort through the creations of a summer program which is aimed at bringing Chicano youth leadership to Mexico so that they may understand the country from within. Furthermore, this program aims to help Chicano youth realize their role in the context of U.S.- Mexico relations, an effort which could bring Chicanos and Mexicans closer, but is a goal still far away. Out of the organizations that have a foot in both countries, Fundación Solidaridad México Americana has made the largest strides in trying to make a difference in the relationship between Chicanos and Mexicans. For the moment, the Fundación is making an effort to show Chicanos that someone thinks of them.

There are four major findings from the study of Mexican-Chicano perceptions. First and foremost, the future of the relationship is in Chicano's hands. While the majority of the Chicano participants responded that they would be willing to work with the Mexican government or NGOs in order to promote the Chicano/Latino agenda in the United States, the majority of Mexican participants outright thought it was a bad idea and that the Mexican side should not be involved with Chicanos but instead focus its energies on its migrants. The Mexican side, at least the governmental, does not see it this way: "Para mediados del presente siglo, uno de cada cinco estadounidenses será de ascendencia mexicana. Dependerá de nosotros crear las condiciones propicias para que los hijos u nietos de nuestros migrantes, mantengan sus vínculos con el país de sus

ancestros.”<sup>217</sup> Chicanos are the ones responsible for the future of the relationship for various reasons. First, as U.S. citizens, their needs and their ability to fulfill them is strictly through their present context. In other words, their life is rooted within a U.S. societal scheme, and they work towards finding a niche within it. As a minority in the United States, their worries, hopes, and dreams take place within a U.S. context. When Chicano participants were asked to write down their thoughts on what Mexicans might think of Chicanos, some insightful participants replied:

- I don't think they think very much about us.
- I think they think we are more fortunate than we really are. That we have everything going for us--when really there is a lot to confront to make it in America. I think they have the impression that we have to give up our Mexican selves to be here. Perhaps a piece of us is gone but we are still of the same blood and heritage.
- I think it depends on whether or not they have family in the U.S. If they do, then they know more about the struggle we have to face. If not, then their perception is limited to what they have heard from others.

Although these participants believed the Mexican perception rested on the complexity of the Chicano experience in the United States, the Mexican participants had a different view. From the participants who wrote that they did know a Chicano, the overarching theme in their reply to their image of Chicanos rested on their border identity.

- Que están en desventaja a los demás estadounidenses, porque a pesar de tener los mismos derechos continúan siendo víctimas de la discriminación.
- Que son gente que busca otras oportunidades de salir adelante, que no se sienten muy orgullosos de México porque este país no les

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<sup>217</sup> Luis Ernesto Derbez, “Clausura,” in *Los Mexicanos de Aquí y de Allá: ¿Perspectivas Comunes?*, ed. Roger Diaz de Cossio, (Mexico City: Fundación Solidaridad México Americana, A.C. y Senado de la República, 2004), 450.

brindo oportunidades para salir adelante y por eso justifican la decisión de sus padres de querer que sus hijos nacieran en EE.UU.

- Para mí son personas mexicanas pues aunque no nacieron en México su origen está ahí. Creo que son un grupo que no encaja ni en USA ni en México.

In a discussion about whether being of Mexican heritage affected one's stance on U.S. - Mexico relations, a Senior Foreign Service Officer, himself a son of migrants, argued that because the "issue basket changes" once one is born in the United States, Chicanos' "acceptance of the American Dream" also takes the place of any need to think about establishing links and working with Mexico.<sup>218</sup> While the Mexican migrant might have the living dream of returning to their home one day, that home is in the United States for Chicanos. Once a part of the United States, Mexico becomes a part of their past. Their "Mexico lindo" images keep their heritage alive, but for the majority, that is where their connection to Mexico stops. There are very few Chicano scholars who come to Mexico to study the country, much less to understand their relationship with the Mexican middle and upper classes. This leads up to the second major conclusion.

While few of the Chicano and Mexican participants demonstrated an understanding of each other's reality- the economic, political, and heterogeneity of their social facets- their common link was the image of the Mexican migrant. For both groups, the image of the Mexican migrants is very much alive and mainly what keeps these two groups linked. According to the symbolic interactionist approach, so that individuals can understand each other, they need an open channel of communication. As was the case for the majority of Chicanos, the type of knowledge available of Mexicans comes through

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<sup>218</sup> Senior Foreign Service Officer, interview by author, 11 April 2005, Mexico City, United States Embassy, Mexico City.

their experience in their home town & state, family, and visits to Mexico. However, if the contact is mainly with the migrant side- migrant parents, migrants in their communities, and visits to heavy migration sending states, their immediate image and frame of reference for all Mexicans will undoubtedly be connected to migrants. The mixing of these images is evident and even acknowledged in Chicano responses:

- Mexicans have a strong work ethic. We are a proud and noble people. We are conquered people. But we still have not given up. I am proud of Mexican industry (oil, telecommunications, auto, and media). I am proud of Mexican American achievement. We are a mixed race. I love Mexico City, but am turned off by bourgeoisie. I am enamored with *campesino* life and the life of Indigenous people. I am proud that Mexicans are the majority in the U.S. Latino community.
- A complex nation of people whose society is structured like any other by region and race (ethnic difference), class, gender, and sexuality. Despite the limits posed above [*reference to instructions not to include Mexican migrants in perception of Mexicans*] it is impossible for me to think of Mexicans without thinking of Mexican immigrants.
- When I think Mexicans I think of the images of poverty that I can see in Baja California and in their persistence to cross the border (or to rely on family that has crossed the border). I think that there is a huge class divide in Mexico. There are those that can live comfortably and have positions of authority and influence. But there are those that can barely scrape by. I don't blame them for their misfortune, but it is an image that comes to mind given this description of "Mexican." [*reference to instructions not to include Mexican migrants in perception of Mexicans*] I often feel judged by them being born here with opportunities and having to put aside parts of my culture at times to get ahead in the scientific community. I don't want to be a sellout--I want to fight for the improvement of the Mexican Americans. But in the faces of those that I see across the border, I feel judged.

When Mexicans were asked whether they would be willing to work with Chicanos, whether through the Mexican government or an NGO, most replied that they wouldn't think it was a good idea because both groups are so different.

- No sería efectivo porque ellos no creen en las instituciones mexicanas.
- El cabildeo y la participación política de los Chicanos es un fracaso.
- No porque ello ya no conocen los principales problemas de nuestra nación.

Out of the one hundred fifty-two respondents, one Mexican participant saw it as an opportunity to work closer with Chicanos.

- Creo que seria bueno porque eso implicaría un tipo de apoyo y unión entre los mexicanos y los chicanos.

Thus, unless Mexican migration halts, the image of the Mexican migrant will continue influencing their perceptions of each other. While other ethnic groups have had a history of marked migration, the Irish for example, their massive migration stops after a certain time period. The images that Irish Americans have of the Irish are related to their history and roots, but there is a marked separation. This is not the case for Mexicans or Chicanos. Santa Cruz explains it best:

No other immigrant community in the United States has the characteristics of the Mexicans. Many were settled in the Southwest before secession and became third-class citizens of their new country. Others took refuge in the United States during the Mexican Revolution, and others- the vast majority- came to satisfy their own needs and the demand for labor born in the second half of the twentieth century. They have all managed to maintain a single cultural flow. This population (anywhere between 22 and 25 million people including U.S. citizens and legal and undocumented residents) has been both a stopgap and a scapegoat in the two countries for both labor and political matters at different points in time.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Eduardo Santa Cruz, "Chicano Literature: Mediator of discordant borders" *Voices of Mexico* 70 (Jan.-March 2005): 117.

Until Mexico is able to create the jobs necessary to support those who enter the work force each year, Mexican migrants will be a part of the reality for each side. The Mexican government has recently made large strides to support its migrants, everything from the establishment of *voto en el exterior* to the creation of a branch aimed to serve the needs of Mexicans in the exterior, and this is very much alive in the minds of Mexicans. Immigrants “always carry traces of the border with them, whether it is through their markings as Latinos, through documentation procedures or through media constructions of immigration.”<sup>220</sup> Interestingly, the friction migrants feel in the United States does not always deal with dominant society.

Allowing Mexican citizens abroad to vote has been one of the most polemic debates regarding Mexican migrants in the United States. President Fox submitted a proposal to Congress on June 15, 2004 to allow Mexicans living abroad to vote in the 2006 presidential race which would have allowed an estimated 10 million Mexicans<sup>221</sup> who reside abroad—98 percent of them in the United States—to vote in the 2006 presidential election. Since 1988, 15 proposals have been submitted by various political parties, including President Fox’s Partido de Acción Nacional. The possibility of voting while abroad fizzled on March 14, 2005 when the President of Mexico’s Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), Luis Carlos Ugalde, presented the Mexican Senate with an analysis of the feasibility of extending voting rights for the July 2006 presidential elections. The IFE’s analysis includes the shortfalls and inconsistencies in the bill passed by the Chamber of Deputies on February 22, 2005. According to the IFE, the bill’s

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<sup>220</sup> Susan Mains, “An Anatomy of Race and Immigration Politics in California,” *Social & Cultural Geography* 1, no. 2 (2000): 152.

<sup>221</sup> Gerardo Albino Gonzales, “NUMÉRUS,” *MX Sin Fronteras* 16 (April 2005): 48.

primary deficiencies stem from the fact that Mexico's Federal Electoral Code (COFIPE) cannot be applied extraterritorially. The IFE concluded that voting abroad is viable if and only if the election administration guarantees the constitutional principles of certainty, legality, independence, impartiality, and objectivity, as well as the casting of universal, free, secret, and direct votes, and declared that the Chamber of Deputies' bill, as presented, did not provide IFE with the resources necessary to guarantee this standard.<sup>222</sup> Thus, Ugalde was singled out to receive the political cost of such a report and despite objections by Mexicans in the U.S., it is increasingly difficult for the vote abroad to be feasible within the 2006 election timeframe. While on the Mexican side this initiative was seen as a positive move to connect with migrants, the Chicano side viewed it solely as a red herring for all the other issues the Mexican government has yet to cover for its migrants. While voting while abroad will not be possible, it is stipulated that voting by mail could be an alternative.

While the creation of the "other" has been focused on the perceptions of dominant society on Mexican migrants, we cannot overlook that a huge conflict also exists between immigrants and Chicanos. The clearest example of one of the earliest conflicts happened during the Great Depression. As has been many a case during economic downturns, the United States faced one of the most difficult economic situations during this era, and consequently began forcefully deporting Mexican migrants to Mexico. Without knowing

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<sup>222</sup> Specifically, the IFE report cites: 1) the lack of investigative and adjudication mechanisms at the IFE's disposal outside national territory; 2) the unfeasible timeframe for implementing the vote abroad; 3) the estimated \$320 million cost of administering elections abroad (the IFE's budget for 2005 is approximately \$20 million); 4) insufficient trained personnel (the IFE estimates it would need to devote 78 percent of its current staff to administering the vote abroad); 5) limits to the IFE's ability to regulate campaign finances abroad (the COFIPE prohibits campaign contributions from foreign individuals or entities); and 6) the inapplicability of media regulations stipulated in the COFIPE to media organizations in the United States (specifically, the candidates' ability to purchase TV or radio slots in Mexican stations broadcasting in the United States without regulation, and the possibility of U.S. citizens using the U.S. media to support or discredit candidates, also without applicable IFE regulations).

it, the U.S. government deported Chicanos as well and ended up serving as the catalyst for problems within the two groups. While the stigma of being an immigrant in the United States is expected to a certain degree by migrants, Chicanos resent the association they receive as well.

More than anything, social boundaries divide Mexican immigrants and Chicanos. Such tension, however, is “almost inevitable in light of the immigration and the on-going diversification of the Latino community.”<sup>223</sup> Furthermore, Johnson believes this discrimination serves as a “metaphoric border between people of Latin American ancestry” because it divides a community “with members who have much in common, including dominant society's classification of the entire group as ‘foreigners’ to the United States.”<sup>224</sup> When this border is created between groups that share their culture, not only can the image of the border create a division, but it also leads to the support of actions to further divide the people.

The most acrimonious example is the division of the Chicano community on the issue of immigration. “To state the obvious, not all (and perhaps not many) Mexican-Americans favor open borders with Mexico.”<sup>225</sup> Another event which demonstrated the friction between migrants and Chicanos was California's Proposition 187, which bars undocumented persons from receiving public benefits, for which about 25% of Latino voters, all citizens who are more-or-less integrated into the political community supported.<sup>226</sup> It could be said that the need for Chicanos to feel an accepted part of U.S.

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<sup>223</sup> Kevin R. Johnson, “Immigration and Latino Identity,” *Chicano Latino Law Review* 19 (Spring 1998): 200.

<sup>224</sup> Johnson, 201.

<sup>225</sup> Johnson, 201.

<sup>226</sup> Barbara Driscoll, Centro de Investigación Sobre América del Norte, interview by author, 15 March, 2005, Puebla, tape recording, Puebla, Mexico.

society has driven some to believe that they have nothing in common with Mexican immigrants. Putting it the context of boundaries, the “examination of the everyday attitudes and interactions among the Mexican-origin community reveals the complex and multifaceted dimensions of intra-ethnic relations.”<sup>227</sup>

At home in Mexico, these migrants are not always been thought of highly either, an image which has changed drastically in recent years with increasingly available information which delineates the difficulties they face in crossing and living in the United States. Immigrants are “exiled by being represented as ‘outside’ at home (and abroad).”<sup>228</sup> Currently, most migration scholars would agree that the Mexican government has begun to treat its migrants as heroes, mainly for the sizeable remittances sent each year.

By emphasizing the existence of a boundary, the United States has been able to create an identity of illegality for the migrants who cross each year. After September 11, 2001, the rhetoric surrounding the terrorist attacks furthered the establishment of an “us” versus “them.” An understanding of the discourse of terrorism reveals that the United States has relied heavily on the creation of a negative connotation for immigrants, or that of illegality, as an effort to control illegal immigration without direct legislation. When someone believes they are “illegal,” it greatly affects their self-concept. An identity of illegality denotes not being accepted; feeling uneasy about carrying out daily activities for fear of being caught and deported, and it also stirs nativist movements against migrants. Not only do migrants feel they are unwelcome by the government, but they also feel unwanted by society at large. However, while a mention of Chicano- Mexican

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<sup>227</sup> Gilda Laura Ochoa, “Mexican American’s Attitudes toward and Interactions with Mexican Immigrants: A Qualitative Analysis of Conflict and Cooperation,” *Social Science Quarterly* 81 (March 2000): 10.

<sup>228</sup> Mains, 151.

migrant relations is included in order to explain the availability of a frame of reference for their answers on the questionnaire used for this study, it is clear that the perceptions that both of these two groups have of each other is an entirely new and large undertaking.

While the relationship between Chicanos and Mexicans is not one where both sides understand each other, the fact that each side has shown an effort to learn and acknowledge the other more in recent times. Ambassador Icaza agrees:

It will take the recent developments in U.S.-Mexico relations, perhaps the most important thing that has happened in the past ten years besides becoming partners in NAFTA, in having our problems, we've been having good dialogue on bilateral relations in how the human dimension is in fact having a big impact in the relation between both countries. Even though we have had migration for more than a hundred years to this country, and even though some of the original settlers of America, especially the Southwest were Mexicans or came with the Spaniards, the fact is that in the past ten years these human relations, dimensions, have grown in importance.<sup>229</sup>

This increasing attention to the human dimension, as Ambassador Icaza puts it, will form a larger part of the Chicano- Mexican relationship, and in turn, takes us to the third major finding of this study.

The third major idea which arose in this study is the disjuncture between scholars' perception of the Chicano- Mexican relationship and participants' perceptions. Academia reveals the evolution of a more positive image of Chicanos, but participants' attitudes revealed negative perceptions still exist. While in the academic world, everyone from historian Lorenzo Meyer to Ambassador Icaza, agree that Mexico has accepted and changed to an image of the Chicano in a more positive light throughout the years, this view mainly holds for those who have increased contact and an understanding through

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<sup>229</sup> Carlos De Icaza, Ambassador to the United States from Mexico, interview by author, 19 July 2004, Washington D.C., tape recording, Mexican Cultural Institute, Washington D.C.

study or interaction of the situation. While the Mexican participants did not reveal an outright negative and pessimistic view of Chicanos, their responses were still mainly tied to Chicano's loss of identity, use of a different Spanish, associations with the lower class and low education, and lack of an identifiable identity. While this view is a bit distanced from that of scholars, it could very well be that the location of the Mexican participants studied had a great deal to do with their replies. Due to the geographical distance, it is rarer for a Mexican in the central part of the country to interact with a Chicano. Those who live on the border, however, would probably have a more informed view of Chicanos as well as an understanding of how they fit, or don't fit, in U.S. mainstream society. Bustamante agrees in that to live near the border "gives you daily contact with people from both cultures. To be at the border is to be on top of a fence that looks at two different lands that are neighbors."<sup>230</sup> In order to change these views so that a more realistic one is replaced in the minds of Chicanos and Mexicans will be a very difficult endeavor, and one which neither side may choose to seek. Santa Cruz suggests:

Mexico should take advantage of the specific dynamic it establishes with the Mexican-American communities to bring down old borders and be a co-participant in the creation of a new discourse in which it could dialogue more frequently and familiarly with its compatriots from the North. Then only imaginary border will remain to be crossed by the fiction re-generated on both sides of it.<sup>231</sup>

The fourth major finding revealed that Chicanos and the ever present waves of migration are challenging the Mexican conception of national identity. While Mexican participants felt that they were very different from Chicanos and their main criticism of Chicanos was based on their identity crisis and the choice of Chicanos' to call themselves

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<sup>230</sup> Jorge A. Bustamante, "Demystifying the United States- Mexico Border," *The Journal of American History* 79 (Sept. 1992): 486.

<sup>231</sup> Santa Cruz, 120.

“Mexican” while Mexicans felt they were not, Mexicans also revealed a changing perception of national identity. While these were their main criticisms, they also held resentment of Chicanos because Chicanos want to forget about their Mexican roots. We can conclude that the Mexican participants are no longer strictly held to the belief that in order to be Mexican you have to be born in Mexico. The conception of national identity that these participants held demonstrates that national identity is now fluid, even for a country that was dominated by nationalism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

However, as mentioned earlier, it is still very much in the hands of Chicanos to go through with this effort, but their drive to do so is questionable. The drive to foster a stronger relationship existed during the Chicano Movement, but Mexico’s hesitation to take the leap marked the willingness for Chicanos to attempt it once more. Now that Chicanos have established themselves in the United States, it is difficult for them to turn around and think of Mexico once more as an ally.