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Coloniality and Border(ed) Violence:
San Diego, San Ysidro and the U-S//Mexico Border

By

Roberto Delgadillo Hernández

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Ethnic Studies

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in Charge:

Professor Ramón Grosfoguel, Chair

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Professor Joseph Nevins

Fall 2010

Coloniality and Border(ed) Violence:
San Diego, San Ysidro and the U-S//Mexico Border

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By Roberto Delgadillo Hernández

Abstract

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By

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Considered the “World's Busiest Border Crossing,” the San Ysidro port of entry is located in a small, predominantly Mexican and Spanish-speaking community between San Diego and Tijuana. The community of San Ysidro was itself annexed by the City of San Diego in the mid-1950s, in what was publicly articulated as a dispute over water rights. This dissertation argues that the annexation was over who was to have control of the port of entry, and would in turn, set the stage for a gendered/racialized power struggle that has contributed to both real and symbolic violence on the border.

This dissertation is situated at the crossroads of urban studies, border studies and ethnic studies and places violence as a central analytical category. As such, this interdisciplinary work is manifold. It is a community history of San Ysidro in its simultaneous relationship to the U-S///Mexico border and to the City of San Diego. In addition, it considers multiple forms of both direct and symbolic violence often overshadowed by attention to drug violence: the annexation dispute in the 1950's (territorial); the 1984 McDonald's Massacre of predominantly Mexican patrons (corporeal/racial); a subsequent fight over a memorial monument (cultural/symbolic); the resurgence of vigilante-like anti-immigrant groups (ideological); and critical responses by cultural producers to the very existence of the border wall. In sum, it considers the relationship between coloniality, nation-state borders and violence to understand the region's role in an increasingly globalized world.

In analyzing the varied responses by local residents, this study thus considers broader theoretical issues of raced/gendered violence, power, and nation-state borders. It challenges two established assumptions in much of the literature on border cities:

- 1) the normative descriptor "San Diego-Tijuana" as a proper name for the region, and
- 2) a related insistence on "San Diego-Tijuana" as an exception in relation to other U.S. counterparts among border cities.

In doing so, my dissertation unsettles the demarcation of San Diego as a border city, given its location and relationship to San Ysidro and the U-S///Mexico border?

In this dissertation, San Ysidro functions as a lens to study the U-S///Mexico border, as San Ysidro is emblematic of globalizing processes, where local dynamics intersect and often conflict with regional, transnational, and global political/economic interests embodied in free trade policies said to make borders increasingly irrelevant. The case study of San Ysidro reveals, however, the contradictory nature of fortified yet permeable nation-state boundaries and surrounding border regions.

Para mi madre y padre que me trajeron a San Ysidro

Table of Contents

Coloniality and Border(ed) Violence: San Diego, San Ysidro and the U-S///Mexico Border

Dedication	i
List of Figures	iii
Preface	iv
Acknowledgements	vi
Vita	vii
Introduction	
Coloniality of Power, Violence and the U-S///Mexico Border	2
Chapter 1	
The Logics of Municipal Annexations at the fringe: Territorial Violence and the Structural Location of a Border(ed) Barrio	21
Chapter 2	
The 1984 McDonalds Massacre and the Politics of Memory: On Murders, Monuments and Militarization	47
Chapter 3	
At Home in the Nation: Contested Citizenship and the Structural Embeddedness of Vigilantism on the U-S///Mexico Border	76
Chapter 4	
Sonic Geographies: “We Didn’t Cross the Borders, the Borders Crossed Us”	103
Conclusion	
The Future of the U-S///Mexico Border at San Ysidro	126
References	130

List of figures

1. Map of San Ysidro in relation to San Diego	1
2. Map, Changing Municipal Boundaries in a Town in Alabama	34
3. Map, City of San Diego, City Council Districts	40
4. McDonalds Massacre Memorial Monument	48
5. Map of San Ysidro with McDonalds Detail	58
6. Photo of the front of the McDonalds following the shooting	67
7. Photo of the McDonalds site being bulldozed	68
8. Makeshift Monument raised at the site of the McDonalds	69
9. McDonalds Monument at Southwestern College	72
10. McDonalds Monument with Steel Fence	73
11. Plaque in front of the Memorial Monument	74
12. Plaque in front of the Memorial Monument with shadow	74
13. Anti-Driver's License Campaign Billboard	78
14. Here Legally Shirt worn at anti-immigrant rallies	78
15. Lead pages to Samuel Huntington's "Hispanic Challenge"	79
16. Map depicting troop movements across the border	82
17. Map with comments on Congressman Dreier proposal	83
18. Lalo Alcaraz, <i>Never Forget</i> , 2002	101

Preface

“This is my *home* this thin *edge of barbed wire*”

-Gloria Anzaldúa

Growing up in the border town of San Ysidro, only blocks from the border wall, I often looked out my elementary classroom window and would see Border Patrol agents in my school playground chasing people who looked like me. This same image would repeat itself through junior high school and high school and has stayed with me as a reflection of my own presence in this country: perceived as “immigrant” and “foreign” despite my formal status as a citizen. The image would be reinforced when on my way home from school I was often stopped by the Border Patrol myself and constantly asked where I was from, where was I going, what was I doing? The terrifying schoolyard scenes constituted my first knowledge of and lesson in the existence of uneven social structures, power, and inequality. The Border Patrol’s intense questionings in turn led me to develop my own questions. Seeking answers from elected officials in San Diego seemed like a fruitless endeavor as their attention was elsewhere. I did not allow these experiences to deter me however. Nor did I erupt with rage, though I certainly could have. I did not know it then, but already at the time my own questions were seeking to understand the systemic and structural factors that accounted for such scenarios.

While I have very vivid and clear images of the above experiences forever engraved in my thoughts, my own memory was born on July 18, 1984, when a gunman stormed a McDonalds within two blocks walking distance from my childhood home and killed over twenty, wounding another eighteen, predominantly Mexican patrons and employees. I cannot clearly remember anything before that day, but I remember *that* day. I remember how that day brought into focus the migrants I would see running across my schools’ soccer fields; brought into focus the Border Patrol officers otherwise so close to my face that their faces would blur. That summer afternoon, in essence, brought focus to my two-pronged question: Why are Mexicans in this border town hunted down and/or killed at a moment’s notice? Today, I can look back and say with clarity that I knew all too well, up close and personal, the idea posed by Ruth Wilson Gilmore about racism as “the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death.” In San Ysidro, Mexicans are hunted down and many die. I did not want to be hunted down. I did not want to die.

I was born in Guadalajara. At little over two weeks old my parents brought me to San Ysidro. When they crossed the border themselves in the mid-1960’s, they did not go to Los Angeles or other popular destinations to the north. They stayed close to the border that they too knew as home. My mother had been born in Guadalajara as well, but would spend her formative teenage years on the other side of la frontera in Tijuana. The border was a familiar place to her. My father was also from the border, but one further south, from southern Chiapas near the Mexican border with Guatemala. As life

long *fronterizos*, San Ysidro was home to them and later to my sister and myself. Upon going into labor with my sister however, they headed *south*, to Tijuana, countering the anti-immigrant logic of “anchor babies”. When I came along my family was in Guadalajara for an uncle’s wedding, otherwise I too would have made the voyage south in my mother’s belly to be born in Tijuana. This “thin edge of barbed wire” we call home is San Ysidro; others call it the busiest border crossing in the world, yet to me it is a small predominantly Mexican town on the northern side of the U-S///Mexico border.

San Ysidro is also the most southwestern point of the continental United States. It is in this regard the culmination of a long historical process that entailed the ongoing expansion of the United States’ national-territory and the relocation of its boundaries to locations further west and south. Mapped chronologically it is an “end point” of sorts, and it is from San Ysidro that I turn around and look back east to critically reflect and analyze the long historical processes, drenched in blood, that led to San Ysidro being the place that it is today. Accordingly, the blood spilled on July 18, 1984, is my own starting point, relatively speaking. And it is from here that I think. I think from the open wound of *la frontera*, situated at the crossroads of more than 500 years of colonization and the imposition of man-made national-territorial boundaries that have carved up the land in this continent *Abya Yala*, *Pachamama*, *Turtle Island*, into the geopolitical units of nation-states. I think from the border as it is the life-blood spilled, in the present and historically, that animates the questions of this dissertation. But to understand why Mexicans are hunted down and killed along the border in San Ysidro and elsewhere, my own initial research took me on some unexpected detours that, in turn, served to elucidate the nature of my concerns with violence on the U-S///Mexico border.

As I began developing my childhood concerns into pointed research questions, I often found myself stuck, unable to find much material on San Ysidro specifically. The more and more I searched, I came to realize to the extent that I found any substantive research on San Ysidro, it was often catalogued or filed under the heading or category of “San Diego” 15 miles to the north of my home on the border. This seemingly benign revelation began to take on a more insidious form, for it highlighted another aspect of the border violence that gave rise to my questions. It revealed the multiple layers that one would have to uncover if one was to address the violence that was itself bordered or marginalized with respect to other scholarly discussions of violence, but also in the invisibilizing of San Ysidro through the privileging of San Diego. Thus began the formal workings of this dissertation project as it became necessary to think about San Ysidro in its simultaneous relationship to both the U-S///Mexico border and to the racialized invisibility that the City of San Diego both generated and obscured. It is at this juncture that my dissertation engages both the urban scale and that of the world-system, for the two converge in San Ysidro in interesting ways that are arguably linked to the question of violence, both state-sanctioned and extralegal. It is in the spirit of thinking from the borders, the many literal ones my family and I have called home—and the borders of disciplines, scales, genres, cultures and the local /global interfaces—that this dissertation seeks to stand against the continued vulnerability to premature death on the U-S///Mexico border.

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This dissertation would have never even been started, much less finished, without the support of Anne Weills, Dan Seigel, Noreen Farrell, Jose Luis Sandoval, Jason Cox, Omar Figueroa, Osha Neumann, and the wonderful fighters of the NLG. To you I owe this degree for the shining intellectual and political example and commitment that was once represented by the third world Liberation Front '69 and its original vision of engaged Ethnic Studies scholarship and practice in whose footsteps few have followed. I also owe thanks to Betita Martinez, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, Robert Allen & Bill Gallegos.

Many wonderful mentors, comrades, teachers, homies, professors, co-workers, students and colleagues went into the labor that is presented here, too many to mention yet I am indebted to you all. The early and continued support of the McNair Program and its staff, as well as the Institute for the Study of Social Change, Christine Trost, and David Minkus, was instrumental to my success. David Montejano and the Center for Latino Policy Research also supported me at crucial moments.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to my dissertation committee and additional readers for all their support, guidance and thoughtful commentaries. I want to specially thank Ramón Grosfoguel for the many intellectually engaging opportunities and collaborations he has opened up for me. I am tremendously appreciative of José David Saldívar for the constant support and mentorship he has provided since I first came knocking on his door seeking an undergraduate thesis advisor. Many thanks to Joseph Nevins for his always humble reminders about the many stories to be told about San Ysidro and for the vital commentary during the dissertation process. I would not have been able to finish without the support and comradeship of Ignacio Chapela, whose example has always kept me focused. This dissertation also benefited immensely from the mentorship and support of Ananya Roy, who was formative to this project.

I would also like to thank all the staff in Ethnic Studies for their help over the years, especially Rosa Johnson, Lourdes Martinez and Francisca Cazares. Very special thanks in particular to Ruth Hooper for reminding us always of our own ES history.

I have been fortunate to partake of many engaging communities and spaces over the years: MEXA, twLF '99, SJP, CRISES, NACCS, Decolonial Feminisms WG, & RNC; each has enriched me in ways I am constantly learning to appreciate.

Lastly, I would have never set on this course without the unwavering support and encouragement of mi amá, Consuelo, and mi hermana, Monica. To you both, I owe all my gratitude. I want to also thank Daphne V. Taylor Garcia for walking this and many other roads side by side with me. To everyone who has ever supported me when others had only doubt, I thank you!

Vita

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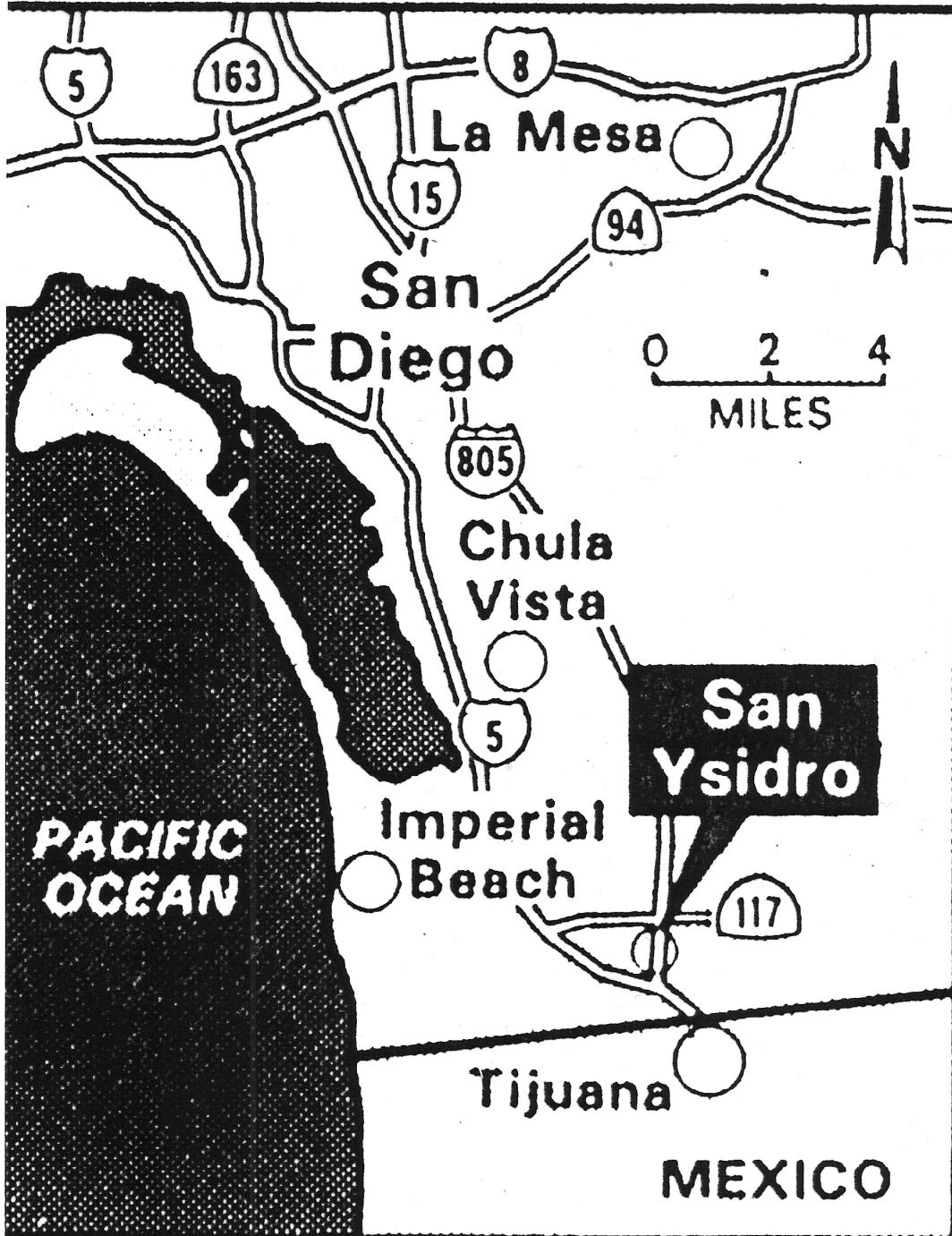


FIGURE 1: The above map shows San Ysidro located nearly 18 miles south of downtown San Diego, enclosed by the Interstate 5 to the west, Interstate 805 to the east, Highway 117 (now the 905) to the north and the border with Tijuana to the south. The City of San Diego is separated from San Ysidro by Chula Vista and National City (not labeled) and extends another 15-20 miles to the north and northeast of what is pictured here.

INTRODUCTION

COLONIALITY OF POWER,

VIOLENCE AND THE U-S///MEXICO BORDER¹

“We didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us”

- Popular proverb

“Combating these historical forces of dehistoricization must be the most immediate objective on an enterprise of mobilization aimed at putting history in motion again by neutralizing the mechanisms of the neutralization of history.”

- Pierre Bourdieu

Organized along nation-state lines, the international state system and its concomitant national-territorial boundaries has become one of the most defining and taken-for-granted features of the contemporary world. National political-geographical boundaries, however, can and do change, as they are the result of both historical geopolitical strife and socially re/produced through the actions, practices and ideas of local residents.² Boundary change occurred, for example, in Europe after World War II and following the collapse of the Soviet Union. So too was the case with the further fragmentation of Yugoslavia or the more recent declaration of Kosovo independence from Serbia. Boundary change is not limited post-war restructuring or to Eastern European countries, as boundaries within the Middle East, and those of various African nation-states have changed in the last half of the 20th century under various conditions. The U-S///Mexico border, unbeknown to many, also has undergone a series of boundary changes, the last one being as recent as 1963 with the resolution of the Chamizal dispute near the El Paso, Texas border with Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua.³ It is

¹ The usage of this inscription for what is commonly referred as the U.S.-Mexico border is a twofold attempt to intervene in the discursive hegemony of both U.S.-Mexico Border Studies discourse and its critiques. First, the dash between the letters ‘U’ and ‘S’ is meant to disrupt the ‘hidden transcript’ that monologically silences dissent and implies a timeless permanence and unity vis-à-vis the term ‘United States’ and its abbreviation. Secondly, it is an attempt to visually voice (protest of) the “triple fence strategy” now in effect in numerous parts of the border via Operation Gatekeeper.

² Néstor P. Rodríguez, “The Social Construction of the U.S.-Mexico Border” in *Immigrants Out!: The New Nativism and the Anti-immigrant Impulse*, Juan F. Perea, ed. (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 223-243.

³ Oscar Martínez, *Troublesome Border*, Revised Edition (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988 [2006]), 24-28.

in this broader context of the local and historical social construction of borders and boundaries and James Anderson and Liam O’Dowd’s (1999) call for attention to the local specificity of border regions that the focus of this study is on violence in the community of San Ysidro and what it can illuminate for larger comparative work on nation-state borders.⁴ Accordingly, I jump from the local to the global and back again, as life on the border is often experienced as the simultaneous negotiation of such scales.

San Ysidro is a small, predominantly Mexican, spanish-speaking community located at the southern ends of San Diego. Originally home to the Kumeyaay—who continue to reside throughout San Diego County with neighboring Kumiai communities from Tijuana to Ensenada in Mexico—the Spanish did not arrive to the San Diego area until 1769, despite a brief ten-day expedition some 165 years earlier. The early Spanish settlement was located near present-day downtown, 15 miles north of San Ysidro, and was itself composed of a diverse mix of indigenous, mestizo, African, and only a handful of Spanish settlers.⁵ While a Spanish Mission was set up to the northeast of the settlement in 1769, a church outpost or *Asistencia* that would later be converted to the Ybarra Ranch was built towards the south, near San Ysidro. Following years of failed Christianizing attempts, a Kumeyaay raid in 1837 resulted in the Ybarra Ranch being abandoned for years, only later to be used by the Dranga family as a general store and later still by the Little Landers cooperative organization as a clubhouse.⁶

The Little Landers Colony, as it is often referred to, was part of a “back to the land” movement that thrived at the turn of the 20th century. In 1909, William Smythe bought extensive land in San Ysidro and resold acre-sized lots to families seeking to live self-sustainable lives by working off the land and combining surplus products for communal benefit via sale in a San Diego market.⁷ The Little Landers Colony is considered by many to have set the stage for the present-day San Ysidro, though the community’s annexation to the City of San Diego in 1957 (discussed in Chapter 1) radically altered the social and political landscape. San Ysidro has since become home to the busiest border crossing in the world.

⁴ James Anderson and Liam O’Dowd, “Borders, Border Regions and Territoriality: Contradictory Meanings, Changing Significance” *Regional Studies* Vol. 33.7 (1999): 593-604.

⁵ Richard Griswold del Castillo, “Natives and Settlers: The Mestizo Heritage,” in *Chicano San Diego: Cultural Space and the Struggle for Justice*, Richard Griswold del Castillo, Ed. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007), 12-39, 13-14. It should be noted that at the time the Spanish officials in then New Spain had a complicated casta system with as many as thirty-two categories for classifying the children of mixed parentage, so the above categories likely do not grasp the complexity that existed among them. Needless to say, the number of Spanish that came to the Americas was relatively small and masks the presumed one-to-one Spanish-Indian equation that is often connoted with the term *mestizo*.

⁶ Herbert C. Hensley, “Untitled” in *Early San Diego: Reminiscences of Early Days and People (1876-1957)*. The above consists of 646 typewritten pages in three volumes. Material located in the California Room Collection, San Diego Public Library – RCC979.498. This is a duplicate copy that accompanied Hensley’s notes on the Dranga Family. In author’s possession.

⁷ Little Landers, “Advertisement: San Ysidro, Home of the Little Landers Colony” (1909). San Diego Historical Society Archives: 13747-2 and 137474-2A. In author’s possession.

As we witness an increasing shift towards the globalization of capital (Sassen 1996, 1998; Harvey 2001), communications and information technology (Castells 1997; Graham and Marvin 2001), production and consumption (Fernandez-Kelly 1983; Peña 1997; Watson 1997; Salzinger 2003)—seen at their extreme in many Mexican border cities such as Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua or Tijuana, Baja California Norte—numerous scholars such as Ohmae (1990), Guéhenno (1995) and Giddens (1999) have argued that nation-state boundaries have or will become equally obsolete, each with varying degrees of emphasis on the factors that they attribute as accounting for such change. While the function and location(s) of nation-state boundaries have undoubtedly been transformed over time, they have nonetheless maintained a central role in a continued partitioning of the globe along presumably stable nation-state lines. They have both hardened and become more fluid.

A significant change that has occurred, and one that puzzled many geographers who for a long time through the work of Ratzel (1897) and Lapradelle (1928) recognized nation-state borders as distant political and military “buffer zones” meant to demarcate the separation of nations, was the emergence of highly-populated border cities and entire border regions in what were once seen as desolate and remote “frontier” locations.⁸ While initially such change was seen as a phenomenon of globalization occurring in border regions throughout the world following World War II, recent borderlands scholarship has noted that, rather than desolate, such frontier zones have always been populated and sources of much concern for nation-states.⁹ Furthermore, Immanuel Wallerstein has shown globalization to be, far from recent, the current nominal designation for the “modern world-system” or what Aníbal Quijano’s work on the “coloniality of power” has called the “modern/colonial world-system” that emerged in 1492.¹⁰ While world-system analysis and the coloniality of power framework recognize ongoing change in our contemporary world, both foreground the necessity of a long historical analytic frame, or what Fernand Braudel and the Annales School of history termed the *longue durée*. This study proceeds with a long historical lens in mind, as it is also a key to understanding local particularities given that such boundaries and surrounding regions, as local mediators of unequal exchanges between neighboring

⁸ Lawrence A. Herzog, *Where North Meets South: Cities, Space, and Politics on the U.S.-Mexico Border* (Austin: CMAS Books/University of Texas, Austin, 1990), 15-20. See also KJ Rankin and Schofield, “The Troubled Historiography Of Classical Boundary Terminology,” Mapping Frontiers, Plotting Pathways Ancillary Paper No. 2, 2004.

⁹ Martinez, *Troublesome Border*, discusses the long history of cross-border raids by many of the distinct indigenous groups such as the Apache and Yoeme who had their original lands bisected by the imposition of a national-territorial border; See also Paul Ganster and David E. Lorey, eds. *Borders and Border Politics in a Globalizing World* (Lanham, MD: SR Books, 2005).

¹⁰ Immanuel M. Wallerstein, *The Capitalist World-Economy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Aníbal Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America” *Nepantla* Vol. 1, no. 3 (2000): 533-580; Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000. Mignolo, draws from Aníbal Quijano and Enrique Dussel, to argue the creation of the modern world-system as the current historical social system, is implicated with colonization therefore the need to name it modern/colonial for the two are opposite sides of the same coin.

countries, also have a history of their own that does not always mirror their national or metropolitan center(s).

Although recent debates on globalization have questioned the continued importance of national-territorial boundaries, it is instead arguable that since the late 1970s we are witnessing a more complex and contradictory process. We are seeing a re-entrenchment of national-territorial boundaries coupled with the reinforcement of pre-existing and emergence of new social boundaries, both playing out primarily, but not exclusively along said borders. The social and political contestations have led to increasing hostilities and outright violence in many places, with the U-S///Mexico boundary—one of the few where an industrialized nation-state borders an industrializing one—figuring prominently. Taken as a paradigmatic case, given its comparative import, a wide body of literature has emerged about the U-S///Mexico border and what many, following Herbert Bolton (1921) and John Francis Bannon's (1970) work on the Spanish frontier on the one hand, and Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) path-breaking interdisciplinary auto-historia on the other, have called the *borderlands*.¹¹ I engage, yet depart from, much borderlands literature (discussed further in Chapter 5), and also engage the work of geographers who maintain analytical distinction between the concepts of *frontier*, *boundary*, *border* and *borderlands*. The latter work analyzes boundaries as lines of geopolitical demarcation between nation-states, frontiers as contact or peripheral zones, and the border and borderlands as distinct regions or social spaces where social and cultural interactions, among others, are informed by a nearby national-territorial boundary and the two (or more) nation-states it separates from one another.¹² Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, among others, attempt to provide systematic conceptual distinctions between the terms “frontier,” “borderlands,” and “border.” They, however, fall short in their insistence on complete historical breaks between each of the concepts, failing to recognize the continuities that persist when seen from a long historical perspective.¹³

In a similar fashion, Paul Ganster and David E. Lorey identify what they see as a “three-part process that allow us to establish a chronology shared by many borders,” yet they argue that “in the long run, most borders are erased or dissolved” in a seemingly natural way.¹⁴ The naturalizing of a contested historical process and their chronological spatial-temporal schema poses two problems. First, while borders do change, they do

¹¹ See Roberto R. Alvarez, Jr. “The Mexican-US Border: The Making of an Anthropology of Borderlands” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995): 447-470, for a great review of literature on the U-S///Mexico border and borderlands in the field Anthropology and other disciplines through the mid-1990s. Border and borderlands literature has proliferated in recent years, yet largely remained within the same frameworks I discuss above.

¹² Joseph Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the 'Illegal Alien' and the Remaking of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary* (New York: Routledge: 2002), 8-9. See also Anderson and O'Dowd, “Border, Border Regions and Territoriality,” 594-595.

¹³ See Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 104, No. 3 (June 1999), pp. 814-841.

¹⁴ Paul Ganster and David E. Lorey, “Introduction” in *Borders and Border Politics in a Globalizing World*, Paul Ganster and David E. Lorey, Eds. (Oxford: SR Books, 2005): xi-xxi, xv.

not dissolve as readily as Ganster and Lorey (2005), and others such as Chang-Hee Christine Bae (2003) and Dear and LeClerc (2003), suggest when they argue of the existence of transfrontier metropolises.¹⁵ Second, the chronology posed by Ganster and Lorey (2005) follows the logic advanced by Adelman and Aron (1999), wherein complete temporal breaks are presumed between each of the “periods” in a crude historical materialist approach that fails to recognize Hegel’s *aufhebung*; that is, the persistence of characteristics in a prior “period” sublated into the next period. Instead, drawing from neo-Marxist geography and world-systems theory I locate an historical system as the unit of analysis and foreground the border as a socially produced and contested space that is fundamentally a structuring mechanism of the modern/colonial world-system.

While world-systems analysis has produced a wide-ranging literature on various regions throughout the world and the long-historical political and economic relations between regions and/or nation-states understood through a core/periphery/semi-periphery analytic, world-system scholars have paid little attention to nation-state boundaries and border regions unto themselves. Some geographers have taken to world-system approaches in their study of urban space, cities and nation-states, notably David Harvey, Anthony King and Michael Peter Smith. With regard to political geographers doing work on border cities or border regions, Lawrence A. Herzog is one of the few to draw from world-system analysis and Wallerstein in particular, yet falls short of grasping the analytic leap entailed in shifting one’s unit of analysis from respective nation-states and state policies that affect the boundaries said to “contain” them, to a historical system where the nation-state form and its boundaries are constitutive of a larger social-historical process. As such, this dissertation focuses on the U-S//Mexico border within the context of world-system analysis, and the local specificity of violence in the community of San Ysidro as a lens to interrogate the role of borders as a central structuring mechanism for the current historical system. I frame this work, however, with and beyond Wallerstein, through what Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano has called the coloniality of power as the defining logics of the current historical system with roots in the colonization of the Americas.

Briefly “coloniality of power” speaks first to a heterogeneous pattern of power constitutive of modernity, rooted not in 18th or 19th century Europe with the advent of industrialization, but in 1492 with what liberation philosopher Enrique Dussel has called the “invention of the Americas,” as the condition of possibility or “primitive accumulation” that allowed for a co-temporally “invented” entity of Europe to enter the

¹⁵ Chang-Hee Christine Bae, “Tijuana-San Diego: Globalization and the Transborder Metropolis” *The Annals of Regional Science*, 37 (2003): 463-477; and Michael Dear and Gustavo LeClerc, *Postborder City: Cultural Spaces of Baja California* (New York: Routledge 2003). While Bae (2003) addresses the particularities of the San Diego-Tijuana region in a nuanced way, more troubling is the work of Dear and LeClerc (2003) who suggests a form of heterogeneous yet unified region stretching from the northern reaches of Los Angeles through Orange County, the diverse micro-regions of San Diego County and extending across the U-S//Mexico border to Tijuana, Tecate, and Rosarito, despite the glaring problems with the collapsing of constitutive racial/gendered, economic, topographic and juridical-administrative divides.

“industrial age” over two hundred years later.¹⁶ Through this shifting of lenses, Dussel establishes “that while modernity is undoubtedly a European occurrence, it also originates in a dialectical relation with non-Europe” and has always had its underside.¹⁷ Second, it is in/through this initial encounter that the socially and discursively created concept of race as we know it today became the central organizing axis for ordering social relations, even if with local variations.¹⁸ Third, coloniality maintains that following the “independence movements” in Latin America in the early and mid-19th century, and of other colonial possessions in Africa and Asia through the 1950s and 1960s, countries achieved not independence but “colonial independences” as the same colonial patterns of power (along class, race, gendered, sexual lines) remained largely in place in newly created nation-states.¹⁹ In effect, coloniality points to the continuation of colonial situations without the presence of formal colonial administrations and to the state/structural and self-administration of a colonial order, operating simultaneously, yet with respective dynamics, at global, nation-state, and epistemological levels.²⁰ In sum, coloniality is part of the epistemological and material scaffolding for the social construction and reproduction of both nation-state boundaries, national, racial and sexual borders and such an understanding sheds new light on the U-S///Mexico border, as it foregrounds the racialized/sexualized nature of violence on the border as one grounded in a colonial enterprise and episteme that manifests itself in local struggles.

Border Cities and Border(ed) Violence

Just as boundaries play a significant role in the geopolitical ordering of the modern/colonial world-system—from the establishment of continental divides in the 16th century and formation of early national boundaries with the Treaty of Westphalia to the emergence of newly colonial-independent nation-states in the 18th century through the 1960s—so do border cities as places of inclusion, exclusion and exchange. In such a world, violence in the form of territorial or boundary disputes at the edges of empires and nation-states alike has been an enduring feature during times of war and times of non-war,²¹ and increasingly play out in cities in particular.²² Similarly, violence in

¹⁶ Quijano, “Coloniality of Power,” 535-536; Enrique Dussel, *Invention of the Americas* (New York: Continuum books, 1995), 19-26. While not as widely recognized in the United States until recently, several authors throughout Latin America have long engaged both Quijano’s and Dussel’s respective work.

¹⁷ Walter Mignolo draws from both the work of Aníbal Quijano and Enrique Dussel to explicitly link the two arguments, articulating coloniality as precisely the underside of modernity. See Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*, ix-x, 17-18.

¹⁸ Aníbal Quijano, “‘Raza,’ ‘Etnia,’ y ‘Nación’ en Mariátegui: Cuestiones Abiertas,” in *José Carlos Mariátegui y Europa: El Otro Aspecto del Descubrimiento*, Roland Forgues, ed. (Lima, Peru: Empresa Editora Amauta, SA, 1993), 167-187, 170.

¹⁹ Aníbal Quijano, “Colonialidad y Modernidad/Racionalidad,” *Perú Indígena*, 29 (1991), 11-21, 11.

²⁰ Quijano, “Coloniality of Power,” 570.

²¹ Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, “The Imperial Peace: Democracy, Force & Globalization,” *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 1999: 403-434. Barkawi and Laffey make a nuanced argument for a change of focus from the ‘democratic peace’ thesis—the assumption that democratic nations are less likely to war with one another, which implicitly assumes the liberal democratic nation-state as a norm and ideal—to renewed attention on the

border cities, of one form or another, have historically dominated headlines, and continue to do so, yet such violence is often dislodged from its causes, rendering it an independent force of destruction.²³ Such representations make violence appear as always deviant and an anomaly in its own right, despite its normal prevalence in everyday life. Representation of violence in U-S//Mexico border cities exemplifies the above dynamic. That is, rather than addressing its causes, we are instead inundated by headlines that place violence itself as a central protagonist thus normalizing it.

To speak of violence on the border is to conjure up images of a presumed lawlessness associated, for example, with drug trafficking in Tijuana, human smuggling in Nogales or the killing of women in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua. A simple review of the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, for example, reveals the following headlines: “Overnight violence in Tijuana kills as many as 8” (October 14, 2008) and “Spike in Violence yields two bodies, three barrels.”²⁴ Here I am interested not in reifying such violence, but in exploring instances of seemingly unconnected violence neglected by virtue of the attention given to the former—a practice that obscures as much as it reveals. Lost is the cause of said violence, for it is violence itself that emerges as primary perpetrator of violence, noted only through gruesome details of decapitated heads and growing body counts. Horrific gore conceals the ordinary.

In contrast, I understand violence beyond simple and limiting definitions of brute force and bloody death. When we consider violence in terms of its causes, techniques, strategies, and objectives what becomes evident is the utility of violence as a tool wielded by many in variegated pursuits of power²⁵ and domination, both physical and symbolic. While I outline my conceptualization of the interactions between border violence and coloniality further below, a preliminary note of caution is necessary. Pierre Bourdieu warns us of a common misreading of ‘symbolic violence’ when he states,

Understanding ‘symbolic’ as the opposite of ‘real, actual’, people suppose that symbolic violence is purely ‘spiritual’ violence which ultimately has no effects. It is this distinction, characteristic of a crude materialism, that the

international workings of peace as an agreement between liberal nation-states to use force towards achieving shared international political and economic goals. Their argument for a change in the unit of analysis from a nation-state to an international system of states parallels, with few important differences, my argument for using a historical system as a unit of analysis.

²² See for example, Stephen Graham, “Cities as Strategic Sties: Place Annihilation and Urban Geopolitics,” in *Cities War and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics*, Stephen Graham, Ed (London: Blackwell, 2004), 31-53.

²³ Julie Slurski and Fernando Coronil, “Introduction: States of Violence and the Violence of States” in *States of Violence* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006), 2.

²⁴ Sandra Dibble, “Overnight violence in Tijuana kills as many as 8” *San Diego Union-Tribune* (October 14, 2008), <http://legacy.signonsandiego.com/news/mexico/tijuana/20081014-1050-lt-mexico-violence.html> [accessed October 30, 2010]; and Sandra Dibble, “Spike in Violence yields two bodies, three barrels” *San Diego Union-Tribune* (October 1, 2008), <http://legacy.signonsandiego.com/news/mexico/tijuana/20081001-9999-1m1tjdead.html> [accessed October 30, 2010].

²⁵ Slurski and Coronil, “Introduction,” 4.

materialist theory of symbolic goods . . . seeks to destroy, by giving its proper place in theory to the objectivity of the subjective experience of relations of domination.²⁶

The purpose here then, is not to create dichotomous understandings of real or physical violence in contradistinction to symbolic or non-physical violence. Nor is it to prioritize either “objective” or “subjective” experiences of violence, or even to illustrate the “objectivity” of the subjective experiences of domination.

Instead, the purpose of these introductory words and broader dissertation is to take seriously the historicizing of border violence in light of the modern/colonial world-system. In other words, the purpose is to ask how do we make sense of border violence apart from its sensationalization, by placing it in proper sociohistorical context, that of an organizing mechanism for an ongoing historical social system. This is not to say there is an overarching structure—the modern/colonial world-system—that *determines* all aspects of everyday life for people, but rather that there is an at once dominant and totalizing, though never fully complete, set of relations of consent and domination, which are constituted by and constitutive of said structure, and manifest themselves in daily local interactions.²⁷ To understand border violence, we must therefore consider how it is produced and reproduced, often times even by those on who it impinges and we must also understand how certain forms of violence render other forms of violence invisible or relegated to the margins of violence literature. Accordingly, my dissertation is concerned with the impact of distinct forms of violence, and both the political and cultural responses to such violence, in the border community of San Ysidro, in light of various historically situated relations of domination.

Realizing my inquiries all fundamentally center on violence broadly conceived, as I began this research I started by focusing on the border community of San Ysidro where I was raised, and the many both direct and mundane experiences my childhood friends and I encountered when growing up. A personal or literal starting point to my questions—trying to make “objective” sense of subjective experiences with relations of domination—thus became a springboard for more pointed research questions.

My initial research however did not yield much published work on San Ysidro and what little I found was usually through literature archived or organized under the heading “San Diego”. In such instances, San Ysidro was typically discussed only in passing. San Diego was also noticeably marked as an exception with regards to various socio-economic indicators when compared to other border cities. For example, border communities on the United States side of the border are among the poorest in the country, yet San Diego does not fit this mold.²⁸ Nonetheless, my personal knowledge of San Diego as a “border city” through growing up in San Ysidro spoke to the contrary.

²⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 34.

²⁷ See Kyriakos Kontopoulos, *The Logics of Social Structure*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993), especially Chapter 10. I will elaborate on this work below.

²⁸ James Peach, “Income Distribution along the United States Border with Mexico, 1970-1990,” *Journal of Borderlands Studies* Vol. 12, no. 1 & 2 (1997): 1-16, 9.

This issue of exception thus became a troubling concern in my work as well. Why is San Diego considered an exception? How might the relative invisibility of San Ysidro be an under-considered element of the classification of San Diego as an exception? What does San Ysidro tell us about the San Diego-Tijuana border? Is San Diego, for that matter, a border city proper?

In the dissertation, I address the above questions through a consideration of four moments in the history of San Ysidro in order to understand the historical relationship between coloniality, nation-state borders and violence: the municipal annexation of San Ysidro to the City of San Diego; the 1984 San Ysidro McDonalds Massacre and its aftermath; the resurgence of anti-immigrant groups patrolling the U-S///Mexico border; music emanating from the border; and briefly a largely completed bi-national shopping mall—intended to be half in San Ysidro, half in Tijuana with a “walking” port of entry inside. Each of these cases, and the local responses to them, illustrate how despite increasing global political and economic integration, violence at the nation’s edges continues to unfold. With violence taking on new shapes and forms, both physical and symbolic, it is thus necessary to pay nuanced attention to the continuities facilitating such trends, if one is to propose remedies or solutions. Interestingly, the responses to the violence are as varied as the concrete instances of the violence itself.

In what follows, I proceed with detailed conceptualizations of coloniality of power and violence, as they serve to frame this dissertation. I complicate how violence as a concept is most often used to denote the use of extreme or brute force meant to, or consequently resulting in, bodily harm. Focused on San Ysidro, I conclude with a discussion on how the local particularities of violence and contestation in San Ysidro might help us understand dynamics of violence and coloniality, arguing nation-state borders and violence are mutually constitutive.

Border Studies, Coloniality of Power and Heterarchical Thinking

Much has been written about the U-S///Mexico border and the borderlands by way of what is often referred to as border theory. These works range from sociological, historical and anthropological accounts of immigration to the everyday practices of border residents. In a related yet distinct vein, Gloria Anzaldúa begins from the material conditions of the U-S///Mexico border to develop the notion of the borderlands and *mestizaje* as a third space, a condition of in-between-ness, where the border is representative of contested yet potentially liberatory space. Literary and cultural studies scholars have furthered Anzaldúa’s work through a focus on cultural/literary analysis and cultural production. Free trade, the maquiladora industry, border enforcement, surveillance, control, militarization, and low-intensity conflict have also been productive areas of research, alongside work on the urban and built environment.²⁹ While there are

²⁹ Key “border texts” include Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987); José David Saldívar, *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); and Timothy Dunn, *The Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1978-1992: Low Intensity Conflict Doctrine Comes*

too many contributions to mention by name, most border studies literature has been developed from one of two lenses. The first is a national specific view that looks south to the border, with a complementary literature “looking north” although the two are rarely in conversation, yet each maintains the United States or Mexico and its respective policies as the object of study. The other is a more recent transnational perspective that under the rubric of globalization considers the state-to-state relations between the U.S. and Mexico (many also include Canada, given the importance of the North American Free Trade Agreement—NAFTA), but continues to insist on the nation-state as the unit of analysis. In both instances the nation-state functions as a container of society, even if the particular policies of one state or the other are contested. Yet when done so they are contested at the nation-state level in turn reifying its singularity. It is my position that a new lens is needed.

Missing from this literature is the key analytical insights offered by the conceptualization of the “coloniality of power” as formulated by Aníbal Quijano, and elaborated by Ramón Grosfoguel and Chloe Georas, Walter D. Mignolo, and Maria Lugones, among others.³⁰ I draw and build on the above literatures on the border, but situate my dissertation within the interdisciplinary coloniality of power framework as it illuminates crucial elements to date neglected by border studies. Coloniality of power brings to light a different way of conceptualizing the U-S//Mexico border that might otherwise go undetected when its study is conducted through nation-specific or disciplinary frames. Specifically, it aims to transcend the naturalized claims to national sovereignty and border security by historicizing and highlighting the simultaneously “national” and global colonial episteme that underpins violence on the border.

Coloniality of power refers to a long-historical matrix of power constituted in and through persisting colonial situations or relations without the presence of formal colonial administrations. Contrary to conventional sociological thinking, coloniality of power is attuned to historical change, yet places an emphasis on continuities and persisting legacies despite discontinuities, change, randomness and newness.³¹ In this sense, it is important to distinguish coloniality from colonialism, as the latter has often been understood as forms of (primarily economic) domination and exploitation pertaining to a specific time (the past) and specific spaces (the “non-western” world). In contrast to literature on imperialism, even that which acknowledges the persistence of

Home (Austin: CMAS Books, University of Texas Press, 1996). Refer to the bibliography for extended citations of the other works mentioned above.

³⁰ Quijano, “Coloniality of Power”; Aníbal Quijano “Colonialidad del Poder y Casificación Social.” *Journal of World-Systems Research* 1, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 2000): 342-386, and “Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality.” *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2 (2007): 168-178. See also, Ramón Grosfoguel, *Colonial Subjects: Puerto Ricans in a Global Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Maria Lugones, “Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System,” *Hypatia* 22, no.1 (2007): 186-209 and “The Coloniality of Gender,” *Worlds & Knowledges Otherwise* 2, Dossier 2 (Spring 2008); and Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*.

³¹ For a related argument that predates the coloniality framework, see also, Aníbal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein, “Americanity as a concept, or the Americas in the modern world-system,” *International Journal of Social Sciences* 134 (1992), 583-591.

relations of domination and exploitation despite the end of formal empires, coloniality refuses the economic determinism of most critical approaches and points to the entangled nature of social categories of power (race, class, gender, religion, sexuality, etc.). Furthermore, instead of rehashing a tired debate on the meaning and factuality in the temporal frame of *postcolonial* critique, coloniality conceptually draws on early work of Frantz Fanon and Immanuel Wallerstein on “colonial situations” that evade the spatial-temporal trappings of much literature on “classic colonialism” to construct a different analytic³² that takes the historical system as a unit of analyses, as opposed to any given “society” usually conceived of as nation-states across time. Viewed this way, colonial-independence becomes visible. In other words, whereas classic colonialism has by and large (with notable exceptions) ended, global coloniality persists. A similar argument can be made about recent attempts by Dear and Leclerc, among others, to point towards the existence of “*postborder cities*” (my emphasis), as the ongoing Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids highlight the persistence and continuing importance of the border in the daily lives of those who would dare transgress it.³³

Engaging Wallerstein’s world-systems approach, but from the South, Quijano elaborates on the work of dependency theorists, internal colony adherents, and proponents of post-World War II interpretations of power as neocolonialism. Coloniality articulates the entanglement of a global division of labor and a global racial/ethnic hierarchy wherein race functions as an organizing principle of the modern/colonial world-system.³⁴ Moreover, coloniality of power speaks to the entanglement of hierarchies at a global, nation-state, and ideological/imaginary level (knowledge production); that is, there is an entangled logic or set of logics existing as simultaneously constitutive of and constituted by and with the structures and hierarchies that maintain colonial relations of oppression, domination, and exploitation without the need for formal colonialism –again with an emphasis on continuity over discontinuities that dominate traditional sociological theory and research.³⁵ In contrast to world-systems analysis, for Quijano “there is no overarching capitalist accumulation logic that can instrumentalize ethnic/racial divisions and that precedes the formation of a global colonial, Eurocentric culture.”³⁶ Race and capital are instead mutually constitutive of another, as manifested in an historical system.

While in agreement with Quijano, Maria Lugones has taken the work on the coloniality of power and elaborated it in new and productive ways. Lugones, in particular, critiques Quijano for maintaining normative understandings of gender and

³² To this frame we can also add an early essay by Peter Puxley on aboriginal communities in Canada that is relatively underconsidered by U-S academics, but read broadly by Native Studies scholars. See Peter Puxley, “The Colonial Experience” in *Dene Nation: the colony within*, ed. by Mel Wartkins (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1973), 103-119.

³³ Michael Dear and Gustavo Leclerc, eds. *Postborder City: Cultural Spaces of Bajaalta California*, (New York: Routledge, 2003).

³⁴ Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America,” 533-536.

³⁵ A good explication can be found in the section ‘Four points of clarification’ in Ramón Grosfoguel and Chloe Georas, “‘Coloniality of Power’ and Racial Dynamics: Notes Toward a Reinterpretation of Latino Caribbeans in New York City” *Identities* Vol. 7 (1), (2000): 85-125.

³⁶ Grosfoguel, *Colonial Subjects*, 18.

sexuality in his formulation, such that the concepts of male, female and a presumed heterosexuality are uncritically assumed and reified by coloniality of power writers.³⁷ Instead, Lugones excavates multiple and diverse understandings of gender in the Americas that simultaneously disrupt the normative male/female divide, and illustrates how such dichotomous frame was constructed in and through the colonization of the western hemisphere. So rather than assume, as some scholars and communities have, that a patriarchal gender system was imposed writ large on native communities, or that native societies were themselves all patriarchal, Lugones elucidates diverse localized social systems that were impinged upon and often though not always overdetermined by the totalizing gender system of coloniality,³⁸ entangled with labor exploitation and racial/ethnic classification. As stated earlier, this does not mean there is an overarching structure determining every aspect of the lives of people, but rather a *totalizing* and dominant modern/colonial world-system, never fully complete, constitutive of and constituted by such sets of social relations. Lugones work thus has important ramifications for gendered discourses of race and nation mobilized by vigilante groups (discussed in Chapter 3).

As was the case with early critics of world-systems analysis, some have argued coloniality of power is an overdetermining macrostructural theory that leaves no room for the agency of either individuals or communities affected by said structure.³⁹ Greek social theorist Kyriakos M. Kontopoulos has analyzed key similarities and differences between hierarchal (macro) and constructionist (micro) theories that provide important forms of social analysis, but are both limited, in his assessment, by the weight placed on macro or micro determining factors, respectively.⁴⁰ Kontopoulos further distinguishes hierarchical theories from heterarchical theories as a way of bridging what is commonly seen as a macro-micro divide. For Kontopolous, hierarchical or macrostructural theories provide overarching structural determinations of the local, while constructionist theories privilege the micro in their elaboration of global structures; yet, neither establish the mechanisms that link the two. Heterarchical theories, in contrast, avoid the overdetermination of the hierarchical and constructionist theories while allowing for a multiplicity of overlapping mechanisms at various levels between what Kontopoulos identifies as local, quasi-local, quasi-global, and global levels of analysis—or what geographers would see as multiscale analyses.

In a sympathetic, yet critical assessment of the coloniality of power framework, Colombian philosopher Santiago Castro-Gomez, draws from Kontopoulos to bring Quijano into conversation with Michel Foucault. On the one hand, Castro-Gomez concludes that Foucault is a Eurocentric thinker, in large part through the content and

³⁷ Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," 187-189.

³⁸ Ibid, 203-204.

³⁹ For an overview of world-system critiques see, Giovanni Arrighi, "Capitalism and the Modern World-System: Rethinking the Non-Debates of the 1970s," Paper presented at the American Sociological Association Meetings, New York, August 16-20, 1996. It is available at: <http://fbc.binghamton.edu/gaasa96.htm>. For critiques of coloniality see various articles in *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol. 106, No. 1, Winter 2007 (Special Issue: *Latin America, in Theory*).

⁴⁰ Kontopolous, *The Logics of Social Structure*, 222-233.

point of reference of his considerations across his many published books and lectures.⁴¹ On the other hand, Castro-Gomez nonetheless points to the non-Eurocentric value and contribution of Foucault's method and theorization of power, such that it allows for a heterarchical conceptualization of the coloniality of power, distinct from what he identifies as hierarchical thinking, via Kontolopoulos, in Quijano's formulation of coloniality of power.⁴² Castro-Gomez further points to Ramón Grosfoguel's elaborations of Quijano, and here I would add the work of Lugones, as a heterarchical. Collectively, the above debates provide an important basis for my own heterarchical approach to the study of raced/gendered violence and coloniality on the U-S//Mexico border.

The border between the United States and Mexico, as mentioned above, has often been the site of dramatic racial, anti-immigrant and/or narco-trafficking violence. However, this dissertation argues that when viewed in the *longue durée* one sees a continuum of violence emerge, one that geographically, discursively, as much as bodily, follows a trajectory from early notions of 'the frontier' or 'wild west' to the current images of lawlessness associated with the southern border in the American imaginary, on through the uneven spoils of globalization that occur in spite of borders said to contain the nation-state (and presumably its violence). The latter most recently and clearly exemplified in the current U.S. involvements in Afghanistan and Iraq, both of which mirror policy towards 'hostiles' centuries earlier.⁴³ Secondly, I consider how the community of San Ysidro has responded in the face of official negligence and how the responses have served to challenge traditional articulations of citizenship by virtue of border(ed) communities declaring their 'right to the city' and their right to dignity and justice despite social marginalization. Lastly, this dissertation interrogates the discourses and popular imagery surrounding the aforementioned violences (frontier-border-globalization) to ascertain the foundations, premises and operative mechanisms of each and how such discursive similarities function as recurring consequences rooted in the episteme of modernity/coloniality.

Conceptualizing Real and Symbolic Violences

While violence as a concept can be a wide-ranging term, it is most often used to denote the use of extreme or brute force, physical in nature, and meant to, or consequently resulting in bodily harm. Nonetheless, scholars from various disciplines have elaborated on the significance and usage of violence, as well as on other seemingly banal manifestations not usually thought of as physical violence. Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois skillfully identify four major tendencies or categories of violence that they frame as direct political violence, structural violence, symbolic

⁴¹ Santiago Castro-Gomez, "Michel Foucault y la Colonialidad del Poder," *Tabula Rasa*, Numero 006 (Enero-Junio 2007): 153-172, 164-165.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ An array of scholarship on the Middle East has begun to elaborate this position following the publication of Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq* (London: Blackwell 2004).

violence and everyday violence.⁴⁴ However, their consideration of direct political violence fails to appropriately distinguish, as does Frantz Fanon between political violence of two strands: the repressive violence of state/colonial forces and revolutionary liberatory violence that aims to counter repressive state violence and in the process regain the humanity of those affected by such repression.⁴⁵ While Fanon's thinking on violence has been subject of much debate, critiques of Fanon have usually emerged from positions of nonviolence that engage one particular chapter of Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, itself divorced from the large body of his work, including a broader contextualization for his later writings on violence, found in his first book *Black Skin, White Masks*. Instead, a broader reading of Fanon reveals the very specific ways in which his invocation of violence was guided, equally as a tool in a strategy whose objective was an ethical position against the dehumanization of colonialism. Fanon is in many ways central to this project, as his grounding of colonial violence in the scopic regimes of colonialism parallel and in many ways inform the coloniality perspective that I adopt in this study to understand the overdetermination of raced/gendered bodies.

Among the other scholarly considerations of violence, structural violence was originally articulated by John Galtung to define "the indirect violence built into repressive social orders creating enormous differences between potential and actual human self-realization" and is now more broadly used to refer to long-term oppressive inequities that have been built in, consciously or otherwise, or institutionalized into the structures that order society.⁴⁶ Symbolic violence, drawing from Pierre Bourdieu and his consideration of and beyond Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony vis-à-vis consent, refers to the internalization of structural violence and/or other forms of violence in such a destructive way that the very violence which impinges on someone is itself used to reinforce such violence upon oneself and make it appear natural. A key example Bourdieu elaborates is the issue of the internalization of misogynist norms by women in light of experiences with violent masculinities.⁴⁷ Lastly, Scheper-Hughes and Arthur Kleinman's respective notions of everyday violence are meant to illustrate the compounding of structural and symbolic violences into the everyday, interpersonal relations of people.⁴⁸ While citing street delinquency and domestic violence, as examples of the everyday violence, it becomes clear that Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois' four categories do not have rigidly defined boundaries and at times overlap. Nonetheless, a characteristic that most considerations of violence do share is the

⁴⁴ Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, "Introduction: Making Sense of Violence" In *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology* ed. by Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois (Malden: Blackwell Books, 2004), 1-31.

⁴⁵ Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963).

⁴⁶ John Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6 (1970): 167-191, 169. See also, Joy James, *Resisting State Violence: Radicalism, Gender and Race in U.S. Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

⁴⁷ Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, 33-42.

⁴⁸ See for example, Nancy Scheper-Hughes, *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and Arthur Kleinman, "The Violence of Everyday Life: The Multiple Forms and Dynamics of Social Violence," In *Violence and Subjectivity*, ed. by Veena Das, et. al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 226-241.

implicit and in some cases explicit binary distinction between legal/illegal, legitimate/illegitimate or worthy/unworthy manifestations of violence.⁴⁹ By bringing together some of the above literature on violence with the coloniality of power framework, my dissertation elucidates the colonial logics of violence along the San Ysidro border.

The border between the U-S///Mexico is the focus here because no other two neighboring countries share such sharp socio-economic differences, as do the United States and Mexico. Violence under such conditions merits further consideration as it speaks to the role of national-territorial borders in the maintenance of global inequality and a local consideration of violence can, as Anderson and O'Dowd suggest, be important for larger comparative work in other border regions. While the four major cases in this dissertation, are of a noticeably different character and dimensions of violence—a territorial annexation, a massacre, vigilantism, and population displacement via urban development—each case offers insight in to the presuppositions and conditions of possibility that make such violence(s) possible. Fanning the flames of renewed anti-immigrant sentiment directed in large part to Mexican migrants in the United States, Mexico has figured prominently in the rhetoric of invasion and of stealing jobs both domestically and through the exporting of industry that characterized de-industrialization since the 1960's. The U-S///Mexico border in this regard becomes the geospatial manifestation of a binary illustrative of violent relations, that of industrial/industrializing or said another way, the modern with the presumably backward. The result has been what some argue amounts to a virtual war zone on the U-S///Mexico border that has at times manifested itself in actual shootings such as the McDonalds massacre, or the low-intensity conflict of militarization and vigilantism. To these very visible forms of violence I add other instances that while not as sensational nonetheless share repercussions equally as detrimental.

Organization of Chapters

Chapter One reviews current urban studies literature on annexation, suburbanization, and segregation, and focuses on the history of the City of San Diego's annexation of San Ysidro and other surrounding communities. Specifically, it investigates the economic and political forces that led to boundary changes in San Ysidro and what is commonly referred to as South San Diego or the South Bay. Whereas, previous scholarship on municipal annexations has focused primarily on the procedural mechanics and local dynamics that inform municipal boundary changes, Chapter One argues that this approach is limited as it overemphasizes the local economic and political dynamics. Instead, I argue that global capital flows and forces play a powerful role in municipal annexations.

The annexation of communities in the South Bay also reveals an underlying racial dynamic that focused on issues of water rights as pretext for control over the border region. Chapter One highlights how the historical experience of San Ysidro provides a

⁴⁹ Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 3-4.

framework for rethinking municipal annexations as territorial violence and local reenactments of colonial enterprises at a metropolitan scale and considers the implications this framework has for ongoing debates about citizenship and belonging in an increasingly globalized world.

Extending the historical contextualization of annexation as the backdrop for San Ysidro's relationship to the City of San Diego, I briefly consider how the annexation created a situation in which a large portion of San Diego lacked land contiguity resulting in significant political repercussions, not only for the South Bay but for a substantial portion of San Diego's Mexican population. In other words, the annexation resulted, among other things, in the creation of San Diego's 8th City Council District as a "Mexican District" that was created and has been sustained as a containing mechanism vis-à-vis predominantly white Northern and coastal communities—the areas city boosters' often point to when referring to San Diego as "America's Finest City".

The 8th District is composed of San Ysidro, the South Bay and Barrio Logan, home to Chicano Park and epicenter of Chicana/o Movement activity in San Diego, along with a 300-foot wide strip of water within the Coronado Bay that was subject of the annexation disputes of the 1950's. A major consequence has been that the 8th District is marginalized within citywide politics yet subjected to additional scrutiny in times of fiscal and political crises.

The existence of a "Mexican district" frames the simultaneous invisibility and hyper-visibility of Latinas/os in San Ysidro and San Diego generally and brings into question the alternating displacement and re-spatializations of local and national concerns onto the 8th District and U-S//Mexico border, often collapsed into a debate around national security that subsumes local concerns with the cloud of calls for border control. Furthermore, it also created the ironic situation of lax police and emergency response when a gunman entered a local restaurant and began shooting.

Chapter Two focuses on an instance of physical/lethal violence, the July 18, 1984 massacre at a McDonalds restaurant in San Ysidro, California—where 21 people were killed and eighteen were injured—and the ensuing battle over how to best remember the victims of that shooting. The 1984 McDonalds Massacre is considered in the context of economic forces that shaped the relationship of the two countries at the time, as the killer James Huberty had recently become unemployed due to deindustrialization and had moved to San Ysidro after a brief stint in Mexico, presumably "following his job" without success. Of the 21 victims, 18 were Mexican and of the 18 wounded, 14 were also Mexican. While the shooting was said to be "random" I argue Huberty's actions were a manifestation of a recurrent colonial logic of Mexican-hating on the border.

Furthermore, I examine the resulting debate over a monument that was to be built in memory of the victims, as a struggle between community members and city officials emerged soon after the massacre. At the heart of the issue were competing worldviews regarding death and its representation. The episode forced city officials to grapple with how the massacre would be inscribed in the public memory of San Ysidro residents. I examine these questions by interrogating the multiple interests involved

and give consideration to the dynamics of power, race, place and gender. Specifically, I am here interested in the clashing of a predominantly Mexican community's "cultural" practices of *lively* remembrance and mourning, in contrast to the city's normative, secular and civic use of public space aimed at forgetting instances of violence.

In Chapter Three I focus on the rise of recent civilian patrols operating along the U-S///Mexico border to interrogate shifting, gendered discourses of nation, citizenship and belonging. First, I consider the shifting and gendered discourses of home and nation, by which the national imaginary's boundaries of belonging are expanded and contracted, both legislatively and discursively, to create changing narratives about who constitutes the nation/home, but always in relation to an other. Second, through the published and public statements of recent civilian patrols along the border I trace how the Minutemen and other civilian patrols utilize discursive strategies that serve to normalize and naturalize the imagined inside of the nation, particularly as it relates to the racialized and gendered constructions of presumably fertile Mexican immigrants. I consider some of the local immigrant rights' activist responses to the civilian patrols and argue that "vigilantism" is a structurally embedded form of border violence.

Through the work of Karl Polanyi and Mark Gravonetter, I reframe Wayne Cornelius' work on the "structural embeddedness of demand for labor" and a related "ethnocultural objection" to argue that gendered discourses of home function as a "colonial/racial objection" to reproduce masculinist narratives of nation, citizenship, property, and belonging. Accordingly, I challenge literature that argues Latinos like previous generations of immigrants (Italians, Polish, etc.) will assimilate, for it does not concur with a nuanced consideration of the lived experiences of migrants who are, to cite Fanon, "over-determined from without". Discourses of vigilantes' patrolling/securing the frontiers from hostiles or runaway slaves, the borders from "illegals", or the outer stretches of the homeland from terrorists are considered for how they serve the purpose of constructing and legitimating a colonialist and masculinist rendition of the nation.

In Chapter Four, I consider how the community of San Ysidro and other border residents have responded to and, in the process, challenged traditional articulations of citizenship and belonging in a national body politic by different means of cultural production. This chapter examines the cultural production of three distinct musical groups *Tijuana NO*, *Aztlán Underground*, and *Los Tigres del Norte*. These cultural workers producing music and texts across different genres are located in different urban spaces, and come from distinct experiences in relation to the U-S///Mexico Border, yet nonetheless speak to similar issues.

Chapter Four asks what it means when three musical artists, speak to the same problematic, albeit from the significantly different traditions of Ska/Punk, Rap/Hip-Hop, Corridos. How do these conceptual similarities in the themes informing the three artists' songs point to deeper fundamental issues regarding Mexicana/o experiences and cultural production along the ever-present U-S///Mexico border? While the three musical genres each have attendant sub-cultures, an analysis of their music, and the three songs that are subject of the chapter, illuminate shared concerns among the

seemingly different sets of cultural formations. The chapter attempts to make sense of this issue by placing the question of the border itself, and its crossing of peoples and shared communities, as a form of everyday violence. The border is interrogated as a central problematic to understand the related themes of the distinct artists and other cultural workers who explore the questions of border violence.

* * * * *

After considering contemporary instances of violence in San Ysidro, I conclude the dissertation by addressing the broader implications emerging from the social, cultural and political impact of various forms of violence in border communities. Through a brief consideration of violence in another border city, namely the killing of women in Ciudad Juarez, I ascertain the foundations, premises and operative mechanisms of border violence and how it functions as a recurring effect of modernity/coloniality, which itself leads to the violence of erasure of San Ysidro from the popular imaginary and the designation of the City of San Diego as an exception among border cities. I conclude by illustrating how the U-S///Mexico border in this regard becomes the geospatial manifestation of a long history of racialized and gendered colonial violence and must be recognized as such if we are going to seriously and sincerely work towards some remedy.

The significance of my research lies in its potential to affect multiscale border enforcement, immigration, and urban redevelopment policy towards more humane ends. It provides insight into contradictions of free trade policies that do not account for the mobility of workers, resulting in the entrenchment of national-territorial boundaries in an otherwise fluid global economy. Similarly, it aims to provide a foundation for the inclusion, on equal terms, of those excluded on the basis of the mere existence of said borders, as well as those who are impinged upon by the insistence on the reinforcement of both national-territorial, and by extension social, borders. By bringing into question the feasibility, practicality and efficacy of nation-state borders and its accompanying violence, my research challenges preconceived notions of belonging and citizenship that equate formal status in a national body politic with rights and privileges, as such formulation occurs at the expense of a significant amount of people whose day-to-day confrontation with the state occurs at a local level, on unequal terms, regardless of formal citizenship status. Lastly, I articulate some of the theoretical and political implications that are revealed through a concrete study of raced/gendered violence in San Ysidro and the coloniality of power along the U-S///Mexico border.

This dissertation began with two questions: What are the connections or disjunctions between violence present in the different spatial-temporal frames: colony, frontier, border, globalization? And, is there an organizing principle maintaining distinct forms of violence—colonial violence, frontier violence, border violence, and the violence of globalization—genealogically similar? Recognizing the broader research program present in my initial questions, I realized I would only be able to focus on a small aspect of the above concerns. A guiding question thus became: How have people been affected by different experiences with violence on the U-S///Mexico border?

Accordingly, this dissertation is concerned with the impact of, and responses to, various forms of raced/gendered violence in border communities, both on its own terms, but also for what it reveals about the functioning of the modern/colonial world-system. In particular, I focus on the border community of San Ysidro, located at the southern ends of the City of San Diego, as emblematic of globalizing processes in which local interests and politics intersect and often clash with discourses of nation, as well as with equally diverse regional, national and transnational exigencies of capital and geopolitical life. Located at the intersections of urban studies, border studies, ethnic studies and world-systems analysis, this dissertation thus reflects my own intellectual commitments to undoing disciplinary, methodological and national-territorial boundaries.

CHAPTER ONE

THE LOGICS OF MUNICIPAL ANNEXATIONS AT THE FRINGE: TERRITORIAL VIOLENCE AND THE STRUCTURAL LOCATION OF A BORDER(ED) BARRIO

“...the geographical pattern in the circulation of surplus can be conceived only as a moment in a process. In terms of that moment, particular cities attain positions with respect to the circulation of surplus, which at the next moment are changed. Urbanism, as a general phenomenon, should not be viewed as the history of particular cities, but as the history of the systems of cities within, between, and around which the surplus circulates . . . the history of particular cities is best understood in terms of the circulation of surplus values at a moment of history within a system of cities.”

-David Harvey (1973, 250)

“Cities accumulate and retain wealth, control and power because of what flows through them, rather than what they statistically contain.”

-Jonathan Beaverstock, *et al* (2000, 123)

Introduction

Cities, as historical entities, must be understood both as locations and relational spaces of circulation. Through a focus on San Ysidro and its relative invisibility in the American popular imaginary, this chapter provides an overview of a number of literatures in Urban Studies, with an emphasis on municipal annexations and boundary change. I make three related arguments to ascertain what is the structural location and function of the community of San Ysidro are in relation to both the City of San Diego and the U-S//Mexico border. The example of San Ysidro points to the limits of municipal annexation literature as “too local”. By this, I mean most scholars focus on two axioms—namely economic and political logics/explanations—while I instead argue the annexation of San Ysidro to the City of San Diego points to the importance of global flows/forces in determining seemingly local territorial disputes.

Using a coloniality of power framework I make a related argument for rethinking municipal annexations as lower scale reenactments of colonial enterprises in terms of

the usurping of land into the jurisdiction of expanding social and political boundaries, premised on notions of the lack of capacity for self-governing annexed territories. Thinking through municipal annexations in this light, as forms of metropolitan colonialisms and territorial violence, carry significant implications for both urban and national body politics, as it highlights the working of political and economic power concentrated in the hands of local business and political elite.

Lastly, through a legal history of cities I trace the inability of modern liberal discourse to reconcile the in-between position of cities in its reverence for an ideal autonomous individual and its parallel the sovereign state. In this paradoxical configuration, referred to in law as Dillon's Principle, which maintains cities are "creatures of the state" even if they predate their respective "creator state," cities maintain a limbo position—not quite individual but collective and not quite state though an administrative arm of its rule. This paradox, visible in the relationship between San Ysidro and San Diego, allows for a creative disjunction in which to rearticulate competing notions of citizenship and claims to the State.

National Borders, City Limits, and Municipal Boundary Changes

As noted in the Introduction, politico-juridical demarcations at the limits of modern nation-states—"borders" as we know them—have been extensively written about in a wide array of disciplines. Municipal boundaries also share a wide range of academic and practical interest, yet are more particularly inscribed in and limited to the politics of jurisdiction. In both instances, classical notions of jurisdictional boundaries such as those of cities, counties, and other forms of municipalities (states and nations included) are said to share the commonalities of governance. In other words, *who governs* is determined by and limited to agreed-upon boundaries of any given territorial entity. While some argue international bodies—manifested in the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, for example—render nation-state borders increasingly insignificant, the process of globalization has signaled not a dismissal of boundaries, but their simultaneous fluidity and re-entrenchment. Argued another way, political and economic flows and trends said to "know no boundaries" in reality have meant that nation-states, *and border cities in particular* as centers of capital and nodes on networks of circulation and flows, are becoming evermore present entities where politics and the production, reproduction, management, and consumption of capital and are negotiated, shifting in response to both local *and* global forces. Moreover, poststructuralist theorists have complicated rigidly defined politico-juridical (and monolingual intellectual) boundaries, as well as traditional notions of governance, to ask not only *who governs*, but *how is one governed*, and how do fragmented notions of governance affect rights and claims vis-à-vis changing articulations of citizenship.

In this context, cities, municipal boundary *changes* and the negotiations of resident-citizens as actors—including their respective dynamics and trajectories in light of structural circumstances—all provide insights into the shifts of capital flows and the accompanying reconfigurations of social, gendered, racial, and political landscapes.

Such shifts have altered the terms of governance and resulted in scholarly interest in cities as sites of multiple and often layered forms of contestation. Central to the study of spatial contestation have been concerns over sprawl, white flight, and the relationship of (re)development and suburbs to old city centers. More recently, scholarship has focused on citizenship and how resident-actors negotiate the limits and “freedoms” of the structural impingements on their lives as they lay claim to social, political and discursive spaces within and beyond city boundaries. Thus, it is necessary to ask what forms have the continuously shifting social, political and economic landscapes assumed, in order to understand the municipal boundaries changes that precipitated, facilitated or followed them and subsequent changes in resident-actors’ claims.

In such spirit, this chapter focuses on the processes and politics of *municipal annexation*, with attention to California vis-à-vis the nation, as it provides a backdrop to the salient themes of (re)development, white flight/suburbanization and gentrification. In particular, I focus on San Ysidro as a case that exemplifies the nexus of local, municipal, state, national and international interests, which often are at odds with one another. The municipal annexation of San Ysidro to the City of San Diego consequently evades established literature on annexation in two ways. First, while most annexation literature focuses on local dynamics or circumstances informing boundary changes, the case of San Ysidro points to concerns over future global capital flows. Secondly, the local circumstances surrounding the annexation point to colonial dynamics at a metropolitan scale that carry significant implications for racialized communities in annexation disputes. I conclude with a consideration of the epistemological foundations of cities’ historical legal development to situate important questions about cities and citizenship.

By offering a critical literature review of competing theories about the city—from modernist political economy to Neo-Marxist theorizations of circulation and accumulation of capital, and postmodern, postcolonial and poststructuralist readings of urban geographies of power—this chapter seeks to relate shifting jurisdictions to larger global processes and demonstrate how such shifts re-signify municipal annexations proper. The chapter presents a framework for thinking about municipal annexations as forms of “metropolitan colonialism,” building on Anthony King’s (1990) work on colonialism and urbanization.¹

Much of the literature in border studies can be divided into two branches: traditional (political economy, sociology, political science) and metaphoric (cultural studies, literary criticism, queer theory) (Palafox 2000). Ananya Roy (2001) and Nezar Alsayyad (2001) acknowledge the important critical work produced through the metaphoric use of multiple notions of hybridity and the border. However, they also point to the de-spatialization, and in some instances de-politicization that occurs when concepts such as the border, third space(s) or third place(s) are used uncritically, and

¹ See Anthony King, 1990, *Urbanism, Colonialism and the World-Economy*, London: Routledge; especially Chapters 1 and 4.

the problematic renderings that have at times emerged from such perspectives.² Accordingly, my aim here is a simultaneous re-territorialization of “border” cities—the physical place, its residents and their lived experience—which recognizes the importance of *what flows through* these locations as much as what is contained by them.³ I thus consider three types of spatial (re)configurations (segregation, suburbanization and annexation), then look at the case of San Ysidro, California as I consider various theoretical works, including Gerald Frug’s (1999) complex interrogation of the legal history of cities and Graham and Simon’s (2001) notion of “splintering urbanism” to argue for an understanding of municipal annexations as a continued colonial enterprise by which capital effectuates “spatial-juridical fixes”⁴ to (re)open markets and extend its reach, at multiple scales, through usage of existing (and/or new) networks of infrastructure.

Producing an “Urban Crisis”: Suburbanization, Segregation and Annexation

Asserting the existence of an “anti-urban” bias among the United States’ populace, in spite of a constant push for (re)development, Robert Beauregard argues the advent of industrialization served as a catalyst for the first expansions of fringe communities, marking a rejection of the perceived moral decay of cities and their social problems (2003, 12-16, 123). As industrialization took hold, resulting in predominantly poor migrants coming to the cities, the growing white middle-class began moving out and forming suburbs—the first evidence of “white flight.” By 1910, while the United States was well on its way to becoming industrialized, suburban communities were also making their presence felt. According to Myron Orfield, however, they received an immediate response in the form of annexation attempts by established central cities. Orfield writes these attempts, facilitated by “liberal annexation policies before 1900 allow[ed] central cities to regionalize their governments. But, by the turn of the century, there was growing opposition...” to the annexation attempts of such communities as well (2002, 134). The new suburbs undertook what Nancy Burns (1994) calls *defensive incorporations*. They began mounting political pressure on state legislators to curtail liberal annexation laws and liberalize incorporation procedures in order to “protect” the newly formed communities from older city centers they had abandoned. Whereas uncharted growth was common prior to 1900—exacerbated by industrialization—most annexations occurring from 1890 to 1920 were functions of cities working to obtain a centralized, bureaucratized form called for by modernization (Mollenkopf 1983, 37). By the 1920’s, however, annexations nearly stopped in their entirety, only to return with the sprawl that accompanied the post-WWII period.

² See also, Neil Smith and Cindi Katz. 1993. “Grounding Metaphor: toward a spatialized politics.” In *Place and the Politics of Identity*, edited by Michael Keith and Steve Pile, 67-83. London: Routledge.

³ For an excellent example of an analysis in this light, see Victor M. Ortíz-González, 2004, *El Paso: Local Frontiers at a Global Crossroads*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

⁴ On spatial-temporal fixes see David Harvey (2003), 87-89, 115-124.

While annexations have been occurring for over a century, the most explicit use of this process has been in response to the 1950's postwar sprawl. According to Mollenkopf, a series of annexations were triggered as "unintended consequences" of the New Deal programs of the 1930's, the development of highways, and the growth of defense industries, which tended to be oriented towards the suburbs (facilitated by new highways) (ibid, 58-59, 119-121). The federal urban development programs' agenda, including the 1934 Housing Act, called for, among other things, increased public housing while simultaneously increasing loan availability to homeowners. This led to an intensification of already existing racial and economic disparities. In other words, while the "young, second generation, urban working-class who had made the New Deal possible had been swept up to war or [out to] new, often suburban, production facilities . . . Black immigrants from the South partially offset the white exodus from the central cities" but were relegated to central city housing projects (ibid 73). Later neglected by Fair Deal administrators due to the racial make-up of the new residents, these "dilapidating" housing projects were perceived as and paraded by city officials as additional evidence of decline, prompting further flight to the suburbs.

The demographic shifts spurred by New Deal Programs, "new" defense industries, and postwar suburbanization would leave central cities with little options but to go after the fleeting tax base, setting the stage for a wave of annexations during the 1950's. According to 1960 Census data, 2,425 municipalities with a population over 2,500 experienced annexations during the period from 1950-1960. California, with 188 annexations, was third on the list of states with the highest number of annexations, trailing only Illinois with 190 and Texas with 215. Together, California and Texas accounted for 34.3% of all people incorporated into new municipalities during the decade.⁵

This period also marked a shift in urban growth away from the Northeast and South to cities in the Southwest. Nonetheless, by the early 1960's, *predominantly white* "powerful suburban ring[s]" sprouting at the fringe of "increasingly darkened" central cities also served as a symbolic "suburban noose" (Beauregard 2003, 98), as central cities remained predominantly minority and suburbs were populated by mostly white residents. Such a demographic layout and racialized landscape would lead to the construction of the so-called "urban crisis." Consequently, perceiving that the limits of the Civil Rights Movement were being reached, predominantly Black urban residents in cities across the North, South and Midwest increasingly identified their situation as a question of "internal colonialism," by virtue of existing under the rule of predominantly white administrative bodies, and thus began seeking "liberation,"⁶ much to the fear of the white populace. Suffocation by white suburban nooses, coupled with unemployment and underemployment, inadequate housing and public services, police brutality and general political disenfranchisement, led to the uprisings of the Black Power struggles of

⁵ All above figures are from "An Information Paper" written by the *United States Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations*, Washington 25, D.C. (October 12, 1961), np. The report is itself a compilation of summary information of the individual State reports that appeared in Table 9 of Series PC(1), "Number of Inhabitants," 1960 Census of Population.

⁶ See Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton. 1969. *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*. New York: Penguin Books.

the 1960's and 1970's and thus once again sent white middle class residents packing to the suburbs out of "fear" of "racial revolt." Ironically, suburban residents failed to recognize their complicity vis-à-vis the consequences of white flight for creating and perpetuating such inequalities. John Mollenkopf, building on Gary Miller, concludes that "exclusionary and discriminatory incorporation practices . . . [and] 'municipal boundaries, increasingly served to separate races and income classes'" leading to increased segregation over the 1970's (1983, 37).

In this context, already (re)segregated cities faced further tax revenue decreases via fleeing suburban residents and increases in demand for services on the part of its poorer black and other "minority" residents. Suburbanization, as well as incorporation and annexation struggles, which accompanied the "urban crisis," a codification of long-standing racial strife, assumed the dominant form of growth in the 1960's and 1970's. However, annexations took a slightly different shape than those of the 1950's. Previously dominated by struggles over city revenue, taxation, services and "decline," annexations now were initiated in response to political concerns over increasingly Black control of cities in the Northeast and South, and joint Mexican and African American control of cities in the Southwest.

Segregation: Race, Poverty and/or Culture?

In his seminal text, *The Contested City*, John Mollenkopf wrote that in the United States "as an urban nation, urban development issues have been a primary, if not exclusive, factor in our national political development" (1983, 11). However, such political development of the nation has always been marred by the reality (and shame/denial) of slavery, genocide and multiple forms of (usually racialized) segregation that have informed its historically shifting geography. Racialized spatial exclusion, or segregation, is historically entangled with national (urban) development, from early Jim Crow laws designating *de jure* separation and spatialized containment (ghettos, barrios, reservations, etc.) characteristic of most of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to current *de facto* segregation via the creation of fortified enclaves, gated communities, and spaces of surveillance and exclusion that often function to maintain spaces of leisure.⁷ As Manuel Castells notes, "Segregation happens both by location in different places and by security control of certain spaces open only to the elite" (2002, 348). In relation to "new urban segregation" and the emergence of "fortified enclaves," Teresa Caldeira similarly asserts, "yuppies and poor migrant workers depend on each other," albeit through separate spaces (1999, 121). Although manifestations of segregation have differed over the years, protagonists of

⁷ On fortified enclaves, see Teresa Caldeira. 1999. "Fortified Enclaves: The New Urban Segregation." In *Cities and Citizenship*, edited by James Holston, 114-138. Durham: Duke University Press. On gated communities and spaces of surveillance see Mike Davis and Alessandra Moctezuma. 1999. "Policing the Third Border." and Mike Davis. 1992. "Fortress Los Angeles: The Militarization of Urban Space." In *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*, edited by Michael Sorkin, 154-180. NY: Hill & Wang. See also Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2003).

suburbanization processes and municipal boundary changes have often been complicit with, facilitated, and/or benefited from such exclusions.

While the body of literature addressing classical forms of segregation(s) is extensive, the Chicago School (Ernest Burgess, Robert Park, Louis Wirth to name a few) outlined a model of cities organized functionally in concentric circles relative to their productive necessities and laid the foundation for theorizing about urban segregation through ecological models (Susser 2002, 4). With different conclusions, St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton's *Black Metropolis* (1945) and Edward Banfield's *The Unheavenly City* (1968) reflect this tradition. Drake and Cayton engage the classic theme of the "dual city"—a city that includes spaces of wealth, as well as those marked by poverty—to interrogate and critique the concentration of racialized poverty in urban ghettos of Chicago.⁸ Banfield, on the other hand, acknowledges the segregation of ghettos, but argues it is constituted by economic as opposed to racial factors, based on the premise that racial prejudice has ended, and in its place economic matters have come to dominate issues of inequality.⁹ This last point became the subject of the later "underclass" debate sparked by William Julius Wilson's *The Declining Significance of Race* (1980) and *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987) and Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton's *American Apartheid* (1993). In a similar though distinct vein, Kenneth Clark, Robert Blauner, Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, drawing from third world dependency theorists, organized their interrogations of segregation and racialized inequality around the idea of internal colonialism, arguing that black ghettos and Mexican barrios were essentially colonies within the United States as their residents lacked any sense of political or economic control over their own lives. Instead, they were spaces owned by white landlords, administered by white politicians, and kept under social control by white police forces that constituted an army of occupation.

Banfield, merits further discussion here, for while he does not explicitly deny the history of the nation being built on crucial intersections of racial prejudice and economic subjugation in their many manifestations, he attempts to *sever* 'historical' causes from 'continuing' causes, seeing to establish that there exists no link between the two (1968, 70). Asserting inequality and poverty *in the present* have more to do with low-income work and unemployment, inexpensive housing costs in the "ghetto," and choices to live in segregated residential spaces, Banfield effectively disconnects the past from a presumably independent 'present.' The economic rationalization in Banfield—Blacks are but the "most recent unskilled and hence relatively low-income *migrant* to reach the city from a *backward* rural area" (ibid 68)—upholds ideological constructions of rural/urban binaries and rests upon an immigrant analogy. In other words, Banfield argues Blacks should be seen simply as a new *migrant* group, who over time will lift themselves up from their bootstraps and escape both poverty and, in turn, the "ghetto."

By rhetorically reconstructing and reframing the legacy of slavery in terms of "rural to urban migration" (with all its problematic precepts), Banfield thus misconstrues the extent to which segregation can be attributed to racial/colonial factors,

⁸ Drake and Cayton (1945), see especially Chapter Eight.

⁹ Banfield (1968), see especially Chapter Four.

and reformulates the particular racial/colonial character of segregated urban spaces in service of a presumed “urban crisis.” While Banfield’s conclusion—“ghettos” are constituted by poverty and “class culture”—seems to refute the idea of “ghettos” as necessarily Black, the effects, premises and motivations of Banfield seem racially charged and resemble a spatialized hybrid of the much refuted Culture of Poverty thesis. Banfield’s logic is also reflected in Peter Jargowsky and M. J. Bane’s (1991) similarly reductionist account of economically determined segregation as constitutive of ghettos.

In contrast to Banfield and Jargowsky and Bane, Loic Wacquant (1997) problematizes the connotative effects that follow from equating the “ghetto” with Black communities by considering how language discursively functions to perpetuate the idea of an “urban/racial crisis.” In Wacquant’s view, both Banfield and Jargowsky and Bane dismiss the continuing significance of race in the intersection of poverty and segregation. Where Wacquant falls short is elaborating the concomitant role of race in the historical development of white flight and suburbanization, given his exclusive focus on the discursive construction of the “ghetto”. Wacquant’s analysis nonetheless challenges the implied social disorganization and exoticization of the “ghetto” in most social scientists writing about urban spaces characterized as ghettos (1997, 341-342). In doing so, he challenges us to think through and beyond ideological and discursive functions of key conceptual and theoretical devices used by social scientists that, through their premises, perpetuate a myopic, and in this case, eurocentric views of society, poverty and ‘the urban condition.’

Annexations: Race, Border Cities and Global Capital Flows

Given this intellectual history, it is no surprise that much of the literature on annexation has been framed around two main axioms that I distinguish as economic and political explanations. While I discuss the two in more detail further below, they are chiefly distinguished by 1) (re)incorporation of important tax bases, with an eye towards renewal of “declining” city centers on the one hand, and 2) white flight and suburbanization due to presumed racial/urban “crises” in cities on the other. Both types of explanations are often posited as manifestations of growth. Those of the first order frame the resulting annexations in largely economically reductionist terms. They are, according to Robert Beauregard, discursive and ideological constructions used to maintain an impetus for growth and (re)development, and implicitly, segregated spaces (Beauregard 2003, 12-16, 123). Such economic analyses abound and form a larger part of the literature on municipal annexations.

A second tendency in the literature has been to distinguish instances where political rationales *veiling* racially motivated efforts to dilute the power of the electoral bodies of municipalities act as the dominant force behind annexations. Studies on Houston and San Antonio, Texas that examine the struggles of Mexican and Black populations following the *Brown v. Board* (1954) decision and the “formal” end of segregation, as well as studies of Richmond, Virginia and Birmingham, Alabama are particularly instructive in this area, as they both were explicit attempts to dilute the voting power of

the Mexican and African American communities.¹⁰ It is important to note however the role of race and the attendant power dynamics operating in *both* explanatory axioms. Furthermore, the *constructed* ‘urban crisis’ cannot be divorced from the justificatory function it serves in the creation of (predominantly white) suburbs.

Both the economic and political dynamics are manifested not just *at the fringe* of cities (i.e., suburbs), but also *at the fringe* of the nation (border cities), as sites where multiple competing interests interact with and negotiate between local needs and the demands of global market forces. While economic and political factors appear—explicitly or implicitly—in the rationales for annexation, it is my contention that in the case of San Ysidro they do so following a seemingly “irrational” and contradictory logic when weighed against other annexations. Instead, following Beaverstock, Smith and Taylor, and while not trivializing border residents or their concerns, I argue that, as a border city, *control over the Port of Entry and its related capital flows were the motivating factors in the annexation process*, rather than what or who was “contained” in/by the annexed neighborhoods.

The importance of looking at border cities is thus twofold. On the one hand, there exists an operative dialectic between the local dynamics of cities (residents, economy, political culture, etc.) and the circulation of capital (goods, services, and products) that “flow through them” as crucial localities in a system of cities (Ortíz-González 2004). While this is an argument that could be made for border cities and non-border cities alike, it takes on added significance on the border given their place in the circulation of capital across borders and the fact that these are among the poorest communities in the United States. On the other hand, as representative of the limit (edge, frontier, border, etc.) of the nation, border cities also serve a dual role of ensuring security and of negotiating human exchange. Susan Mains has argued “While immigration concerns are made more concrete by focusing on physical sites of border crossing, these sites are frequently signifiers for much broader, wide-ranging, and punitive efforts to police national identity” (2002, 211). In both instances, the local/urban dynamics of border cities intersect and are, at times, undermined by national interests and the *social* investment in a presumably united, authentic, and untainted national body politic. In other words, the border has a social function of appeasing concerns of the national body politic about the need to “secure the border” in order to protect and preserve the social fabric of the nation from “the foreign” or “the other” (i.e., the closing or re-entrenchment of the border), albeit while allowing entry to a sufficient amount of “foreigners” to meet production and consumption demands (its relative opening).

As suburbs continue to dot the landscape, municipal boundaries have undergone changes as well. While there have been many manifestations of growth—new incorporations and concomitant fragmentation of city governance—by far, the most common form of boundary change has been through annexations. Since annexation laws are established by state statute, no two states provide for precisely the same procedures. State statutes themselves also change frequently. While the objectives of

¹⁰ See Rodolfo Rosales, *The Illusion of Inclusion: The Untold Political Story of San Antonio* (Austin: UT Press, 2000).

cities have often been to integrate undeveloped land or existing unincorporated communities, annexation has varied widely both within and among cities, and frequently has been a volatile local issue. Each move towards suburbanization has been accompanied by several municipal boundary changes, but not always for the same reasons or under similar circumstances. In the next section I will first briefly address classificatory debates and the contested logics of annexation. I will then turn to San Ysidro and the challenge this case poses to established literature, in order to reconsider the ways that municipal governance is structured at the nation's fringes, but more importantly, to situate the way in which San Ysidro is structurally located in relation to the City of San Diego and the U-S//Mexico border.

Classifications Schemes and the Contested Logics of Municipal Annexation

Research on municipal annexations is wide-ranging and varied. Scholars have adopted diverging approaches to studying municipal annexations, including classification systems, quantitative analyses, and specific case studies. In an oft-cited detailed legal treatise, Frank Sengstock classifies municipal annexations based on a five-part scheme he developed according to whom held “final decision-making authority” in the process of an annexation attempt (Palmer and Lindsey 2001, 61). Sengstock's classification system, which is still used by most scholars and practitioners today, includes the following paraphrased categories:

1. Popular Determination: citizen control over the process (via petition or voting)
2. Municipal Determination: unilateral authority resting with the city
3. Legislative Determination: annexations by legislative act
4. Quasi-legislative (or administrative) Determination: determined by an appointed commission
5. Judicial Determination: city, citizen or legislative control, with court approval (Sengstock 1960)

While scholars and practitioners have long argued about various approaches to annexation, with varying conclusions, a complementary body of literature has focused on providing empirical support for Sengstock's classificatory scheme. For example, Thomas Dye (1964) and Raymond Wheeler (1965), analyze factors contributing to differences in annexation rates. Dye finds that “the ease or difficulty of annexation procedures . . . does not appear to be predictive of annexation activity” (1964, 445). He argues instead that “older” cities were less likely to annex than “newer” cities. Newer cities here, implies a bias for cities in the West. Wheeler additionally finds that annexations were less likely when the “social distance” was greater (i.e., differences in socioeconomic characteristics between the city and the territory being annexed) (1965, 355). This latter issue would be a key point of contention in the annexation of San Ysidro and the South Bay to the City of San Diego given the socioeconomic differences between the annexing and annexed areas.

In a different set of findings that may seem counterintuitive, Thomas Galloway and John Landis find that “popular determination” by citizens in both the existing city and the territory to be annexed *decreases* the likelihood of annexation (1986, 41-43). Their research found that provisions to initiate annexation by ordinance, by petition of property owners, and by referendum of only those electors in the annexing city facilitates annexation (ibid). This means that requirements for public hearings, for approval by “quasi-legislative” or administrative commissions, and for referenda by electors in the target areas to be annexed deter annexation. Annexation, according to Galloway and Landis, is thus more likely to occur in states that do not require the participation or consent of those being annexed and is less likely to occur in those states that do (ibid, 43).¹¹ These findings are counterintuitive in the sense that participation of those affected would seem to affect the results more. A possible explanation for the counterintuitive conclusions of Galloway and Landis may lie in the work of Richard Feiock and Jered Carr (2000).

Assessing different forms of local boundary change (annexation, consolidation, incorporation, etc.) with a theory of “collective action”—which stipulates the existence of “free-riders” who rely on the actions of others—Feiock and Carr (2000, 4-5) argue that such changes become difficult to enact, both because of the limited number of players, as well as because of the different procedural issues that govern such changes at the level of the state. Feiock and Carr argue, “The need to act collectively to alter boundaries means that those groups better able to organize and sustain these actions will be favored in the process. Thus, local boundaries will be more often drawn in ways that these advantaged groups prefer” (ibid). Similarly, this logic could be extended to argue that the oppositional response—that of promoting a contrary form of boundary change or a continuation of the status quo—experiences a complementary *disadvantage* in which action taken against the initially suggested changes may not be indicative of the overall *sentiment* of the residents of the target area in question, as they too become “free-riders” who rely on the actions of the organized few. Additionally, the political and socio-economic realities of racialized communities exacerbate the situation. For example, the electoral power of Black, Latina/o and immigrant communities has been historically eroded by numerous factors including earlier restrictions necessitating all petitioners to be citizens and homeowners. Electoral disenfranchisement via felony convictions, which disproportionately affect African American and Latino populations, and issues of immigration status have also prevented the full representation of Black and Latina/o communities in such decision-making processes.¹² Voting eligibility was also an important aspect in the case of San Diego’s annexation of the South Bay in 1957.

While Nancy Burns (1994) first articulated the idea of “defensive incorporation”—that is, of unincorporated areas becoming their own cities to avoid annexation into surrounding cities—Feiock and Carr have also recently presented a complementary notion of “offensive annexation” whereby “cities aggressively annex

¹¹ This conclusion again marks a big difference with the San Ysidro example, as we will see below.

¹² Alec C. Ewald, “ ‘Civil Death’: The Ideological Paradox Of Criminal Disenfranchisement Law In The United States,” *Wisconsin Law Review* (2002): 1045-1132

where there are minimal constraints on incorporation in order to pre-empt future incorporation efforts” by unincorporated areas (1996, 10). As issues related to sprawl and the revitalization of central cities persist, the role of annexation will continually be debated. Pressures to empower not only those who are affected by annexation but also municipalities, so that their capacity to manage growth effectively might be enhanced, are likely to increase. Moreover, where race and lower-income residents are involved, such debates are likely to be more contested.

In the following sub-sections I present brief synopses of what I term the “economic logics” (or rationales) and the “political logics” (or rationales) of municipal annexation. These are not meant as analyses, per se, but as brief sketches of the arguments surrounding annexation.

Economic Logics of Annexation

Literature about proponents of annexation often argues that changes to the economy, caused first by industrialization and then the post-industrial shift to a service economy, have resulted in an increase in people of color (immigrant and native, usually poorer) moving to and becoming larger percentages of, central cities. In response, more economically stable white residents have moved to the outlying fringes, leaving behind cities with *less tax-based revenue* and *more expenses* to pay for increasing amount of services to its newer, poorer residents. On the other hand, sprawl entails residents who move out of city jurisdictions, thereby evading taxation, but who in many instances still make use of city services. Proponents of annexations, argue annexations are needed to make unincorporated areas pay for city services they receive. In contrast, opponents—usually framed in the discourse of overextended *city services* and *fiscal responsibility*—have argued cities would spread themselves too thin and not be able to provide necessary services to outlying communities. While Feiock and Carr’s notion of “offensive annexations” may shed light on such annexation attempts, the assumption of offensive or pre-emptive annexation has not always proved fruitful, as in Detroit where, according to Orfield, ambitious annexation campaigns were unsuccessful and only served to exacerbate existing problems (2002, 134).

There is widespread agreement among scholars that Nancy Burns’ notion of “defensive incorporation” speaks to situations when those in the outlying areas are affluent white middle class suburbanites who oppose annexation. However, what are the dynamics when the target area is not the subject of “defensive incorporation” or is not predominantly white and middle/upper class? Instead, in some annexation struggles, target area residents have explicitly articulated their opposition to annexation as a matter of (internal) colonial “land grab”.¹³ Economic reasons given for opposing annexation have thus ranged from defensive incorporations to simple desires for autonomy. Yet, there is also the fear that despite the presumed lowering of taxes as

¹³ For example, see Becky Gillette. 1998. “Annexation or occupation: It’s all a matter of perspective.” *The Mississippi Business Journal* 20:27 (July 6): 12; Charles Connerly. 1999. “One Great City’ Or Colonial Economy?: Explaining Birmingham’s Annexation Struggles, 1945-1990.” *Journal of Urban History* Vol. 26, no. 1 (November): 44-73.

promised by annexation proponents—often with supportive projections from city and county auditors’ office reports—taxes will nonetheless increase. In some cases, target-area residents also fear they will end up paying for services they do not receive because of the extensive territory cities cover, making certain services unattainable to all residents within the proposed boundary-changed area. This was the case in San Diego, where some *South Bay* residents opposed annexation in the 1950’s fearing that their tax dollars would be used to subsidize redevelopment efforts (ongoing at the time) of Balboa Park near the City’s *northern* extremities at the time in an effort to restore its fame acquired through its hosting of the World’s Fair; Balboa Park was seen as too far for many South Bay residents to benefit from or enjoy (Kaye 1957, A19).

Political Logics of Annexation

Despite the fact that *most* academic work on municipal boundary change, aside from the classificatory debates cited above, focuses on the economic aspects and fiscal impacts of annexations, there is also a growing body of literature on the political dynamics of municipal annexations. Much of this latter literature offers a critique of the dominance of economic logic and discourse surrounding annexation. A particularly significant element of this literature has been the role of race and racially charged motivations underpinning some annexations, even when these motivations are framed or disguised by seemingly benign (in most cases) economic rationales. Accordingly, a consideration of the underlying racial (and colonial) subtext in annexation discourse reveals a more complex and gloomy picture.

Numerous cases in the South (most notably Richmond, Virginia—and Houston and San Antonio, Texas, in the Southwest) have involved predominantly white residents, often with business ties to the area, pushing for annexation of surrounding areas that are inhabited usually by (predominantly, if not entirely) white residents.¹⁴ In particular, such efforts have been indirect if not explicit attempts to dilute the growing black or Latino vote. In Richmond, as well as in Birmingham, Alabama, advocates couched their support for annexation in an argument of “status” among cities, pushing for a “Greater Richmond” and a “Greater Birmingham” (Moeser and Dennis 1982, 5; Connerly 1999, 52) that would otherwise be overshadowed by the growing surrounding suburbs. The numbers, however, elucidate a different picture.

In Richmond, for example, fearing a majority Black city and Black control of the “capital of the Confederacy,” the annexation of neighboring Chesterfield “enabled 47,000 people (97 percent of whom were white) to become city residents and participate in the 1970 councilmanic election which was less than a year away” (Moeser and Dennis 1982, 7-8). One other case involves a town in Alabama, in which the city’s white residents made use of related and rarely used *de*-annexation procedures. While the city had previously been in the shape of a square, predominantly white residents, claiming to want an octagon-shaped city, voted to *reduce* politico-juridical boundaries by *de*-annexing portions of the city. Citing preference for one geometric shape over another,

¹⁴ See John V. Moeser and Rutledge M. Dennis. 1982. *The Politics of Annexation: Oligarchic Power in a Southern City*. Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing, especially the Introduction.

the municipal boundary change was used to de-annex the outlying areas that included most of the town's black population.¹⁵ As the image below illustrates, it is not difficult to discern how race played a factor in the (de)annexations, as the pivotal motive and result was to minimize the non-white populations within the given city limits. What was once a town with a mixed Black and White population was transformed into a predominantly White town as Blacks were excluded from the new city boundaries. This second group of analyses reveals how arguments seeking to advance the "greatness" of a given city are usually intricately tied to their racial make-up.

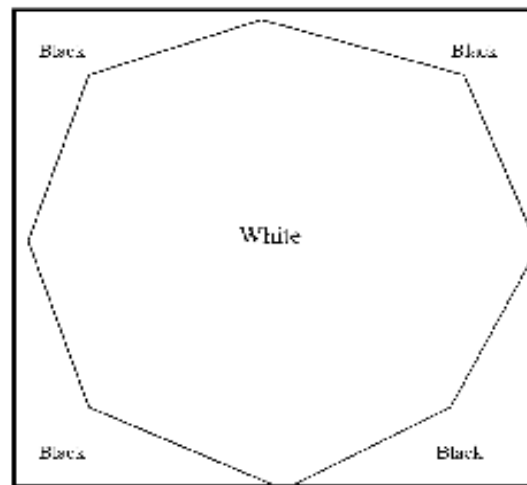


FIGURE 2: The above image is a representative sketch of the changed municipal boundaries of a town in Alabama. The outer, darker solid lines represent the previous city limits, while the lighter lines inside the square represent the new city boundaries after deannexation of the predominantly Black neighborhoods. The result was reconfiguration of the town to ensure it included only a minimal Black population.

Municipal Annexation and Racial Contestation

Recognizing that race plays an important role in disputes over municipal annexations leads to a number of questions. Namely, *who supports* annexation? *Who opposes* it and for what reasons? The several cases cited above demonstrate that white city residents seeking to increase their tax base or maintain homogenous demographics more typically support annexations. Meanwhile, opponents often include white residents of the surrounding suburbs that stand to be annexed to poorer and more

¹⁵ This striking reference is from Brett W. Berri. 1989. "Annexation and Municipal Voting Rights." *Journal of Urban and Contemporary Law* Vol. 35:237-248, cited in D. Andrew Austin. 1999. "Politics vs Economics: Evidence from Municipal Annexation," *Journal of Urban Economics* Vol. 45: pp. 501-532, pp. 505, fn. 9.

diverse city centers, who believe their taxes will subsidize *social* services for the city's poor and minority residents on the one hand, and minorities who believe their voting-base will be diluted or their taxes will pay for *utility* services in the areas to be annexed. While Beauregard notes economist Bennett Harrison as one of few "to resist blaming inner-city minorities for fiscal problems . . . separating race from poverty and white flight" is a difficult task as they are discursively and historically entangled (2003, 155). "Race," Beauregard adds, was "increasingly the glue that bound together all *perceived* problems of the declining cities," particularly poverty and crime (ibid, my emphasis). In other words, with the consistent exception of affluent white communities engaged in defensive incorporation—a codified racial dynamic of its own—opposition to annexation has largely stemmed from "minorities" who seek to preserve their voting strength, resist their perceived criminalization (Musso 2001, 148),¹⁶ and in some instances, articulate their opposition to a presumed "colonial" situation.

Andrew Austin's analysis directly addresses the continuing significance of race when he states, "annexation alters the composition of the city, and thus the balance of power . . . in other words, annexation allows current decisive voters to influence the *identity* of the decisive voter in the future by the strategic addition of new voters" (1999, 501-502, my emphasis). While annexation discourse is usually framed in economic terms, and while "political" or racial/colonial decisions often carry fiscal implications, one must be able to discern the economic from the economically codified, as therein lies a narrative of race and power. While in actuality, it is very difficult to disentangle economic factors from political and/or racial determinants, in practice they are much simpler to distinguish *if* one approaches a consideration of annexation looking and thinking beyond economic factors. Austin further concludes, "The results reveal a connection between annexation and migration." While such a connection is often tied to "migration of the poor into the cities . . . the results show that racial motivations matter..." (Ibid).

Austin's findings corroborate my own and underscore the need for broad analyses encompassing economic *and* political motivations, factors and outcomes of annexations, as they clearly affect the identity of the constitutive memberships of cities and the claims to its rights, services and protections that follow from such assemblages. Having gone through a detailed consideration of the various factors, studies and theorizations about municipal boundary change, race, and urban (re)development, I now turn to the specific annexation of San Ysidro and the South Bay region to the City of San Diego.

San Ysidro: "Is that in Mexico?!"

San Ysidro, site of the world's busiest port of entry, shares a simultaneous relationship to both the U-S//Mexico border, and to the City of San Diego, the downtown of which is some 20 miles to the north. While San Ysidro was once an

¹⁶ Juliet Ann Musso notes common approval of annexations by target area residents with promised "police protection" increase.

unincorporated neighborhood, the growth of San Diego and debates over water services led to the eventual annexation of San Ysidro and the entire South Bay area into the politico-juridical boundaries (i.e., city limits) of San Diego in 1957. What is particularly unique about the San Ysidro/San Diego relationship is that at its root and atypical of most annexation scenarios, it was a struggle over *control* of the port of entry (the border), resulting in political maneuvering that led to the annexation. In other words, keen to global capital flows, the City of San Diego wanted to lay claim not so much to the physical territory of the South Bay and what it contained in terms of residents and resources, but to the site of the border crossing and thus benefit from the flows through it (goods, capital, labor), in order to cement its status, wealth and power as an important node in a global network of cities. San Diego was equally invested in some form of local control over who could cross into Mexico, given the hype about accessibility to a number of vices south of the border.

As a community abutting the U-S///Mexico border, San Ysidro is a site and place where the multiscale interests that intersect in all cities are most visibly evident, often at odds with one another, and dealt with through heated processes of negotiation. One of the most visible tensions is between national efforts to police the boundary and local needs and rights of a predominantly Mexican community that often falls within the crosshairs of Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents. How are issues of governance and municipal services (to name a few) accounted for given the various local and federal actors and interests involved? Most recently, the creation of a binational mall, *Las Americas* has raised similar questions.¹⁷ While this border community with close cultural, economic and often familial ties to Tijuana, Mexico, is politically and jurisdictionally a part of the City of San Diego, it has historically been neglected by San Diego historians and politicians alike.¹⁸ My work thus seeks to provide an analytical framework for understanding and offering insights about such geographical and structural location of border cities in relation to the U-S///Mexico border as it affects enfranchisement of local residents in a globalized economy. To understand San Ysidro then, one must consider the City of San Diego.

San Diego, Water and Annexation

Incorporated in 1850, San Diego underwent a series of changes culminating in the latest City Charter, adopted in 1931, in which business leaders made use of at-large elections to install a city manager in agreement with their agenda (Stone, Price, and Stone 1939; Mott 1932).¹⁹ The new and weakened city council shifted their loyalties from voters to the city establishment, effectively and intentionally disenfranchising working-

¹⁷ This is an issue that is considered briefly in the Conclusion.

¹⁸ In September of 1982, five students at San Diego State University undertook a research project on the history of San Ysidro. The resulting booklet of essays provides a good starting point for future work on San Ysidro. Richard Griswold del Castillo, ed. *The San Ysidro Community History Project* (San Ysidro: San Diego State University Community History Project, n.d.).

¹⁹ The City Charter of 1931 is still in place and, amidst fiscal uncertainty and near bankruptcy, the most recent mayoral elections resulted in the shifting of power from the City Manager to the Mayor.

class and “minority” voters (Bridges 1997, 35, 169). As these voting blocs were shut out of the political process, the business elite came to dominate elections and city politics generally. Hampered by the Depression, it was not until after World War II that San Diego, fueled by massive federal spending in both military and social programs, grew rapidly, bringing new taxes and new citizens to the city. Anthony Corso (1983) maintains that much like other Sunbelt cities, San Diego implemented ambitious, unplanned annexation programs, resulting in uneven residential sprawl and continued strength of the pro-growth business community. As cities expanded through annexation, the local tax burden for city services grew apace. It is in this context that annexations of the South Bay were attempted, contested and eventually realized.

Ever since at least the 1930’s San Diego has been subject to outside forces that provided essential services such as water, power, and transportation. In May 1944, San Diego metropolitan area voters approved by a margin of fifteen-to-one the creation of their own San Diego County Water District to counter the influence of Los Angeles to the north. According to its Charter, the new entity had the power to annex itself to the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), yet by late 1944 drought and population growth had combined to exhaust most of the city reservoirs’ reserves (Shragge 2003).

San Diego’s pursuit of water would continue at least through 1962, when the Metropolitan Water District released a booklet, “Water for People,” which compared Southern California’s “thirst” to the Romans and Babylonians and their use of infrastructural advances such as aqueducts, since their water also came from “great distances” (cited in Pourade 1977, 203-204). San Diego, thus, implicitly recognized itself as a node within a network of cities and acknowledged that the processes of urbanization entailed much more infrastructural planning than is generally realized (Graham and Simon 2001, 58-60).

Herein lies the drama of history, as most sources cite the annexation dispute as a matter of the South Bay being in desperate need of water services and the larger City of San Diego as the entity that would provide the needed water. Thus, for example, San Diego historian, Richard Pourade, suggests one “thirsty” municipality with its own water district was seeking annexation into a larger, *presumably thirstier*, municipality. This was the case despite San Ysidro (and Oceanside) having an “abundance” of supply of the “best local water” in the county according the county health commissioner.²⁰ Nonetheless, most popular and the two main existing academic accounts of San Ysidro also activate the “need for water services” narrative.²¹ Donald Kurtz’ anthropological study assumes an eternal relationship between San Ysidro and San Diego, with annexation as a passing mention to situate the “poverty habitat” of San Ysidro (1973, 7-8). Margaret Ann Baker’s (1980) revealing Masters’ thesis, drawing on an internal colonialism framework, suggests San Ysidro is structurally located as a “metropolitan

²⁰ “Local Water is Best in County,” *San Ysidro Border Press*, Vol. 1, Number 3 (November 7, 1930): 1

²¹ See for example, “South Bay Annexation Vote Today” *San Diego Union* (July 16, 1957): A1, and “South Bay Approves Annexation to City” *San Diego* (July 17, 1957): A13.

colony” of San Diego. While elucidating a “colonial dynamic” however, she fails to interrogate the crucial series of boundary changes that precipitated that relationship. Instead, San Ysidro, according to Baker, “*gave up* its autonomous past . . . and *opted* to become the official conduit of human exchange between Tijuana and San Diego” (1980, 36-37, my emphasis). Baker, in a similar fashion to discourse on annexations as “marriages” between two cities, as was the case with Los Angeles and San Pedro, suggested that San Ysidro, and the South Bay generally, threw itself into the arms of San Diego, a thirsty lover in need of quenching satisfaction (Christman 2001, 34).

While water was an important long-term issue for Sunbelt cities generally, as the work of Graham and Simon points out (2001, 57-59), for the City of San Diego improved control over the border as well as the economic development of the harbor also factored in the equation. In both cases, the city recognized the potential significance of such sites given the nature of the circulation of capital and goods at a global scale.

With the postwar return of soldiers to San Diego (historically a military town) and the economic and population boom occurring in Tijuana, a new set of concerns were raised. City officials expressed fear that “good American boys” were being exposed to “indecent” south of the border, paralleling concerns of the San Pedro Woman’s Club over drinking and prostitution in their port city (*San Diego Union*, July 14, 1957; Christman 2001, 37). As officials in San Diego debated annexation of unincorporated areas near the border that included San Ysidro, Otay and Nestor, Congressman Bob Wilson “introduced a new measure aimed at keeping teenagers out of trouble in Mexican border towns . . . [to] make sure that American juveniles aren’t exposed to vice conditions if they cross the border into Mexico” (ibid). Another factor at the time was that San Diego had been seeking to make full use of the harbor to rival San Pedro in the north and Ensenada in the South, but, according to Pourade, San Diego “had met frustrations in the matter of commercial expansion: there was only so much waterfront within the jurisdiction of the City” and as a result, there was intense contestation over the remaining shoreline (1977, 211). Like Los Angeles’ preemptive creation of a harbor commission before the city had a harbor (Christman 2001, 37), suggestions regarding unifying the political and economic jurisdictions over Coronado Bay were ongoing, such that when some area citizens petitioned for annexation, the City rushed to extend its boundaries to the border.²² Other citizens however, opposed the annexation and by the 1960s, along with new citizens, mainly Chicanas/os, would challenge the ruling coalitions, demand equal treatment in education, city services, jobs, and access to city decision making (Kurtz [1969] 1997), as they argued that the annexation had left them in an neglected position since the South Bay was 20 miles to the south and not contiguous by land, separated from San Diego by National City and Chula Vista.

While San Diego claimed had a stake in the unincorporated lands of the South Bay because of its “purchase of the Otay River water system,” the land was not “contiguous” to city limits and so a direct land connection was needed and actively

²² Shelley J. Higgins, *This Fantastic City: San Diego* (San Diego: Watson-Jones Co., 1956), 153-157.

pursued.²³ The claim to having a stake in the South Bay was itself dubious at best, as it was the City of Coronado across the bay and not the South Bay that was benefiting from Otay River water.²⁴ Pourade provides the most thorough account available,

. . . There were conflicting claims to land under the bay, [so] a compromise was reached. Coronado agreed to let San Diego have a 600-foot wide corridor in exchange for Glorietta Bay... Later, San Diego surrendered half the corridor to National City, under a threat of legal action. [...]

The task of establishing a direct connection to the South Bay would create a number of difficulties for the City of San Diego, as other legal challenges would emerge. Pourade continues,

In 1956 San Diego moved to annex a large area of the South Bay but met resistance from . . . Imperial Beach . . . [who] incorporated as a separate-city. San Diego tried again, with the hope of . . . reaching clear to the International Border.

Chula Vista was joined by Imperial Beach in seeking to prevent the annexation by challenging the legality of the corridor, but the filing of suits was not sanctioned in 1958 by the State's Attorney General, Edmund G. Brown, as required by court decision. South Bay voters [finally] approved annexation . . . on July 16, 1957 (1977, 218-219)

Just as the desire to capitalize on Coronado Bay as a “Gateway” to the Pacific (and Asian markets) drove the efforts of Boundaries Commission surveyors 100 years earlier, which proposed the location of the border south of ‘New San Diego’ (Terrazas 2001, 166-167), so too did interest in expanding markets south to Tijuana guide San Ysidro’s annexation. Victor Ortíz-González’ argument, that border cities’ role in systems of cities vis-à-vis an overlapping world economy, is one of “a site in the function of somewhere else. [Where] local considerations . . . are pervasively subordinated to the nonlocal,” takes on added significance in San Ysidro (2004, xxiv). He states, “Mexico’s northern border cities have some of the highest per capita incomes in the country, while most U.S. border cities have some of the lowest in the United States” (ibid, xxxvii). Thus, it follows, that San Ysidro’s location in relation to San Diego, its ports and its proximity to the U-S///Mexico border has made it, rather than a “conduit of human exchange” as envisioned by Baker, a type of “dual colony” as it holds economic, political and structural disadvantages in relation to *both* the U-S/// Mexico border and San Diego.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Henry G.S. Wallace, Captain, U.S. Navy (Ret.), “Coronado’s Water History,” in J. Harold Peterson, *The Coronado Story*, (Coronado, California: 1954), 159-165.

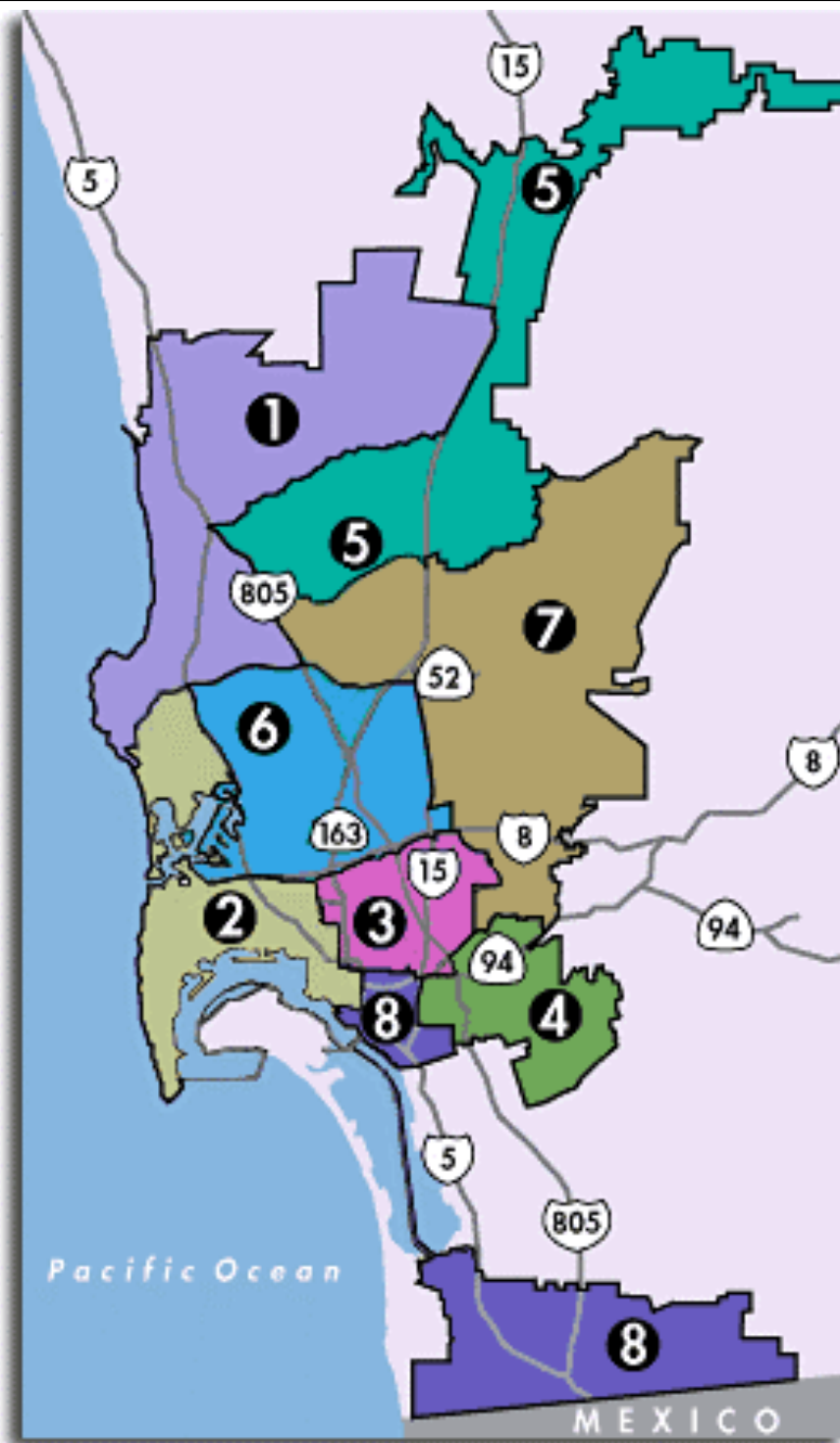


FIGURE 3: The above map is the current geographical-territorial limits of the City of San Diego. The numbers (1-8) represent the eight City Council districts. Downtown is in the 2nd District, from which most of the city extends to the north and east. The 8th District is divided in two, the northern portion to the immediate southeast of downtown, and the southern portion, which includes San Ysidro, Otay, and Nestor (the “South Bay”). They are connected through a strip of water that runs down the Coronado Bay.

In a similar vein, San Ysidro's geographical location twenty miles south of the city center, with no direct *land* connection to the City of San Diego places it in an extraordinarily awkward position. While strip annexations have been prohibited in other states, most notably Texas, the 300-foot wide corridor *within* the Coronado Bay connecting the City of San Diego proper to San Ysidro and the rest of the South Bay is legally recognized despite numerous challenges from the surrounding incorporated cities of Chula Vista, National City, Imperial Beach and Coronado. In contrast, when some Texas cities extended their boundaries by annexing strips as narrow as 10 feet, challenges made it such that, as of 1973, strips less than 500 feet were prohibited and in 1987 the minimum was increased to 1,000 feet.²⁵ Yet, in California, the San Diego/South Bay and Los Angeles/San Pedro corridors remain intact despite being much smaller. Stated another way, San Ysidro is restrictively connected to the 'premium' infrastructure networks (the border and the ports), yet selectively "switched-off" and on to meet its function "in the service of somewhere else" (Graham and Simon 2001, 15; Ortiz-González 2004, xxiv).

The result of the annexation was that the City of San Diego now extended clear down to the U-S///Mexico border, yet was physically separated from the South Bay region by two distinct municipalities, National City and Chula Vista. The 8th District would not be created until 1963, but the city remained organized through at-large elections that prevented anyone from San Ysidro from getting elected, as they had to draw their vote from the much larger electorate in the City of San Diego to the north. This led to many years of minimal and sub-standard representation in the City Council, with a number of representatives elected through the citywide elections eventually resigning or leaving office under a series of allegations of corruption and misuse of funds. It was not until the mid-1980s that the Chicano Federation successfully ran a campaign for district-specific elections that included a lawsuit against the citywide election system for "diluting the impact of the Chicano vote."²⁶ While successful, the 8th District still remains split between the historic Chicano barrios of Logan and Sherman in the north and San Ysidro and the South Bay to the south.

Invisibility in "America's Finest City"

So why annex San Ysidro? Predominantly a working-class Mexican community, San Ysidro does not adhere to either political or economic logics of annexation examined above. Residents would not increase San Diego's tax base, nor dilute its "darkening" voting power. Instead, they would contribute to an overall "darkening" of the City of San Diego, and arguably place a strain in terms of the need for more social services. From the perspective of San Ysidro residents, they years would pass and they would still feel they have not received the benefits and services imagined by annexation

²⁵ "Interim Report," *Texas Senate Interim Committee on Annexation*, 76th Legislature (October 1998), (accessed on December 3, 2004), <
http://www.senate.state.tx.us/75r/senate/commit/archive/IC/N_4_#N_4_>.

²⁶ Isidro Ortiz, "¡Si Se Puede!": Chicana/o Activism in San Diego at Century's End," in *Chicano San Diego*, Richard Griswold del Castillo, Ed. (Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 2007), 129-157, 143-144.

proponents. Nor has the annexation to the City of San Diego meant that the predominantly Mexican community increased its political strength or autonomy. Instead, one of the first actions taken by San Diego concerning the target area was to deploy police officers to the border for a 24-hour watch within the year of annexing the territory, to guard against underage boys from being “led to vice” in Tijuana (*San Diego Union*, July 18, 1967, A29). It also took nearly five years for the “first drops of City water . . . to reach San Ysidro” in 1962 (Baker 1980, 46), who had voted largely against annexation. While the overall South Bay vote was 804 to 575, in San Ysidro the vote distribution was more evenly divided, 369 in favor, 327 against (*San Diego Union*, July 17, 1967, A13). The annexation was decided by the votes of less than 1400 residents, when the population of the area was over 30,000 people. In San Ysidro less than 700 people voted, only a little over 5% of the population there that was roughly 13,000 at the time. The bulk of voter support for annexation came from Otay and Nestor, though still a relatively small percentage of the overall population. What do these numbers indicate? How has San Ysidro fared today? How are we to make sense of the annexation of a predominantly working-class and minority community?

While the annexation debate most explicitly centered on water, the border was implicated from the start. As early as 1930, when word was received from Washington that San Ysidro was to be the site of the “U.S. Gate No. 1”, interests in San Diego began to eye San Ysidro for the presumed revenue that a new Customs house would bring to the area. As such, a local effort to incorporate San Ysidro as its own municipality was begun by local residents in January of 1932.²⁷ The dispute over incorporation lasted months, and despite arguments by incorporation backers that the County had no jurisdiction over the matter as State laws governed municipal incorporation and annexation, a strong and vocal opposition from the City of San Diego persuaded the San Diego County Board of Supervisors to block the incorporation on suspect legal and jurisdictional grounds.²⁸ Economically, proposed incorporation could be seen as an offensive incorporation as local residents foresaw that the City of San Diego would eventually make a move to annex the communities adjacent to the U-S///Mexico border. Nonetheless, the annexation resembles Feiock and Carr’s (1996) “offensive annexation” albeit in the context of globalization, but it also serves as a signifier for the policing of perceived moral and social boundaries (Mains 2002).

Municipal boundaries at the nation’s fringe, in this case, determine not only who governs and who is governed in a politico-juridical sense, but more significantly, such boundaries function to police the social borders that distinguish the “we” from the “they” in the broader national imaginary. While San Ysidro is a predominantly Mexican community at the fringe, in the public imaginary (of San Diego and otherwise) *it is* a part of Mexico.²⁹ It has been spatially racialized through both politico-juridical boundaries (San Diego and United States) and socially produced boundaries. However,

²⁷ “Want Incorporation Here,” *San Ysidro Border Press*,” Vol. II, no. 15 (January 29, 1932), 1.

²⁸ “Incorporation Fight is Again Delayed by Board,” *San Ysidro Border Press*, (March 3, 1932), 1.

²⁹ To this day, I am amazed at the number of blank stares that I get when I introduce myself as being from San Ysidro. Many people I have encountered believe it is in Mexico, and then proceed to want to tell me of their drunken adventures in Tijuana.

instead of a “city of walls” as the dominant form of “new urban segregation” is taking, it is a city of/between freeways.³⁰ Both types of socially constructed borders (infrastructural and moral) have thus allowed for a containing effect of its residents and the de facto erasure of San Ysidro, as it has been “disappeared” in the imaginary—from Fodor’s Travel guide omitting it on its map, citing Tijuana as 23 miles south of San Diego, to the Official City of San Diego webpage omitting the major annexation from its timeline—to the point that when one says she/he is from San Ysidro, a common response is “Is that in Mexico?!” or “Isn’t that in Mexico!?” And, given Mexico’s politico-structural location in the world-economy, such association implicitly reaffirms the disappearance and hence the colonial situation of San Ysidro in relation to the City of San Diego. The current distance, alienation and perceived lack of representation given the layout of the 8th City Council district illustrated above, reinforces a sense of powerlessness and invisibility for San Ysidro residents. Just as important though, the annexation of San Ysidro, and the South Bay generally, points to gaps in annexation literature as too mechanical (i.e., procedural) and too “local” or uni-scalar. It elucidates the need for a multiscalar (local, state, national and global) analysis that pays more attention to global capital flows, as Beaverstock, *et al* remind us that cities matter just as much ‘because of what flows through them, rather than what they statistically contain’.

Epistemological (Dis)Entanglings and the Quest for Visibility

In order to critically understand how the history of politico-juridical boundaries intersects with competing notions of citizenship, it is helpful to consider the work of Gerald Frug on the legal construction of cities. In *City Making*, Gerald Frug aptly refers to a paradox of pre-existing cities’ confrontation with the emergence of the modern nation-state and the *subsequent* need to reconcile such discrepancy to suit modernist conceptions of individuals as autonomous subjects and states as sovereign bodies.³¹ Frug illuminates how the “the legal conception of cities for hundreds of years” was to understand them “as created not by state governments but by their members—created, in other words, to pursue the interests of the people who live within them rather than those of the state” (1999, 5). This reading of cities would, in turn, lead to fundamentally different understandings of the current notions and debates around citizenship, which according to James Holston is currently understood in law as membership in a national community, although claims to/on cities are resulting in renegotiations of such legal formulations akin to those of Frug’s analysis. Current law however differs significantly. Instead, drawing from Goerke, Frug argues “with the development of modern political thought, . . . [the] Sovereignty of the State and the Sovereignty of the Individual were steadily on their way towards becoming the two central axioms from which theories of social structure would proceed, and whose relationship to one another would be the focus of all theoretical controversy” (ibid, 31). In this configuration cities exist in a liminal position as “subjugated subjects”—part ruler, part ruled—and as a consequence,

³⁰ Teresa P. R. Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

³¹ For an excellent consideration of the legal history of cities, see Frug (1999), especially chapter two.

after much wrangling, current legal doctrine, referred to commonly as Dillon's Principle, maintains the position that cities are "creatures of the state" regardless of historical record (i.e., which came first, city or State?). In other words, while citizens are empowered to dictate the course of cities, such power is limited and delineated by the State (ibid 45-48). This situation, accordingly, matters most for cities that antedate their respective nation state, but also holds ramifications for cities where the historically recorded "creator-state" is different from its current "*creator-state*" (an obvious paradox already).

Anthony King in a related argument maintains urbanization is constituted by, and embodies, processes of modernization, modernism and colonialism, in creating territorial centers for managing the extraction and consumption of surplus (1990, 3-7, 13-15). In the United States, and California in particular, one must therefore consider the circumstances that led to the creation of any municipality *in its own context* before interrogating multiple manifestations of growth (industrialization, urbanization, and suburbanization). The legal history of cities is thus equally as complicated as the history of boundary change accompanying it. At the center of historical tensions and anxiety is debate over reconciling the preexistence of cities with later modern nation-states, but also concerns over governance, the disciplining of subjects, and their claims vis-à-vis the reach of the State.

King further notes that the study of urbanism requires studying systems of cities connected to one another in a world-system, which thereby constitute a colonial enterprise of sorts, albeit at a different scale, paralleling the modus operandi of classic colonialism in its internal logic and ideological justification (1990, 68-77). Stated another way, this means that the invoking (or implying) of the doctrine of *terra nullius*—the ideological justification for colonization of land, resources and subjects based upon the assumption that the land was uninhabited, and, where not empty, people could not govern themselves—has been reproduced at the scale of the urban.³² Such ideological underpinnings were at work in the case of San Ysidro, as City of San Diego officials saw themselves as more fit to govern over the border region than the immediate local residents.

In a similar vein, David Harvey's recent work engages such analysis, albeit from an epistemically complicit point of departure in his notion of "accumulation by dispossession"—a neo-Marxist, yet developmentalist articulation of *ongoing* forms of "primitive" accumulation—that fails to problematize the "primitive" precept arbitrarily rearticulating it as a matter of general dispossession (i.e., non-racialized). In Harvey (2003), however, we have a seemingly timeless dynamic of dispossession that is not properly historicized and therefore loses sight of the racial/colonial at work. Instead, it follows that boundary changes in the "world urban system" as in the world-system not only set the context in which political subjects act, but also reasonably include elements and dynamics akin to colonial expansion and racial subjugation.

³² For an example of the terra nullius assumption see Schweikart (1999), 186; see also Smith, (1996), for a similar dynamic.

In this regard, the territorial entity known as California, first inhabited by Karuk and Tolowa in the north and Kumeyaay bands near the present-day border with Mexico, was colonized by a series of Spanish settlements, usually built around Catholic Missions or military presidios. These pre-urban settlements, epistemologically entangled with the modernizing impetus of urbanization in the *longue durée*, included Charters propagated by the Spanish Crown and later recognized by Mexico upon its “colonial independence.”³³ These same Charters were later recognized with relative ease by the next politico-juridical entities to take possession of said territories, Mexico (1821-1848) and the United States (1848-present), as the guiding episteme has been one and the same. Therefore, after 1848, when the United States took possession of the present-day southwest, while some previous territorial units were reorganized, they were not dissolved. Instead, they entered the union (or were “created” according to Dillon’s Principle) through newly formed juridical entities. California, in particular was admitted into the United States as a state in 1850. Similarly, the City of San Diego, while first established in its present location by the Spanish since 1602, was formally “incorporated” under a new system of governance also in 1850; nearly 250 years old at the time, yet a “creature of a state” only 75 years in the making.³⁴ So while San Ysidro was founded in the 1880’s or 1909 in the Little Lander’s narrative, according to Dillon’s Principle its history becomes entangled with and distorted by its multiscalar place as a particular type of node, a “border” city, within a global network of cities bound together by the flows of capital and the infrastructure that sustains such flows (in all its forms) and in turn constitute it as the ‘busiest’ Port of Entry in the world despite its invisibility vis-à-vis the City of San Diego.

The inability to reconcile the paradox embedded in Dillon’s principle has thus led to the etching away of classical notions of citizenship that equate individual with nation, in turn, leading to new articulations of localized or contingent forms of citizenship based upon petitioning at the local, as well as national scale. In other words, despite the promises of annexation, San Ysidro has had little to show for in terms of gains, as it remains largely neglected by the City of San Diego. Its location in the 8th District is at once overlooked in relation to Barrio Logan and Sherman Heights, and ignored as all infrastructures in the border area is built with an orientation towards San Diego proper. In other words, the infrastructure is geared for commuters to Tijuana or vice versa, to travel *through* San Ysidro, without stopping in San Ysidro. In the context of current development projects such as the binational mall, arrangements such as community-benefits agreements that cut across the U-S//Mexico border have created spaces in which local residents, despite formal (national) citizenship status, negotiate grievances and open new possibilities of making a claim to the local governing bodies. Yet the

³³ Articulating a notion of “coloniality of power” Aníbal Quijano differentiates “colonial independence” from independence with decolonization (following Fanon) to suggest ideologies of ‘national identity,’ ‘independence,’ ‘development,’ and ‘progress’ are implicated in the epistemological underpinnings of modernity so as to obscure the continuities of “colonial situations” that persist despite “formal” independence. For more on such distinctions see Quijano (1991; 2000), and Mignolo (2000) who outlines the overlapping layers of modernity when he speaks of the “modern/colonial” as two inextricable sides of the same coin.

³⁴ See “Timeline of San Diego History,” *San Diego Historical Society* <http://www.sandiegohistory.org/timeline/timeline.htm> [Dec. 1, 2004].

success of efforts to petition for shared infrastructure and representation that will address local needs remains to be seen. In San Ysidro, reconstituted notions of citizenship have begun to empower residents in their concerns about development and displacements, but this only fifty years after the original annexation.

Conclusion

As a broad overview of annexation, suburbanization and segregation literatures, this chapter sought to point out limits in procedural and local considerations of municipal annexations. Instead, historical changes in the politics and processes of municipal boundary change reveal the dominant logics of municipal annexation, economic and political determinants, do not fully account for all the considerations and negotiations that go into municipal annexation disputes. Through a consideration of San Ysidro, California and its 1957 annexation to the City of San Diego, this chapter has sought to challenge the established literature on municipal annexations for its myopic focus on procedural mechanics and on the local dynamics informing municipal boundary changes. Arguing that such literature is “too local,” I have instead suggested attention must be paid to global capital flows and forces, which are just as pertinent in assessing the motivations driving annexations. San Ysidro and its subsequent structural location vis-à-vis San Diego confirm the need for such an approach. Through a long historical, multiscale lens and a legal history of cities, the chapter has also provided a framework for the rethinking of municipal annexations as territorial violence and reenactments of colonial enterprises at a metropolitan scale. It is through this rethinking of the ongoing racial and colonial dynamics of municipal/urban politics that the implications of such a framework become evident, as we will see in the response of the City of San Diego to a massacre at a McDonalds in 1984, which is the basis of the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

THE 1984 McDONALDS MASSACRE AND THE POLITICS OF MEMORY: ON MURDERS, MONUMENTS AND MILITARIZATION

“A man’s memories only have worth if they are lifeless. Buildings. Monuments. Statues.” She cuts a flower and streaks the pollen on my cheek. “This is a woman’s remembrance, the chain of never ending life.”

-Rosa Martha Villarreal¹

“The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons.”

- Fyodor Dostoyevsky²

On July 18, 1984, an armed gunman stormed a McDonalds fast-food restaurant in the U-S///Mexico border community of San Ysidro and unleashed a flurry of bullets on the unsuspecting, predominantly Mexican patrons and employees. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, San Ysidro’s structural *and* geographical location in relation to the City of San Diego would prove to have devastating consequences that summer day, as it exacerbated the extent of the violent carnage during the actual shooting owing to a longer commute distance that prolonged the time it took for the police to respond, and in the massacre’s aftermath that pitted local residents with (physically and socially) distant city officials that, in the eyes of community residents, seemed indifferent and hostile to their desire for a community park to remember the victims. Since San Diego proper is located nearly 18 miles to the north of San Ysidro, it would take police an excruciating thirty-five minutes to get to the scene, extending the time that the gunman would have a lot of time to wreak havoc at the shooting site. Moreover, after the tragedy, as the community of San Ysidro struggled to heal and recover from the traumatic ordeal, an ensuing conflict would emerge over what to do with the site of the massacre and how to best memorialize the victims of that tragic July afternoon.

¹ Rosa Maria Villarreal, *Doctor Magdalena* (Berkeley: TQS Publications, 1995) pp. 17.

² This quote is found widely on a variety of web pages dealing primarily with Prison Justice, in particular, on the web page of the organization, No Prisons, via their home page found at: <www.noprison.org> or directly at: <www.noprison.org/archive/Vol.%2016,%20March%202001/mar2001page2.html>. The famous formulation derives from Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s novel, *The House of the Dead*, originally written in Russian at the turn of the 20th century, but still very relevant today. Ironically, but significantly, it was also found on a few “Correctional” Services web pages, meant to convey the idea of the Prison Industrial Complex as just and functional.

* * * * *

If I balance my vertically challenged body, tiptoeing on the ‘border’ that reinforces the steel-bar fence I am grasping myself onto to keep my weight from pulling me back off the concrete rim, then, maybe can I catch a clear glimpse of the entire monument, free of its barred confinement. However, as I stand a short, and husky, five feet and five inches, this becomes a difficult task to maneuver. Instead, I must settle with seeing it from a few feet distance, where its caged existence is difficult to ignore. Or worse yet, if I am to get a complete bar-less view of the memorial, I must press my face up against the bars—inverting the perspective, as if I was the one in prison. Apparently sentenced to lockdown, ‘The McDonalds Memorial Monument’ has been mired in controversy since its inception, perhaps even since the day of the massacre itself, as local working class Mexicana/o community members struggled against predominantly Anglo and middle class Mexican American city officials over the function and acceptable forms of remembrance of the massacre victims it is meant to commemorate.



FIGURE 4: Monument to the victims of the 1984 McDonalds Massacre in San Ysidro. The site of the McDonalds is now a satellite campus of the nearby Southwestern Community College located in eastern Chula Vista.

The monument also symbolically stands as a representation of the self-consuming undercurrent of mass consumption in which American fast-food culture and society has swept itself beneath, but not without taking many with it in its wake. Like other public memorials erected at the sites of tragedies, each of the twenty-one stone pillars is in honor of one of the victims who perished as a result of the heinous shooting. But, housed behind steel cage that reminds one of prison bars and the U-S///Mexico border wall itself, we must ask: What is the purpose of a caged memorial? In what way is the public memory of the massacre inscribed? What is it that is to be remembered, forgotten, indicted and/or convicted via the metal cage? What larger power struggles might the battle between community members and city officials over the monument itself reveal? Lastly, what happens when different, and in fact competing, worldviews regarding death and its representation are at odds over the way a community's history is remembered by different parties involved? These questions, among others, comprise the inquiry I am concerned with in this chapter, which I examine by interrogating the massacre itself, the significance of McDonalds in this picture, and the competing interests involved in the memorial monument dispute, while giving consideration to the dynamics of power, race, place and gender in the ordeal.

I engage the discussion above in the context of the subalternization of culture, knowledges, and “ways of knowing” that have carved the border(ed) communities with violence in and through the modern/colonial world- system. One of the constitutive elements of the coloniality of knowledge production has been its ability to transform the distinct local knowledges, histories and practices to the realm of “myth”, culture, folklore and tradition, understood negatively within a hierarchy of knowing that legitimates particular (western) practices and histories as normative and universal.³ That is, western ways of knowledge—in reality one particular local history among many—have been extended in a way that suggests their inevitability and supremacy. Specifically then, whereas the last chapter addressed the annexation of San Ysidro into the City of San Diego, here I am interested in the 1984 McDonalds Massacre and the clashing of a Mexican community's “cultural” practices of lively remembrance and mourning in opposition to the city's normative, secular and civic use of public space, guided by a western patriarchal logics that understand the act of memorializing the dead, and memory itself, as “lifeless,” to be preserved and assigned value through “Buildings. Monuments. [And] statues.” These differences in how to memorialize the victims of the massacre became a heated point of contention following the shooting. In a similar line of critique that I am suggesting here, Chicana feminist Norma Alarcón, argues [T]he juridical text is generated by the ruling elite, who have access to the state apparatus through which the political economy is shaped and jurisprudence is engendered, whereas representations in the cultural text may include representations generated by herself [Chicana, raced/sexed woman]" (Alarcón 2003, 357). I thus juxtapose the memorial monument with another particular type of concrete building which are becoming increasingly salient throughout society and are arguably a monument to fast-food society's perception of itself: prisons.

³ See Walter Mignolo, *Local/Histories/Global Designs*, 37-39. Mignolo is indebted to Aníbal Quijano for his own work on coloniality, and relies heavily on Chicana thinker Gloria Anzaldúa in particular, in his understanding of how particular knowledges have been subalternized.

According to Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* (1977) it is through storytelling that Native Americans construct their reality or understanding of the world.⁴ Similarly, I have argued elsewhere that for some *fronterizas/os*, it is through *corridos* (as narrative or storytelling) that knowledge and reality are constructed, transmitted, and understood by people in the borderlands.⁵ Not surprisingly, a few *corridos* have been written about the McDonalds Massacre, including one by José "Pepe" Villarino and Oscar Galvan that I engage below.⁶ It is within those hidden, subjugated, or unheard stories that subaltern subjects possess their own knowledge, a knowledge omitted from the nation's creation story. The latter story is one driven by the illusion of happiness and the myth of violence (or a lack of) that predominates the 'master narrative' of this society—what people often take for granted or unquestioningly accept as 'just the way things are'. This chapter thus poses a series of overlapping and competing stories, or cultural texts as forms of knowledge production, as a way of pointing to what Pierre Bourdieu referred to as "the objectivity of the subjective experience of relations of domination".⁷ In what follows, several competing stories/knowledges are interwoven with empirical research to bring to light a narrative about McDonalds, the 1984 Massacre in San Ysidro, its causes and representation, and the Memorial Monument.

“¡Jesús esta en Tijuana!” / “Jesus is in Tijuana!”

In the now classic comedy *Born in East L.A.* (1987), the film's protagonist Rudy, played by Cheech Marin, is a United States citizen inadvertently caught in a raid on a Los Angeles assembly factory by Immigration and Naturalization Services agents (then INS, now transformed into ICE—Immigration and Customs Enforcement), while attempting to pick up his cousin Javier, played by Paul Rodriguez. Rudy is subsequently deported despite his repeated protests to the INS agents that he is a U.S. Citizen, a Chicano who was born in East Los Angeles and who did not even speak much Spanish (although he knew some German from having served some time in the United States military). The protests are to no avail and Rudy ends up in Tijuana. Meanwhile, having recently crossed the U-S///Mexico border without proper documentation, his cousin Javier was lost and arrived at the factory late, avoiding the raid. With an address in his hand, he eventually ends up in Rudy's home as Rudy struggles to get back across the border. In perhaps one of the movie's most comical scenes, Rudy attempts to make a collect call for help from a Tijuana pay phone, but Javier mistakes the answering machine, which was hidden in a wall niche behind a moving hologram portrait of Jesus Christ, for a message from the Lord that declares, "Javier, I am in Tijuana!" A confused Javier, clearly tenuous about his new surroundings, proceeds to make the gesture of a cross over his head and chest in acknowledgement of Jesus' sign and "apparition" to

⁴ See Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977).

⁵ Roberto Hernández, "Violence, Subalternity and *El Corrido* Along the U.S.-Mexico Border" *The Berkeley McNair Research Journal*, vol. 8 (Winter 2000): 141.

⁶ *Ibid.* 137-152.

⁷ Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, 34.

him, while Rudy is arrested in Tijuana for beating the phone in frustration—as he too is lost in his new surroundings—and is then taken to a questionable jailhouse.

The scene, which is later followed by another phone call, this time from Rudy's neighbor asking for some beer and Javier proceeding to take Jesus a "taal boy" of Coors raised above his own head as an offering to the portrait, which from Javier's angle seems to wink back at him in appreciation, is meant as a metaphor for how the U-S///Mexico border entraps documented and "undocumented" brown bodies alike. Much like Frantz Fanon's articulation of being "over-determined from without," Rudy's brown body and mere presence at the local factory marked him as a likely "undocumented" migrant, a fact that out-weighted his clearly spoken English, his military service and vociferous insistence that the INS agents were making a big mistake. Once deported, Rudy's arrest highlights to another contradictory reality of the United States' claim to modernity as a heightened sense of social progress, by alluding to the growing prison population in the US that was experiencing unprecedented growth in the 1980's, at the time that the film was being made on location in Los Angeles, Tijuana, and San Ysidro roughly a year or so after the McDonalds massacre.

If Dostoyevsky stands correct, that "the degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons," what can be gleaned from the rising prison population in the United States, which is drastically overrepresented by Blacks and Latinos? Is it that Blacks and Latinos are prone to criminality? Or, might it say something about the degree of "civilization" of a society that continues to be marred by racial/colonial logics that increase the likelihood of particular bodies to be incarcerated and/or subject to "state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death"⁸? In any country, prison is presumably where society sends its failures. The question that begs asking is what do you do when an entire country, society as is known in the modern/colonial imaginary that equates nation with geographic-territorial boundaries, is itself failing? Suggestively, on April 15, 2000, United States surpassed the 2 million mark in prison population, by far the highest of any nation, which has since reached the 2.3 million. This transpired as various McDonalds—perhaps the most commonplace symbol of American culture other than Nike—were erected in countries around the world, considered by many a sign of modernity and progress for those nations.⁹ The American imprisonment rate, in light of Dostoyevsky's famous formulation, would imply we live in a decadent society. According to the Prison Activist Resource Center (PARC), in April 2000, despite being home to only five percent of the people in the world, the US contained 25% of the world prison population.¹⁰ The drastically high figures would appear to paint the image of a downtrodden nation amidst ruin and collapse, yet the United States prides itself as the bastion of democracy and freedom, a Picasso of the Modern world. Perhaps the most

⁸ Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 28. The above quote is Wilson Gilmore's working definition for racism.

⁹ Watson, "Introduction, in *Golden Arches East: McDonalds in East Asia*, James L. Watson, Ed. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 1-38, 4-5. Watson notes that in 1996, Belarus and Tahiti were the 100th and 101st countries to open a McDonalds.

¹⁰ Prison Activist Resource Center. Press release, April 15, 2000.

adequate characterization however, is that of a three-dimensional moving hologram portrait—much like that of Jesus Christ kitsch with eyes that follow your own, as they did Javier’s—that moves, providing different images to the viewer, varying on the angle or position in the modern/colonial world system from which one observes it.

For a privileged some who live without much care in the world, Jesus may appear to have a serene face that transmits a sense of calm and tranquility, as if one can rest assured that *their* prayers have been surely answered—the comfort of their middle to upper class home and lifestyle serving as testament to their personal connection with a higher power. However, for most such as Javier or Rudy or countless others whose daily life is a constant battle to make ends meet or prevent being deported, the image provided for their viewing (or consenting) pleasure is one of a Jesus agonizing in a pain, as if wanting to scream but having to hold it in, a mood often reflective of their own sentiment given their struggles to stay afloat. In other words, it is one of a hegemonic colonial imaginary, internalization of contradictions between the rhetoric of the state and corporate interests and the increasingly global sociopolitical reality—shielded, of course, by a veneer of “Golden Arches” and reminders to “Just do it!” As such, the angle that I take, or rather where Jesus’ eyes and mine meet given my social, political, economic and historical location within the modern/colonial world-system and the european/non-european racial/ethnic hierarchy, is one of a neck-straining eighty-degree upward gaze. In other words, it is a perspective, as Mariano Azuela so eloquently articulated, from *los de abajo*,¹¹ looking up at the coloniality of power and ensuing privilege(d) interests and structures that inform everyday lived experience.

Having grown up in San Ysidro, within a mile from the U-S///Mexico border, I concur with Gloria Anzaldúa’s characterization of *la frontera* as an open wound, “una herida abierta where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country—a border culture.”¹² Symbolically submerged within the literally bloodstained landscape of the open wound’s hemorrhaging, the predominantly Mexican community I call home is no stranger to the rampant violence of the U-S///Mexico border. This violence in a myriad of forms is currently being intensified via the increasing militarization of the same. In relation to the focus of this chapter—the events that took place at the San Ysidro McDonalds on July 18, 1984—what follows is a composite of views on the role of McDonalds in the modern/colonial world-system followed by a personal narrative account that informs this conversation, as the gruesome killings transpired a mere two blocks from my childhood home at the time.

¹¹ Mariano Azuela’s novel, an account of the Mexican Revolution from the perspective of those struggling against the Porfirio Diaz regime and encroaching U.S. corporate interests at the time. Such perspective, according to Walter D. Mignolo, suggests thinking from the subaltern side of the colonial difference. See Mariano Azuela, *Los de abajo* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997) and Walter D Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*, 19.

¹² Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 3.

The Politics of McDonalds in the Global Economy

In the American imagination's creation story, the three fences of Operation Gatekeeper's "triple fence strategy" along the San Diego-Tijuana border,¹³ become the white picket fences, safeguarding sheltered minds from the punctum sight of the violent reality that created, shaped, and continues to reinforce the existence of this nation. The customary three meals a day, Happy Meal included, make it easy to forget or refuse to remember, that countless others do not eat three meals, two meals, or much less one 'happy' meal on any given day. Yet McDonalds, one of the stories many protagonists (or antagonists, depending on how your eyes are set on Jesús—to kitsch or not to kitsch?), continue to sprout in nation after "industrializing" nation. At one point, a new McDonalds was opening up somewhere in the world roughly every three hours.¹⁴

Rather than arriving at a myopic presumption as to the nature of the McDonalds phenomenon as a positive turn towards a united global community, one can derive from Antiguan writer Jamaica Kincaid's *On Seeing England for the First Time* that the proliferation of McDonalds addresses an act of colonization, dominance, and death:

I did not know then that this statement, "Draw a map of England, was something far worse than a declaration of war, for in fact a flat-out declaration of war would have put me on alert, and again in fact, there was no need for war—I had long ago been conquered. I did not know that this statement was part of a process that would result in my erasure, not my physical erasure, but my erasure all the same . . . I did not know very much of anything then—certainly not what a blessing it was that I was unable to draw a map of England correctly.¹⁵

McDonalds, with its "globally-recognized" Golden Arches, can thus be seen as part of a process that in "super-sizing" its operations across national-territorial and cultural boundaries, so to speak, is bringing about the cultural death of entire societies. In short, whether directly or indirectly, consciously or not, the results are the erasure of distinct cultures and in its place the supplanting of a new "western," more "modern" story.

One striking example located in Mexico is the traditional breaded steak or Milanese, which has now been displaced by the new McMilanese, in reality nothing more than a disfigured breaded hamburger patty. Then there is the McTorta, whose Wonderbread-style, hamburger bun shares no resemblance to the baguette-style *pan birote*, which makes the Mexican sandwich a torta. The full Mexican McMenu, not surprisingly, includes all that is American about McDonalds: big macs, fast-food, "french" fries—with side orders of the violence of cultural genocide that Mexican intellectual Octavio Paz argues is implicit in modernity, exemplified most recently in the project of western hegemonic cultural imperialism:

¹³ Joseph Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the "Illegal Alien" and the Making of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary* (New York: Routledge, 2002): 125-130.

¹⁴ Watson, *Global Arches East*, 3.

¹⁵ Jamaica Kincaid, "On Seeing England For The First Time," *Transition*, 51 (Spring 1991): 34

“What sets the worlds in motion is the interplay of differences, their attractions, and repulsions. Life is plurality, death is uniformity. By suppressing differences and peculiarities, by eliminating different civilizations and cultures, progress weakens life and favors death. The ideal of a single civilization for everyone, implicit in the cult of progress and technique, impoverishes and mutilates us. Every view of the world that becomes extinct, every culture that disappears, diminishes a possibility of life.”¹⁶

McDonalds shares part of the responsibility for the extinction that Paz articulates.

In a parallel vein, though engaging the *longue durée* approach of coloniality, Portuguese legal scholar and social theorist Boaventura de Sousa Santos has referred to the impacts of colonization on cultural and knowledge production as “epistemicide” in that the very forms of thought and social-cultural spaces *from which one thinks and knows* the world around them have been increasingly decimated and replaced by one dominant form of western epistemology.¹⁷ Nonetheless, the rise of the fast-food toxic outlets across the world has significantly altered the geography and cultural landscape of Western and non-Western nations alike, into a more uniform, Americanized mold.

Interestingly enough, according to Thomas Friedman, no two nations that possess (or are possessed by) a McDonalds have ever gone to war with one another. While arguably a reformulation of the “democratic peace” thesis challenged by Barkawi and Laffey as an imperial peace within an international state system discussed in the Introduction, it follows in Friedman’s work that upon the creation of a McDonalds within the national-territorial boundaries of any given nation, it gains, with no exception to date according to Friedman, the acceptance of the McDonalds-bearing nations, a protection from future hostilities, in a sense.¹⁸ In this context, McDonalds serves as a stand-in for democracy, and some would even go as far as to argue it is a natural by-product of a democratic society. However, others such as John Tomlinson argue that this dynamic is rather a case of submission to a culturally imperialistic force,¹⁹ one that bears a striking similarity to the Mafia’s extortion of businesses in exchange for “security” and “protection”. In either case, McDonalds thus becomes the arbiter of international agreements to seize hostilities, even as it contributes to cultural genocide and epistemicide.

¹⁶ Epigram at the beginning of Jamake Highwater, *Primal Mind: Vision and Reality in Indian America*, (New York: Meridian Books, 1981).

¹⁷ Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Una epistemología del Sur: La reinención del conocimiento y la emancipación social* (México, CLACSO y Siglo XXI, 2009), 12, 81. See also Boaventura de Sousa Santos, “Beyond Abyssal Thinking: From Global Lines to Ecologies of Knowledges,” *Review*, XXX, 1 (2007): 45-89.

¹⁸ Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1999), 239-251. While some argue there have been a few exceptions, Friedman has countered that these are recent occurrences and the exceptions that give strength to the general rule.

¹⁹ John Tomlinson, *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991), 75-79.

In the United States, the elimination of cultures that Paz has warned of takes on new meaning for the ‘physical erasure’ is part of the working narrative. Mass shooting sprees in recent U.S. experience, have had two popular sites: fast-food restaurants and the postal system²⁰—one, a federal carrier/communications service or agency, while the other, a multi-billion dollar a year industry the stands as a pillar of Americans’ fast-paced society. McDonalds, referred to by *Life* magazine as “this most American of institutions”²¹ even within the context of reporting on the massacre helps exemplify how McDonalds and “the American way of life” that it endorses and, sometimes without welcome, exports around the world is constituted and permeates with violence. In these sites, cultural systems and bodies collide. As Denis Johnson, one of the great communicators of America’s trauma culture, describes it in his novel *Angels*: “[T]he fast-food universe [is a] tiny world half machinery and half meat.”²² Recent exposés such as *Fast Food Nation* (2001) and the film *Super Size Me* (2007) have since depicted further details of the workings of the fast-food industry.

As early as 1906, Upton Sinclair’s novel *The Jungle* illuminated the fact that from the beginning of the machinerization of society, factories that had become industrialized has their abundant share of violence and death, manifested in different forms (i.e. slaughterhouses, fatal workplace accidents). Since the turn of the century race and class have figured central to the equation, as workers of color and poor whites were often the first victims of the advent of such factories. Ironically, the social imaginary of this nation continues to deny the reality of violence, even as it continues to plague its own factories, restaurants, backyard, front yard, living room, schoolyards, and more importantly, their own bodies. There are many who dismiss violence in the United States as random acts, however, others know better, informed unfortunately by the violence that shapes and their every day lived experience.

Critics of McDonalds have pointed out what they believe is wrong with the fast food giant. First, McDonald’s has spent a fortune on advertisements, trying to cultivate an image of being a caring and “green” company that is also a fun place to eat. Children are lured in, dragging their parents behind them, with the promise of “free” toys and other gimmicks. But behind the smiling face of Ronald McDonald lies the reality—McDonalds’ interest is expanding its markets, whatever the cost. Richard Love’s “biography” of the fast food giant lucidly describes the rise of the chain through cutthroat competitiveness that actively sought out to edge out its burger-selling counterparts at all costs.

Secondly, while millions of people are starving, many as noted above, without even one ‘happy’ meal, vast areas of land in poor countries are used for cattle ranching

²⁰ Mark Seltzer, *Serial Killers: Death and Life in America’s Wound Culture*, London: Routledge, 1998, 29-35.

²¹ Linda Gomez, “Ninety minutes at McDonald’s: the lingering anguish of the San Ysidro massacre,” *Life* v8 (January 1985): 76.

²² Quoted in James Gilligan, M.D., *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997) 199.

or to grow grain to feed animals to be eaten in the fast-food outlets.²³ McDonalds continually promotes meat products, encouraging people to eat meat more often, resulting in the overuse of more and more food and land resources going towards the raising of cattle and other livestock for the fast-food slaughter houses. It takes roughly seven times the amount of grain to feed to livestock than the amount of meat and by-products that are produced. On a related note, animal rights' activists have even argued that on a vegetarian diet Britain could easily be self-sufficient in food.

The third major criticism is that McDonalds is also destroying the earth. Multinational companies are destroying the world's most beautiful forests at an appalling rate. McDonald's recently was forced to admit to using beef reared on ex-rainforest land, preventing the regeneration of forests. The use of farmland by multinationals and their suppliers has also displaced entire communities, largely indigenous and farming communities, forcing local people to move on to other areas and cut down further trees. Lastly, given that McDonalds is the world's largest user of beef, methane emitted by cattle reared for the beef industry is also an important contributor to global warming, relatively speaking.²⁴ These criticisms are furthered by many accompanying health risks.

McDonalds promote their food as "healthy", but the reality is that it is high in fat, sugar and salt, and low in fiber and vitamins. A toxic diet of this type is linked with a greater risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes and other diseases. Their food also contains many chemical additives, some of which may cause ill health, and hyperactivity in children. Meat consumption at fast-food restaurants is also the cause of the majority of food poisoning incidents in recent history. In 1991, McDonalds restaurants were responsible for an outbreak of food poisoning in the United Kingdom, in which people suffered serious kidney failure.²⁵ Despite industry claims to humane environments for the raising of livestock, critics allege that the menus of McDonalds and the industry as a whole are also largely based on the torture and murder of millions of animals. They claim most are intensively farmed, with no access to fresh air and sunshine, and no freedom of movement.²⁶ Referred to "humane slaughter" in the industry, the practices are seemingly as questionable as the term itself.

McDonalds' workers also do not have it as good. Aside from the commonly known low wages earned by McDonald employees, George Ritzer points to the lack of overtime rates provided, even when employees work very long hours.²⁷ Pressure to keep profits high and wage costs low results in understaffing, so staff have to work harder and faster; consequently, accidents, particularly burns, are very common. The majority of employees are people and immigrants who have very few job options and so are forced

²³ Eric Schlosser, "Fast-Food Nation: The True Cost Of America's Diet," *Rolling Stone*, Issue 794 (September 3rd 1998).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Tony Royle, "The 51st US State?: Fast-food in the UK," in *Labour Relations in the Global Fast Industry*, Tony Royle and Brian Towers, Eds. (London: Routledge, 2002), 48-75, 52.

²⁶ Schlosser, "Fast Food Nation."

²⁷ George Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society*, 144.

to accept such menial jobs.²⁸ Not surprisingly staff turnover at McDonald's is high, making it virtually impossible to unionize and fight for better wages and working conditions, thereby suiting McDonalds' anti-union history.

Criticisms of McDonalds have come from a large number of people and organizations over a wide number of issues. In the mid-eighties London Greenpeace drew together many of those strands of criticism and called for an annual World Day of Action against McDonalds. Efforts continue to occur every year on the 16th of October, with pickets and demonstrations all over the world. Protests against McDonalds, who spend over one billion dollars a year on advertising and promotions, are trying to silence the worldwide campaign by threatening legal action against those who speak out.²⁹ While image control has always been a top priority for McDonalds generally, this too would be an issue following the massacre in San Ysidro, as the company made it a point to immediately provide money for a fund created to help survivors and their families after the massacre, as well as for efforts to publicize their donation.³⁰

July 18, 1984: San Ysidro, CA: The McDonalds Massacre

Few would expect that a trip to McDonalds, walking through the Golden Arches of the embodied American Dream, could be a deadly one. However, the afternoon of July 18, 1984, many people were proved wrong. As 4:00 P.M. neared, an alleged Vietnam veteran named James Oliver Huberty walked into a local McDonalds restaurant in the town of San Ysidro, located within a mile from the U-S///Mexico border and three miles east of the Pacific Ocean, and opened fire on the unsuspecting customers and employees.³¹ It is critical to note that despite the town's proximity to the beach, there are no surfers in San Ysidro. In other words, the lived experience and reality of San Ysidro and its residents is shaped, not by its relation to the coast, but by its relationship to the increasingly militarized border. The residents of this border community—as well as those in its counterpart across the border in Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico—are most effectively characterized as *fronterizos/as* given their habitual transnational migratory practices. Nearly 90% of the town's population at the time of the shooting was Mexicanas/os, both United States citizens and “legal” residents. Many routinely crossed the U.S.-Mexico Border, legally or not, in search of work, to visit family, or simply to shop or eat at the local restaurants on either side, such as McDonalds. In fact, a number of the customers, and even some of the employees who

²⁸ Robin Leidner, “Fast-food Work in the United States,” in *Labour Relations in the Global Fast Industry*, Tony Royle and Brian Towers, Eds. (London: Routledge, 2002), 8-29, 18-19.

²⁹ Schlosser, “Fast Food Nation.”

³⁰ Mary-Angie Salva-Ramirez, “The San Ysidro massacre—ten years later,” *Public Relations Quarterly* 40.11 (Spring 1995): 44-46.

³¹ Arthur Golden, “21 Die in San Ysidro Massacre,” *The San Diego Union* (July 19, 1984): A1-4.



FIGURE 5: Map depicting the McDonalds in relation to the U-S/Mexico Border

would encounter the shooter James Huberty on that fateful Wednesday afternoon were from Tijuana,³² although such detail is not commonly acknowledged by most sources.

Huberty, on the other hand, had recently moved to San Ysidro from Canton, Ohio, where he had been employed as an embalmer and later a welder, only to lose that job and a succession of other jobs thereafter. While living in San Ysidro, he had recently worked as a security guard until also being fired from that job a few months before the shooting.³³ His inability to maintain a job undoubtedly led to a growing frustration as it would with any other person, however, the results are not usually as detrimental, or as I argue, so targeted. Huberty did seek mental health support in the weeks leading up to July 18th, but his calls were often unanswered and his messages were not returned.

Rather than pathologize Huberty, we should also consider the socio-economic circumstances under which he was operating. The most stable employment Huberty had known in the previous years was as a welder. When his factory shut down in the early 1980's it happened at a time when the popular perception in the American imaginary (only partially accurate) was that jobs were being shipped to Mexico. While

³² José “Pepe” Villarino and Arturo Ramirez, “La Masacre en San Ysidro: Text and Context,” in José “Pepe” Villarino and Arturo Ramirez, eds. *Chicano Border Culture and Folklore* (San Diego: Marin Publications, 1992): 236-242.

³³ Golden, A1, A3.

symptomatic of a broader de-industrialization that was sweeping the United States' heartland, many workers who lost their jobs blamed Mexico and Mexican workers rather than the corporations who left them unemployed in their search for workers they could pay a portion of the U.S. salaries or the governments whose policies enabled looser labor protections and tax incentives to relocate. Huberty would end up in San Ysidro in particular in a misguided attempt to “find his old job” and “get it back”, spending a few weeks trying to locate his old employer in Tijuana. Whether or not his factory had relocated to Tijuana remains unclear, but one thing that is certain is that Huberty did not get his job back. It is within this context that we must consider how James Oliver Huberty began shooting, not “randomly” but rather premeditatedly, at the predominantly Mexican customers and employees, who he arguably viewed as responsible for his own unemployment, as he specifically told his wife he was going out to hunt Mexicans. Deindustrialization—the exporting of jobs and production abroad in search of not “cheaper” but underpaid labor and new markets—which followed much in the logic of globalization and the cultural imperialism of McDonalds’ global reach, was for all intent and purposes “left of the hook,” not readily identified as the main culprit of his unfortunate circumstances.

Dressed in a black T-shirt and military-style, camouflage fatigues, Huberty entered the fast-food restaurant carrying a 12-gauge pump action Winchester shotgun, a .45-caliber semiautomatic pistol, and a 9mm rifle similar to a military issue M-16.³⁴ He soon unloaded hundreds of bullets, pumping them into the bodies of children and seniors citizens alike, blasting the McDonalds into a blood-soaked slaughterhouse much like those from which McDonalds derives its toxic patties. While much of the gory details emerged in local newspapers in the weeks that followed, local cultural producers also narrated the events of that day as the corrido “La Masacre de San Ysidro” by José “Pepe” Villarino and Oscar Galván illustrates:

El muy cobarde tiraba
a los de afuera y adentro;
disparó cienas de balas
traía mucho armamento.

The coward would fire on
people outside and inside
he fired hundreds of rounds
He had plenty of weapons.

Tres compañeros pequeños
quedaron acribillados;
el asesino endiablado
los dejó crucificados.

Three youngsters
lay riddled with bullets,
the diabolical assassin
Left them for dead piled in a heap.³⁵

He was fully armed with a variety of accessories, and a canvas bag full of ammunition slung over one shoulder. He reloaded his weapons twice as he circled the room, killing anyone he found still alive. A few, miraculously, were able to subvert Huberty’s agenda by feigning their death, including one of the three young boys, one of them my neighbor, whose images circulated around the world. The body count at the McDonalds Massacre

³⁴ Golden, A3.

³⁵ Villarino, “La Masacre en San Ysidro,” 238-240.

site was twenty-one dead and eighteen wounded, before a single shot from a police sharpshooter, ironically firing a rifle from the roof of the post office adjacent to the restaurant, brought Huberty's killing spree to a halt by striking him in the chest.³⁶

No one was spared from the attack, only a handful able to escape, but not without their own traumatic, physical and/or psychological wounds.³⁷ As a result of the twenty-one people who were killed, all but three were Mexicanas/os. Seven of them were actually Mexican nationals in San Ysidro for the day. Another eighteen were injured. Of those injured, fourteen were Mexicanas/os.³⁸

Days later, a July 20, 1984 headline on *The San Diego Union* read, "They represented all walks [of life]," detailing their occupations, lifestyles and ages, but not speaking to their transnationality as *fronterizas/os*.³⁹ The sketches of the victims of the most heinous mass shooting at the time since Charles Whitman gunned down sixteen people at the University of Texas omitted the one common characteristic most of them shared: a significantly large majority of those killed or wounded were Mexicanas/os. For Huberty and his victims, the metaphor of the border as "a war zone" was a reality years ahead of the when most scholars note the beginning of the militarization of the border.⁴⁰

Cuerpos hundidos en sangre
todo a muerte hería
parecía zona de guerra
aquel horrible día.

Bodies covered with blood
were seen all over the place.
The stench of death was everywhere.
It looked like a war zone.

The corrido later continues,

El pueblo de San Ysidro
tenía esto ya muy patente
que odiaba a los mexicanos
su plan cargaba en la mente.

The town of San Ysidro
already knew of his notions
that he hated Mexicans
And that his plan was preconceived.

Ya ven hermanos y hermanas
su destino concebido
maldecía a la raza
he aquí lo acaecido

So you see my brothers and sisters
with his actions well planned,
his dislike for "La Raza"
and this is what resulted⁴¹

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Richard Hough, William Vega, Ramón Valle, Bodhan Kolody, Rosalinda Gonzalez del Castillo, and H. Tarke, "Mental health consequences of the San Ysidro McDonalds massacre: A community study," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* (January 3, 1990): 71-92.

³⁸ Villarino, "The Massacre in San Ysidro," 236-237.

³⁹ Warren Froelich and Joe Gandelman, "They represented all walks," *The San Diego Union* (July 20, 1984): A1, A14.

⁴⁰ While Timothy Dunn points to 1978 as the beginning of the loosening of restrictions that would lead to the militarization of the border, later operations on various sites on the border between 1993 and 1994 are often cited as exemplary of low-intensity conflict.

⁴¹ Villarino, "The Massacre in San Ysidro," 238-239.

There are some who insist the massacre was an isolated incident, a random act involving a sick individual, not possibly a representation of this great nation. The same people might also hold that so too was the Rodney King beating and subsequent violence following the verdict, the Oklahoma bombing, Columbine and other school shootings, the Unabomber attacks. Yet this perception, akin to blaming violence on the violence itself, without consideration of its root causes, results in a reductionist analysis and is in and of itself a violent act, for it denies the history and enduring legacy of the modern/colonial world-system that informs this nation, built on and reinforced through the maintenance of a violent society. It exemplifies the ways in which border violence is itself bordered or rendered to the margins of violence discourse along with attempts to truly grapple with the underlying causes.

According to San Diego historian Richard Griswold del Castillo, “the media coverage of the shooting . . . varied according to geographical distance from San Diego. The local media reported events in great detail and for a longer period of time while the national press limited itself to more general overviews.”⁴² The incident was covered by *The New York Times*, the newspaper of record for the Library of Congress, as a “[g]unman on coast” randomly, and with “no known motive,” going insane, shooting and killing people at a McDonalds along the coast (1984, A1, A24).⁴³ That no surfers were shot or that the victims were largely Mexican remained unreported in the *New York Times*.

Conversely, the corridos’ account points to Huberty as an American with alleged ties to white supremacist groups, killing Mexicans at the U-S//Mexico border, which was similarly reported in the alternative press on both sides of the border, as well as in establishment newspapers in Mexico.⁴⁴ While both accounts are arguably, technically correct, the different corresponding reference points, the U-S//Mexico border on the one hand and the coast on the other, reveal much about the politics of knowledge, its production and its legitimation. Venues that think and produce knowledge from the perspective of those in subaltern locations within the geopolitics of knowledge conveyed a longer historical outlook and moral outrage at the bloodshed marring the San Ysidro border, while those constituted by and beholden to the coloniality of power attempted to frame this as a “coastal” shooting.

Cuerpos hundidos en sangre
todo a muerte hería
parecía zona de guerra
aquel horrible día.

Bodies covered with blood
were seen all over the place.
The stench of death was everywhere.
It looked like a war zone.

⁴² Richard Griswold del Castillo, “The San Ysidro Massacre: A Community Response to Tragedy,” *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, Vol. III, No. 2 (1988): 65-79, 66.

⁴³ *New York Times*, “Coast Man Kills 20 in Rampage at a Restaurant,” *New York Times*, (July 19, 1984): A1, A14.

⁴⁴ Griswold del Castillo, 72.

La prensa del otro lado
lo juzga supremecista
y los cronistas gabachos
lo rechazan por racista.

The press from the Mexican side
says he's a white supremacist,
and the U.S. press never
Mentions any racial tendencies.

Pero uno que otro decía
con mucha ira y fervor
saben que todo esto es cierto
que James fuera un malhechor.

But one or two would say
with anger and fervor,
they know all of this is true
That James was a wrong doer.

In contrast to the mainstream accounts, most notably of the *San Diego Union* and the *San Diego Tribune*, the corrido attempts to relate the trajectory of that day from the perspective of those in San Ysidro who often face constant Border Patrol harassment, and a daily reality largely informed by the existence of the U-S///Mexico border. Accordingly, the corrido asserts that Huberty was a racist, and highlights the massacre's meaning for the Mexican community.⁴⁵ As of this writing the corrido "La Masacre de San Ysidro" had not been put to music and according to one of its composers, José "Pepe" Villarino, it will not be put to music until about twenty-five years after the massacre to avoid possible trauma for the survivors.⁴⁶

According to Phil Moomjean, one of the first emergency workers to enter the McDonalds after Huberty was killed by a SWAT team sniper, "The scene was carnage... It was just like Vietnam" (Golden 1984, A3). The point here though, is that James Oliver Huberty, who according to a neighbor the day before had made comments suggesting animosity towards Mexicanas/os (Cummings 1984, B5), believed it *was* "just like Vietnam" resulting in a gruesome outcome for San Ysidro. While it remains unclear whether Huberty was a Vietnam veteran, Ethnic Studies scholar Larry Trujillo (a Vietnam veteran himself), has argued that the 1980's advent of war movies such as *Rambo* (1982) that depicted a mentally unstable Vietnam veteran, *Commando* (1985) and *Cobra* (1986), to name a few, represent a Vietnam "lifer" genre.⁴⁷ That is, the 1980's under then-President Ronald Reagan (no stranger to Hollywood) witnessed the rise of the "angry white male" depicted brilliantly by Michael Douglas in the film *Falling Down* (1993), for whom the time had come to "take *their* country back" from the real and perceived advances made by communities of color in the United States and to reverse the United States' defeat in Vietnam abroad. The Vietnam "lifer" then, is best understood as those for whom the Vietnam War never ended; who years after were/are still seeking to "win the war" by bringing the war "home" to the United States against those they see as representing the enemy within.

Recognizing a long history of coloniality's inability and unwillingness to serve justice to border(ed) communities, and reminiscent of Walter Benjamin's Angels of History, the corrido concludes,

⁴⁵ Ibid. 74.

⁴⁶ Phone interview with the corrido's composer, June 26, 2000.

⁴⁷ Personal communication, *National Association of Ethnic Studies*, San Francisco, California: March 30, 2006.

Vayan, vayan angelitos
vayan díganle al señor
que se apiade de nosotros
aquí sufrieron el dolor.

Go, Go little angels
go and tell the Lord
to have mercy on us
Suffering our pains.

The corridistas thus invoke a moral high ground by calling on “little angels” to serve as the winged messengers that will carry and convey this horrible atrocity to others, as they perhaps see no other recourse than their own cultural work as knowledge production given the everyday violence faced by many along the U-S///Mexico border.

* * * * *

That afternoon marks the day the ensuing violence gave birth to my memory. I was only a child, five years into this world, yet awakened into the harsh reality of the McEra and the violence the jolly redheaded clown I grew up admiring represents. To this day I can still remember the tragedy that took place at that McDonalds only two blocks away from our small vecindario-like apartment complex. It was around half past three ‘o clock as my abuelita, my mom, my sister and I had finished shopping for groceries at the nearby Big Bear market, four stores down from the McDonalds. As we drove out of the parking lot, the summer heat coupled with the giving heart of a loving grandmother allowed for the simple words, “¿Quieren una nieve? Do you want an ice cream?” she asked her two young grandchildren. The car was instantly filled with the common youthful happiness of five and nine year-olds considering the prospect of an ice cream sundae from McDonalds, strawberry toppings and peanuts included, of course.

It was a mother’s instinctive sense of protecting her children however—perhaps from a sick tummy since we had not eaten, or a gut feeling, border gnosis subconsciously warning her about the impending tragedy—that took hold of her as we were about to enter the McDonalds parking lot. The mere uttering of the words now forever engraved in my mind, “No, máther, no han comido. Y al cabo que ahí tenemos nieve en la casa.”—No mother, they haven’t eaten, and besides, we have ice cream at home—is what, as I vividly recall, kept us from going into the McDonalds restaurant only minutes before James Huberty would do so. Empty stomachs and the gallon of aging chocolate chip ice cream gathering frost in the far end of the refrigerator kept us away, protecting us from the violence that was to soon ravage our small border community and shock (at least *very* temporarily) the entire nation.

All it took was the difference of making a right turn rather than a left at the stop sign that separated death from our home up the street. As we drove up Averil Avenue and made a different left turn on Blackshaw Lane, from where three young boys that would not return home that day often played, we began to hear gunshots ring. Not knowing where they were coming from, but frightened by the closeness of their thunderous BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! We hurried home. As we reached our apartments, Villa Esperanza (Place of Hope), our next-door neighbor, Pedrito, was trying to sneak out of his home and join our three young friends who had earlier invited him to bike down to McDonalds for an ice cream sundae. Fortunately for Pedrito, the gut feelings

well at work in his apartment also, as time after time either his mother or sister would catch him and fetch him back home. As we unloaded the groceries, I remember my sister and I asking why he was so eager to sneak out. His response was that he wanted to join our other neighbor David, and two friends Omar and Joshua who were going to McDonalds. At that moment, my sister exclaimed, “watcha, el ghetto bird!” pointing to the sky. We saw the police helicopter hover above, though in San Ysidro this was not an uncommon sight. A strange feeling filled the air this time, as inside the phone rang, and soon after, my mom hollered at us to come in. My Tia Pati, huddled in the safety of her own home 15 minutes away in Chula Vista, called to check if we were alright and tell us to tune in to Channel 39, as reports of the shooting hit the airwaves.

The McDonalds down the street, which we nearly visited, where three youngsters were spending their week’s allowance on a sundae, was under siege by one James Oliver Huberty, whose name is remembered in people minds while the names of all the victims are often forgotten. By then, Pedrito had also heard the news, and this time, on his fourth attempt, he was successful in sneaking out of his mother’s watchful eye, taking a pair of binoculars with him. Thirty or so minutes later, he returned, tears drenched his eyes. Pedrito, only ten at the time, had seen the bodies of three of his childhood companions lying next to their bikes, motionless.

It was not long after Pedrito’s return and the images, by then being flashed on television sets across the country, that we knew this situation to be very real. Pedrito’s tears confirmed it. Our bodies paralyzed by his silence. The twenty-one children and adults killed at the McDonalds that day was being talked about as a record high for mass-killings in the United States in a single day.

Two points are important here. First of all, the horrific fact that there seemed to be someone keeping tally, with body counts looked at as if with the hope of one day being reached if not surpassed. Second, we must acknowledge the ongoing violence of short-term memory—that is, the denial of the countless thousands of indigenous peoples, blacks, Mexicanas/os, and people of Asian descent who have died in this nation throughout its history, but who, because of its history, are apparently not part of the tally, as to count them would require an acknowledge of such history.

The aftermath of the massacre also became as heated as the motives and police response, which some had argued was delayed and could have saved some lives had they responded sooner. The slow police response was, ironically though not surprising or new to area residents, a result of the annexation that was to bring more city services to the South Bay, yet left San Ysidro under the jurisdiction of a municipal body twenty miles away. Reports later surfaced that the Chief of Police was out at a reception on a local beach, which contributed to the lack of coordination of the first responders on the scene. While the San Diego Police Department insisted that all of the shooting occurred within the first ten to twelve minutes of Huberty’s arrival at the McDonalds, witnesses and survivors declared otherwise. Instead, they argued that Huberty kept shooting throughout the ordeal, for about 40 minutes before the police finally engaged him, at times pausing and pacing, but then shooting again at anything or anyone that moved. One of the most alarming accounts came from one of the three neighborhood kids on

bikes, Joshua Coleman, who reported that after the initial rounds of shooting his victims in cold blood, Huberty walked around kicking bodies as they lay on the floor. Those who showed signs of life were then shot again at close range. The 11-year old Coleman was also nudged by the killer's military style boots, but feigned his death as the only way he thought he might survive. And while Joshua did survive the ordeal, the psychological trauma was too much to bear, as he has since been riddled by a number of mental health troubles of his own.

Another young survivor, Betty Romo, age 15, who also had enduring trauma from the massacre, would have the psychological and emotional scar reopened when, walking to school a little over a year later, she encountered two young undocumented migrants running in her direction. Recognizing their situation, she simply stopped in her tracks so as to not impede their passage or be in their way. Moments later however, a Border Patrol agent fast approached, presumably hot on their trail. As he neared Betty Romo the agent reached for his gun, and upon that sight, Romo recalled the horrific events of July 18, 1984. Instinctively fearing for her life at the prospect of a gun being drawn near her, she ran for safety attempting to hide in a nearby yard. Not long after, Border Patrol agents would find her and insist that the fear that caused her to run into the yard was proof itself that she was likely an undocumented migrant. Much like Cheech Marin's character Rudy, Romo protested that she was a United States citizen, a minor who according to immigration law at the time was not required to carry proof of residence. This was insufficient to the Border Patrol agents and Romo soon found herself penniless and alone in Tijuana for the next three days.⁴⁸ Having endured the McDonalds massacre, the socio-political reality of living near the U-S///Mexico border further aggravated the already traumatic experiences the young woman had survived.

The case of the McDonalds Massacre in San Ysidro is important, as it involved a mass killing in a public space. Thus the trauma of the event was inscribed not only in the minds of survivors, victims, and their friends and families, but also collectively on San Ysidro residents who frequented the McDonalds or simply recognized the colonial/racial dynamic that informed the shooting. In this sense, it was arguably reminiscent of the systematic killings of native peoples that led to the eventual creation of the border, and current globalizing phase of the modern/ colonial world-system, as many Mexicanas/os knew well that more than twenty-one people had been killed at once in numerous frontier massacres. Particularly traumatizing for many was the contradiction between what they knew to be true, confirmed by their own live long experiences with the Border Patrol in the area and reaffirmed in Tijuana news broadcasts, and the invisibility from U.S. media outlets of any mention of race in the incident. The massacre, now considered the first in a series of such "random" shootings, further galvanized pro-Second Amendment gun activists eager to arm themselves against a perceived 'urban crisis' discussed in Chapter One. Interestingly, the shooting is also credited as one giving rise to the self-proclaimed, civilian 'border militias' involved in detaining and/or shooting immigrants—a reenactment of the frontier mentality and exultation of the coloniality of power that is discussed in the next chapter.

⁴⁸ H.G. Reza, "15-Year Old San Ysidro Girl says Border Patrol Illegally Deported Her," *Los Angeles Times*, (November 17, 1985): A4.

The McDonalds Massacre has since had a memorial monument erected to commemorate the tragic day, but this too would be the subject of a racialized battle between San Ysidro residents and the City of San Diego. I now turn to what I contend is the continuation of the violence endured on July 18, 1984, and after, continued through an ongoing battle between conflicting ways of knowing and remembering death within an already emotionally torn border community.

The McDonalds Memorial Monument

Not long after the massacre on July 18, 1984, questions began to surface about what was to become of the bullet-ridden and blood-soaked McDonalds building. Would it reopen? If so, when? Others however, immediately called for the McDonalds to be shut down, the building razed, and for a park in honor of those killed—with space for a public altar—to be opened in its place. Not surprisingly, City officials twenty miles to the north of San Ysidro balked at the idea of a park and public memorial with altar space. The City of San Diego had different ideas about what to do with the site, as did McDonalds, each with their own version of how the massacred would be remembered.

According to Michel-Rolph Trouillot, history, its production, and public memory are a reflection of power in which, “Power is constitutive of the story. ... Power itself works together with history . . . [it] does not enter the story... It precedes the narrative proper, contributes to its creation and to its interpretation . . . In history, power begins at the source.”⁴⁹ In the context of U-S//Mexico border history, as would be the case with the San Ysidro massacre, this has resulted in a downplaying of oppositional views and often conflicting, even dichotomous, accounts of the same event, perhaps the most notable example being The Alamo.⁵⁰

In a related vein, Trouillot thus rhetorically asks whether the Battle of the Alamo stands as “a moment of glory during which freedom-loving Anglos . . . chose to fight until death... Or is it a brutal example of U.S. expansionism, the story of a few white predators . . . providing, with their death, the alibi for a well-planned annexation?”⁵¹ In contrast, Emma Pérez reiterates Pilar’s famous assertion in the 1999 movie *Lone Star*, “Forget the Alamo!”⁵² Not surprisingly, the Alamo, too, has been the subject of various corridos. Following the McDonalds Massacre, a similar battle ensued, which centered on the memorial monument and the way in which the massacre was to be remembered.

⁴⁹ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995): 28-29.

⁵⁰ While Trouillot discusses the example of The Alamo briefly, see also Richard R. Flores, *Remembering the Alamo: Memory, Modernity, and the Master Symbol*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002; and Emma Pérez, *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History*, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 9.

⁵² Emma Pérez, *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999): 126-127.

In this struggle, what was revealed was the complex ways in which San Ysidro's working class Mexicanas/os remember and honor their fallen loved ones, while civic efforts to memorialize the day's tragedy instead served as veiled attempts to forget (if not deny) the racialized reality and sociopolitical implications of the massacre.

Immediately after the horrendous killings, flowers, candles, water, food, fruit, sweet bread and a host of other personal articles traditionally used in Mexico to remember the dead were brought and placed at the site of the shooting. Placards and posters, filled with written messages in honor of those who passed, complemented the abovementioned items. The Mexican altar tradition was introduced into a public space, as the site essentially became a living altar.



FIGURE 6: Photo of the front of the McDonalds within days following the shooting.

For many Mexicans in San Ysidro, the spiritual and healing practices of altar building at the place where one dies is seen as a way of ensuring that the spirits of the deceased know that they are not being forgotten. The water, food, fruit, and other perishable items known as spirit food is first prayed with and then left at the altar in order to help nourish loved ones in their journey to the spirit world. The flowers, candles and other (usually personal) items serve as reminders that of their spirit beings are in our memory as they are still living energy.

This practice, dating back to las Américas precolombinas, is a tradition, according to Rosa Martha Villarreal, usually carried through by indigenous communities and mothers in particular, as the Spanish, usually men, were seen to remember things through lifeless objects, such as statues and monuments. It is also a way for a community to collectively grieve, and forever celebrate the lives of those passed as the maintenance of the altar is continued for years, often times with specific community members or relatives assigned as caretakers.

Following the massacre, flowers, candles and posters remained while McDonalds considered various options as to what to do with the site. According to John F. Love, “any hesitation on closing the store quickly disappeared when the McDonald’s representatives attended the funeral, toured the community and met with Monsignor Francisco Aldesarro, the spiritual leader of the Catholic community.”⁵³ Upon consideration of the community’s potential reaction as drawn from the altars, it was concluded that any decision “to reopen that McDonald’s—with so much human emotion attached to the site—would have been absolutely wrong.”⁵⁴ What to do with the site was still up in the air.

Controversy soon stirred when a wrecking crew moved in one night and the building was demolished in the early hours of the morning of September 7, 1984, without warning. And with the building gone, so too was the living altar on the outer perimeter of what not long before had been a busy McDonalds. Figure Seven is a photograph taken the morning McDonalds was brought down by the wrecking crew. Behind the morning haze one can see Tijuana roughly about one mile away. Only debris, a few red bricks and the cedar brush out front on San Ysidro Boulevard remained.



FIGURE 7: McDonalds site being razed. Photo courtesy of Consuelo Delgadillo

⁵³ John F. Love, *McDonald's: Behind the Arches*. (New York: Bantam Books, 1986): 381.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Nonetheless, community members continued to bring flowers only to have them occasionally removed. The community also began to pressure city officials more adamantly for a park and a memorial for the altar to sit on, seeing that the site would soon be completely empty. City officials, however, were reluctant to move on or commit to any future plans for the site, as it still belonged to McDonalds. The corporate offices of McDonalds themselves responded with an image control, public relations approach. They took extra care to ensure that information was dispersed about their “initiative to show its compassion for the families of the victims by shouldering costs related to funeral arrangements, hospital bills, counseling and flying in relatives.”⁵⁵ McDonalds also cooperated significantly with the media in a self-described effort aimed at “keeping all communication lines open and making information accessible” to the public.⁵⁶ Moreover, management expressed its shock, sympathy and disbelief immediately after the incident. However, the extent of demonstrating their sympathy was to cancel television advertising one day after the shooting, suggesting it would somehow assist victims’ relatives in the grieving process. Worried about the potential loss of business at other McDonalds restaurants, they felt that these moves would help the company diffuse negative coverage. Lastly, and significantly (for McDonalds at least), they donated the lot to the city and opened a new franchise two blocks west of the original site. In this way, they lifted the burden from their own shoulders of having to decide what to do with what had become an increasingly contested site. That such “initiatives helped McDonald's to regain its original market share despite an initial sales loss,”⁵⁷ was later revealed by a public relations journal to have been important considerations in the corporation’s decisions.



FIGURE 8: After the McDonalds was bulldozed local residents arranged a makeshift altar to the victims of the massacre on the same site.

⁵⁵ Mary-Angie Salva-Ramirez, “The San Ysidro massacre - ten years later: McDonald's actions spoke louder than words,” *Public Relations Quarterly* v40, n1 (Spring, 1995): 38-43.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Once the city was officially in charge of the land, and it continued to be reluctant on what actions to take, a local couple, a 53-year-old disabled teacher and his wife, Tom and Alicia Arena, decided to take matters into their own hands. After a year had passed and still no resolve from the city council on any plans for the massacre site, the Arenas came down to the location with wood and the appropriate tools necessary then “dug a foundation for a temporary wooden shrine” and raised a makeshift altar for the victims that was immediately put to use by community residents.⁵⁸ The altar, however, was raised without the permission of the city and became the symbol for the struggle between the local working-class Mexicana/o community and the predominantly Anglo and middle class Mexican American City officials. Time after time, the city asked the Arenas to remove the altar, citing concern for the property. However, the Arenas refused to bring down the makeshift shrine, prompting Assistant City Manager John Lockwood to suggest possible legal action against them if they did not comply. Tom Arena responded in kind: “If he’s so concerned about the property, ... why aren’t they also concerned about the cars that park there and the people who throw beer bottles? Who’s kidding who about what?”⁵⁹ In the view of Arena and many area residents, the lack of care and action on the part of officials implied that the City of San Diego did not consider the slain Mexican patrons and employees as significant, in turn reopening never fully healed wounds over the annexation of the area and its precarious situation given the city council district boundaries.

At the heart of the issue stood an important question posed by Judith Butler in *Precarious Life* with regards to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the tenfold ratio of Palestinian to Israeli deaths that marks the violence in the occupied territories. That is, how is it that in colonial/racial contexts some deaths and bodies are seen as having more value and are therefore worthy of remembrance while others are not seen as even worthy of being mourned?

The disputes over the monument reflected both race and class conflicts over the urban space and competing perceptions of how to best remember the victims. The city’s hesitation on allowing the predominantly Mexican community to preserve their altar, honoring their dead the way they know best, was a manifestation of a larger problem. City officials eventually did live up to their initial threats and responded to the makeshift altar by occasionally removing flowers and assigning City Park and Recreation employees to “clean up” the site. As the Arenas continued to maintain the altar, a month after the heightened tension with City Hall, the shrine was vandalized, with no clue or motive as to the perpetrators left behind.⁶⁰ The Arenas nonetheless rebuilt the altar only to find it repeatedly vandalized, and even having small statues of La Virgen de Guadalupe smashed. By mid-November, the Arenas decided to abandon the shrine, as the constant rebuilding was becoming an emotionally overwhelming process. A

⁵⁸ Emmet Pierce, “Couple building massacre shrine,” *The San Diego Union* (September 2, 1985): B1.

⁵⁹ Gina Lubrano, “City defied on shrine in San Ysidro; Arena refuses to take it down or pay,” *The San Diego Union* (September 10, 1985): B-1

⁶⁰ “Memorial at massacre site is vandalized” *The San Diego Union* (October 2, 1985): B-2.

distraught Tom Arena said, “they’ve destroyed it, desecrated it.... The candles, every time we try to light them, we go there in the morning and find them scattered all over the lot.”⁶¹ Some community members suggested their suspicions that the City officials themselves were behind the vandalism. Others cited the San Diego Police Department as the likely culprits and thus responsible. Nonetheless, city officials warned Arena again to remove the shrine or pay the cost of having the city remove it.⁶² It was not until Arenas’ decision to abandon the altar that the City of San Diego surprisingly, decided to finally consider what it was going to do with the land. The eventual result was the scrapping of any plans for a public park. Instead, the City sold the lot to a local community college, Southwestern College, which then moved to build a satellite to their main campus ten miles northeast of San Ysidro in Chula Vista.

When the Southwestern College Education Center opened its doors, it offered a full array of services to meet local student needs, including financial aid and academic counseling. However, its development was initially touted as an effort to bring desperately lacking opportunities to the San Ysidro border community. Ironically, its course offerings seemed more guided towards promoting classes for the management of the then growing maquiladora factories in Tijuana, thereby helping meet the needs of the cross-border business community, involving itself in the recent globalizing trends that characterize U.S. economic and cultural violence that was arguably an important factor in the massacre itself. For example, according to the satellite campus’ website, “Japanese language courses are offered to employees of nearby maquiladoras (twin plants).”⁶³ There is also a Mentor/Intern Program available, which “allows *employers* to help develop a pool of future employees while students acquire the skills necessary to succeed on-the-job.”⁶⁴ These courses are not meant for assembly line workers, but for mid-level management to communicate with corporate executives. One can deduce who are the students taking the Japanese language courses, as sitting in front of huge machinery for prolonged hours each day, while earning measly wages and laboring under poor working conditions, does not require foreign language skills (unless operating manuals were not translated). In fact, such forms of labor do not require any talking at all, and even benefits from silence, both auditory and sociopolitical silence, in terms of labor organizing for better conditions and wages. While San Ysidro residents did not succeed in obtaining the park with a living altar space that they wanted at the site of the massacre, Southwestern College did eventually erect the much fought for memorial monument that San Diego City officials had been reluctant to concede.

In front of the Southwestern College Education Center now stands the San Ysidro Massacre Memorial, which honors the memory of the 21 victims of the 1984 tragedy on the site. College officials worked with civic leaders to solicit contributions for the construction of the memorial. However, of the eighteen submissions considered for a possible monument the one selected also caused uproar amongst San Ysidro residents.

⁶¹ Jim Okerblom, “Vandals force abandonment of shrine,” *The San Diego Union* (November 19, 1985): B-3.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ <http://swc.cc.ca.us/AboutSouthwesternCollege/SanYsidroCampus/index.htm>

⁶⁴ Ibid. My emphasis.



FIGURE 9: This photograph above depicts the McDonalds Memorial shortly after its dedication in 1990. Courtesy of Consuelo Delgadillo

Local immigrant rights advocate Christian Ramirez noted that “many in the community were unhappy with the marble block monument, because neither it nor the accompanying plaque give a real description of what they say happened on this site on that day in 1984. They feel the white marble and vague language obscure the pure hate and racism that manifested here, a hate which is still very much alive.”⁶⁵ A number of the submissions were hailed in the television media at the time as artistically refined pieces, yet too graphic in their depictions of bodies in pain. In the end, an appointed panel of judges composed of city and community college officials decided on the particular entry that became the monument. It is my contention however, that the one selected and erected was indeed the most traditional or “plain” monument of all, as it appeared Southwestern College did not want a graphic depiction that would voice the violence done onto the victims and the community on July 18, 1984. A subsequent search that I conducted over the course of at least three years between 2006 and 2009 led to many leads, and much more runaround, talking to Southwestern College staff, administrators, librarians, facility management, even professors in art and architecture, yet I was unable to retrieve copies of the seventeen other submissions.

Nonetheless, the information I was able to gather about the submissions paralleled an important discussion in a 2002 article, where Andrew Shanken notes that following World War I there was a public debate over how veterans of that war would be remembered. Between the two World Wars, what came to be known as “traditional monuments”—obelisks, statues, triumphant arches, etc.—were often the monuments of choice when memorializing historic figures, war heroes and other notable individuals. Following World War II however, “living memorials” in the form of parks, community centers, libraries and so on, became the favored way to remember wartime casualties and the like.⁶⁶ The monument at the McDonalds resembled more the traditional approach to monuments, whereas the requests of the community resonated more with

⁶⁵ Kari Lydersen, “Blood, Sweat & Tears,” *Lip Magazine* (September 22, 2003).

⁶⁶ Andrew M. Shanken, “Planning Memory: Living Memorials in the United States during World War II,” *The Art Bulletin* 84, no1 (March 2002): 130-147.



FIGURE 10: McDonalds Memorial Monument after the steel cage fencing was erected to prevent mourners from using it as an altar to place flowers, candles, and other items on it.

the latter approach where the idea was of a park as a living memorial, with a “living altar” for the memory of the dead was also seen as a “living” relationship.

It is here, in the choice of monument, that the violence of short-term memory takes hold. In particular, I argue the community college, under pressure from their governing board and city officials, opted for the architectural creation that appeared to be an attempt to forget and gloss over, or more accurately, white-wash the living memory of the victims. In a very real sense, it functioned as further violence upon the survivors’ families for it signified to them that their relationship with their loved ones was one that was itself dead, one that would be experienced only through the dead inanimate concrete and marble of the memorial monument. And in doing so, it further suggested, as noted above, that regardless of their intention, the action by the officials was experienced as an active denial of the right to mourn their dead.

The groundbreaking ceremonies for the memorial structure comprised of 21 white hexagonal pillars and designed by former Southwestern College architecture student Robert Valdez, Jr., were held on July 18, 1990, on the 6th anniversary of the tragedy; the memorial was later dedicated on December 13, 1990. The “white-washing” or twofold erasure of memory occurs first in its depiction of the pillars, meant to represent the victims, as being absent of color or “white”, when the racialized bodies of most victims were, in a very real sense, not white—marked as brown and “foreign” by the border only a mile away regardless of their formal immigrant or citizenship status. Although the monument is indeed a beautiful piece of work, Southwestern college officials involved in the monument selection noted that many of the other submissions seemed to better represent both events of July 18, 1984, as well as its victims both aesthetically and artistically. Instead, the bland nature of the chosen structure disembodies the people killed that tragic day, ultimately transposing the memory of their lively existence, as acknowledged by the colorful altar that once stood in its place, into color-less, lifeless pillars.

Immediately after the opening of the memorial, the flat tops of each pillar on the monument came to replace the community altar that the Arenas had so courageously fought to maintain years earlier. Tolerated at first, as it was believed to be only temporary, inspired by the recent dedication of the memorial, flowers and candles again adorned the site once wreaked with blood. As relatives and community members continued placing their flowers offerings on the new “altar” so to speak, Southwestern College and City officials became increasingly disturbed by the (minor, if at all) financial cost and physical energy expended on their part to remove old flowers or “clean” the memorial. Despite family members coming and continuing their role as caretakers of the new altar, maintenance was cited as the reason to enclose the memorial monument.

The occasional spilled wax and other items left behind, Southwestern College and city officials felt, affected the aesthetic value of the monument and became the justification for the steel cage that was erected months later. The imprisoning of the renewed altar space, as illustrated by the images below, constituted a second act of violence upon the ways in which the predominantly Mexicana/o community remembered their dead, preventing the community from raising their *altares*, which are seen as a necessary part of maintaining communion with deceased family members.

As it stands now, there is a plaque with the inscription of the names of the 21 victims engraved into a brass marker in front of the memorial. It is the only accessible part of the memorial—on the sidewalk in front of the Southwestern College Educational Center—as the rest remains behind bars. On the memorial is the following inscription: “The San Ysidro Memorial is dedicated to those who died so tragically July 18, 1984, and to the survivors who bear the scars of that day.” While each victim is now memorialized on the plaque, one cannot help but notice that at certain times of the day, the ever-present cage casts its daily shadow over the bronze plate, symbolically “imprisoning” its



FIGURE 11, FIGURE 12: The above are two pictures of the dedication plaque at the massacre site, taken at different times of the day, hence the shadow on the right.

names in much the same way as the rest of the memorial is at all times of everyday. As the sun moves west, to set in the direction where the U-S//Mexico border wall extends into the Pacific Ocean at Border Field State Park only two short miles from the site of the McDonalds tragedy, the shadow on the plaque becomes a manifestation of the community's ongoing struggle to remember their dead, the way they have been taught to—with flowers that represent “the chain of never ending life.” The plurality of the different ways of knowing, free of the confinements of progress and modernity, that say there is only one way to remember the dead, is what transcends into never ending life. The view that there is but one way to view life and death itself, as Octavio Paz formulates, is precisely what brings on the onset of cultural genocide, or perhaps more accurately epistemicide, that results in not just physical erasure, as Jamaica Kincaid speaks of colonization, “but erasure all the same” for the very capacity, epistemology and knowledge base from which to think, live, die and mourn otherwise is wiped away.

The memory of the massacre victims is thus not yet fully free, as it is haunted by reminders of that day, and Huberty in particular, by virtue of the nearby border wall that tends to on occasion attract other fatigue-wearing “lifers” seeking to also make their last stand against what they see as a Mexican invasion. That same border wall had previously been, and would yet again be, the site of multiple confrontations with vigilante-like volunteer civilian patrols such as the Minutemen and others that I turn to in the following chapter. The wall and the modern-day “vigilantes” serve as a constant reminder of the threats posed by those who have taken their lost (in some cases imagined) fight in the jungles of Vietnam and the deserts of Iraq to the brush of the Tijuana River Valley and the dry mountainous terrain east of the San Ysidro port of entry. Nonetheless, each year on the anniversary of the massacre, survivors, friends and family gather at the memorial and “cross” the metal fence, the monument's border so to speak, to place (even if for that day alone) their flowers, candles, virgencitas, pan dulce and other personal items on the altar to their loved ones, bringing new life to their memory.

CHAPTER THREE

AT HOME IN THE NATION: COLONIALITY AND THE STRUCTURAL EMBEDDEDNESS OF VIGILANTISM AND BORDER VIOLENCE ALONG THE U-S///MEXICO BORDER

“...We rededicate ourselves today . . . to the principles that made America great: the dream, the prize, the honor—American citizenship”

-Good Fences Make Good Neighbors
Anti-Immigrant Rally

“We are simply a big neighborhood watch group”

-Chris Simcox, Minuteman Co-Founder

In this chapter, I focus on the rise of the civilian patrols between 2004-2008 operating along the U-S///Mexico border, both in San Ysidro and beyond, to interrogate shifting discourses of citizenship and belonging, the persistent colonial logics of racism, and some of the mechanisms which I argue uphold this structurally embedded violence. I situate this chapter on the local particularities of the U-S///Mexico regions in a *longue durée* analysis of the raced/gendered logics of nations and violence that Aníbal Quijano has termed the *coloniality of power* as outlined in the Introduction.¹ Whereas in the previous chapter I examined one specific fatigue-clad, gun-wielding individual that riddled the San Ysidro McDonalds with bullets, here I examine the physical and discursive manifestations of violence at the hands of (semi-)organized groups, some of which included Vietnam “lifers,” who have organized themselves as civilian patrols on the U-S///Mexico border and continued in the long-held American tradition of Indian and Mexican-hating. Furthermore this chapter seeks to understand the actions and collective subject-formation of the civilian patrols, and arguably of James Oliver Huberty, by historicizing them in light of their previous incarnations that we associate with three distinct historical moments and conceptual frames: the frontier, the border and globalization. I thus argue that the distinct manifestations of violence, frontier vigilantism and civilian border patrols, follow an interwoven trajectory rooted in the dominant episteme of the first colonial encounter dating back to the end of the 15th Century. In other words, recalling Fanon, the anti-Indian colonial violence on indigenous-marked bodies that shaped the frontier has been relocated to the border (frontier’s end) in the guise of anti-immigrant and anti-“Latina/o” sentiment.

Briefly, I utilize coloniality of power in this chapter to foreground how the initial colonial encounters in the Americas gave shape to the socially and discursively created

¹ Aníbal Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentricism, and Latin America,” 533-580.

categories of race as we know them today to make them the central organizing axis for ordering social relations (Quijano 1993, 170).² Furthermore this chapter illustrates how this process has been intricately gendered and tied to hetero-normative conceptions of nation, constituted as larger scale replications of the ideal patriarchal family or ‘home’. In other words, the concepts of home and nation (e.g. homeland security) are meant to be mirror images of one another, and it is the role of *homo-patriarcus* (via exclusionary violence on racialized/gendered bodies) to ensure such is the case. Moreover, Maria Lugones’ analysis of the colonial/modern gender system is also important as she elucidates how the construction of the male/female divide upon which the hetero-patriarchal family as the site for the exercise of unequally distributed power relations is itself predicated and subsequently institutionalized, is itself premised on the simultaneous marking of racial and gender difference through bodies. It is situated within this specific element of the coloniality of power and gender, that this chapter makes three distinct but interrelated arguments as they relate to the civilian patrols. In what follows, I will address the civilian patrols historically and then return to their resurgence in the San Ysidro and broader San Diego county border region.

* * * * *

First, I consider the shifting and gendered discourses of home and nation, by which the national imaginary’s boundaries of belonging are expanded and contracted both legislatively and discursively to create changing narratives about who constitutes the nation/home, but always already in relation to an ‘other’ or as Chantal Mouffe has articulated, a self-affirming *constitutive outside*.³ These *constitutive outsides* have historically included the savage, the slave, the immigrant: those who Gloria Anzaldúa called *fronteriz@s*, *neplanter@s*, the queer and the squinted-eyed. The rich Manichean and dimorphous constructions have served to distinguish the “them” from the “we”. They have served to illuminate what Caribbean philosopher Sylvia Wynter refers to as a process for making sense of the *propter nos*, the “for our sake”—that is, for the sake of the nation/race/civilization (47).⁴ While today the “them” of the nation is frequently defined as a “terrorist”, the “them” or *constitutive outside* against which the border watch groups make sense of a constructed “we-ness” (as American-ness) is increasingly the immigrant. In other words, the *propter nos*, or the “for the sake of the nation” is currently defined in relation to a nebulous terrorist, which along the border has become somewhat synonymous with immigrants. Worse yet, in the portrayal of some civilian patrol groups, there has a metaphorical if not literal collapsing of the latter two into a new form of immigrant/terrorist—with a driver’s license even, as a billboard campaign by the Coalition for Secure Driver’s License against giving driver’s licenses to

² Aníbal Quijano, “‘Raza,’ ‘Etnia,’ y ‘Nacion’ en Mariátegui: Cuestiones Abiertas,” in Roland Forgues, ed., *José Carlos Mariátegui y Europa: El Otro Aspecto del Descubrimiento* (Lima, Peru: Empresa Editora Amauta, SA, 1993), 167-187.

³ The use of “constitutive outside” is employed here in the way it is used by Chantal Mouffe, where the real or perceived violations of norms serve to reify the very same norms that are being violated. See Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (New York: Verso, 1993).

⁴ Sylvia Wynter, “1492: a New World View,” in Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford, eds., *Race, Discourse and the Origin of the Americas*, (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 5-56.

immigrants without proof of legal status have so vividly represented in various targeted efforts in states across the country.⁵



FIGURE 13: The above ad was widely circulated during 2006. Similar billboards were posted in other states including New Mexico.

Second, through the published and public statements of recent civilian patrols along the border I trace what I argue is an ironic simultaneous triangulated *constitutive outside*. But in this second case, it is the Minutemen and other civilian patrols, which function as a distinct but related “them” or *constitutive outside* that serves to normalize and naturalize the imagined normative inside of the nation through their respective discourses of exclusion directed at the primary *constitutive outside*, namely immigrants. By the imagined normative inside I mean what many observers, irrespective of partisan leanings, refer to as “middle America”, “mainstream America”, or perhaps most importantly as it relates to the racialized and gendered constructions of the nation, “your average everyday Joe,” (six-pack or the plumber) as stylized at anti-immigrant rallies by demonstrators wearing shirts designed in San Diego that read: “Here Legally”.⁶ My argument follows that by painting an image of the civilian patrols as “vigilante” formations, as extremists, as bigots, as racists, (which many of them admittedly are) there is nonetheless a double-play by which their



FIGURE 14: Popular shirt amongst anti-immigrant crowds.

⁵ The Coalition for Secure Driver’s Licenses ran similar campaigns in at least 12 states between 2004 and 2008. <http://www.securelicense.org> (accessed Dec. 2006). The site is no longer online, and is now available only through www.archive.com. The image can still be found at <http://greensboring.com/viewtopic.php?f=19&t=214> (accessed November 2010).

⁶ I have observed these shirts to be a common presence at anti-immigrant rallies. Upon searching for their source I found the address for ordering the shirts listed as being in San Diego. One of the ads is still available at <http://www.mikedesign.biz/T-shirts.html> (accessed March 2006 [and November 2010]).

“extremism” discursively constitutes them as an “outside” to the “mainstream”. In doing so, the result is an effective legitimating of a kindler, gentler racism on the “inside,” and by this I am referring to issues of mainstream politics/legislation, such as the Sensenbrenner bill (HR4437), the *Secure Fences Act of 2007*, and for example, the series of anti-immigrant legislation throughout most of the 1990s in California and now surfacing in various states and small towns across the United States today.

Lastly, these first two interrelated arguments lead us to a third argument regarding the structural embeddedness of vigilantism and border violence. Through the work of Karl Polanyi, Mark Gravonetter, and in conversation with Wayne Cornelius on the “structural embeddedness of demand for labor”—and what he separately terms a persisting “ethnocultural objection”—I argue that gendered discourses of home and nation function to reproduce Eurocentric and heteronormative narratives of nation, property, citizenship and belonging and I reframe Cornelius’ concept to suggest it is a colonial/racial objection at work. One can understand what I mean by such distinction between ethnocultural and colonial/racial objection when we recall the images of choice in Samuel Huntington’s now infamous *Foreign Policy* article, “The Hispanic Challenge.”



FIGURE 15: The above images are the first two opening pages to Samuel Huntington’s article, “The Hispanic Challenge,” which appeared in *Foreign Policy*.

Whereas ethnocultural is suggestive of a long list of literature on immigrants who have assimilated after a few generations, and one that argues in particular that Latinas/os, like previous generations of immigrants (Italians, Polish, etc.) will assimilate, the data on the topic is mixed and suggests otherwise. While indeed some Latinos assimilate, are effectively incorporated into the United States mainstream and share varying degrees of success, those who do so usually do it through actual lighter-skin or the mere perception of it (though not exclusively so) and thus share in a symbolic whiteness.⁷ In contrast, among those portrayed by *Foreign Policy* we see dark, brown, presumably fertile, young female bodies with several children in tow, invoking an image of unassimilability on the one hand, and of an “Indian” or a long familiar racial/colonial subject in the Americas hemispheric imaginary on the other, and it is these latter “Latinas/os” that draw the ire of the border watch groups. Here it is useful to recall how given the colonial construction of a complex racial caste system in Spanish colonial possessions, which has been effectively reduced to an amorphous “mestizo” category, means largely becoming “Latina/o” in the United States for many despite being scoptically marked as indigenous bodies.⁸ In other words, discourses of vigilantes patrolling/securing the frontiers from hostiles or runaway slaves, the borders from “illegals” or the outer stretches of homeland security (read here Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, etc) from terrorist attacks “at home” invoke familiar and recycled colonial tropes for the purpose of constructing and legitimating a white supremacist masculinist rendition of the nation, free from the “contamination” of non-white bodies.

In each of these instances, the head of the household, imagined as a brave young man (usually white, though no longer exclusively and hence the point of expanding boundaries of inclusion and whiteness), simultaneously protects his “nation”/territory as he would his home/”property” (read here real estate, wife, children). This scale jumping between discourses of home and nation, which feminist scholars such as Norma Alarcón, Nira Yubal-Davis and Floya Anthias, and others have shown, intimately tie notions of nation-building and domesticity,⁹ produce myths of women as property, and sovereign nations as female/home, and both as private/domestic realms. The above

⁷ See, for example, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.

⁸ An interesting point noted by indigenous-identified “Latin@s” is that Mexico officially claims to be a nation that is 60% Mestizo, 30 % Indigenous, and 10% European (completely erasing smaller but nonetheless important Afro- and Asian- populations that only recently are being recognized). Meanwhile, in the United States, the most common form of establishing who is Indigenous is via blood quantum requirements that vary from one Indigenous nation to another; a practice that has been contested from its inception. Nevertheless, if one were to apply to most conservative of *contested* U.S. blood quantum requirements to Mexico then the demographics would be more akin to 60% Indigenous and only 30% Mestizo, with the larger share of the remaining 10% being heavily Afro-descendant Mexicans. Arguably, one would have a similar representative sample among “Latin@s” in the United States.

⁹ For path-breaking elaborations of these positions see Nira Yubal-Davis and Floya Anthias, eds, *Woman-Nation-State*; Caren Kaplan, Norma Alarcón and Mino Moallem, eds, *Between Woman and Nation: Nationalisms, Transnational Feminisms, and the State*; and, Sita Ranchod-Nilsson and Mary Ann Tétreault, eds., *Women, State, and Nationalism: At home in the nation?*.

are all imagined as internally cohesive and pure closed systems and their leaders or protectors (from threats both real and imagined) as men in the public realm of politics. The result thus structurally embeds the gendered political ordering of the world-system along the lines of nation-states, with boundaries to be protected by border (or civilian) patrols, so as to ensure that all the necessary *outsides*—immigrants, terrorists, other nations as invaders or “rapists” (of women and/or nations)—and even “extremists” with a shared propter nos stay in “their place”. In doing so, “the protectors” ensure that the insides (nations/women) remain in tact, orderly, secure, sovereign, etc. While the above may sound overdeterministic and points to Emma Perez’ cautionary note that patriarchy leaves few options, as women are notably mythically constructed as static representations to symbolize “the nation”, Zillah Eisenstein reminds us that “live women, rather than mythic ones, can always subvert this representation and the national boundaries constructed by it” (2000, 42).¹⁰ In other words, as in the struggle over the McDonalds Memorial Monument discussed in the previous chapter, the homogenizing and totalizing tendencies of coloniality can be (and are) actively resisted.

I conclude my analysis by positing a challenge to those who wish to work in the interest of justice and confront the constructions and impositions of such representations and asymmetrical binaries in all their relations (gendered, racial, national, etc.). I argue that a shift in approach to such discursive formations is sorely needed. I suggest this can be done by looking precisely at a concrete study of violence on the border, civilian patrols and their discursive strategies, as a way to bridge what is often posited as another asymmetrical and false binary, the intellectual/activist or theory/practice divide. Instead, discursive (re)formulations such as those undertaken by the Minutemen and others illuminate the need for an intellectual/activist engagement, that recognizes the violence of binary divides and acts on them without reifying them in the process, as to do so would itself constitute yet another injustice.

Geographies of War, Then and Now

In January of 1969, Huey P. Newton, co-founder of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, wrote a short article titled, “A Functional Definition of Politics,” in which he stated: “Politics is war without bloodshed. War is politics with bloodshed.”¹¹ Echoing an earlier 1938 statement by Mao Tze-Tung, rather than a mere inversion of Clausewitz’s famous dictum that war is politics by other means, Newton was advancing

¹⁰ Zillah Eisenstein, “Writing bodies on the nation for the globe” in Sita Ranchod-Nilsson and Mary Ann Tétreault, eds., *Women, State, and Nationalism: At home in the nation?* (London: Routledge, 2000), 35-53.

¹¹ Huey P. Newton, “A Functional Definition of Politics: January 17, 1969,” in *The Huey P. Newton Reader*, David Hilliard and Donald Weise, Eds. (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002): 147-149. Newton began elaborating this line of argument as early as 1967, in a shorter piece with a similar title published in the *Black Panther Intercommunal News Service*, v.1 no. 2 (May 15, 1967), 4. These writings prefigure later articulations on politics and war by French theorist Michel Foucault between 1971 and 1976, following his engagement with Black Panther members and visit to Attica prison while in the United States. See Brady Thomas Heiner, “Foucault and the Black Panthers,” *City*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (December 2007): 313-356.

a distinct logic that recognized politics themselves as war, which was to say that when it came to matters of race, a colonial war that was begun when Columbus set foot on the island of Hispaniola has been ongoing such that distinction between politics and war was a misnomer at best. Newton also noted that part of the United States’ obsession with war as exemplified in the insistence on war against everything—War on Poverty, War on Drugs, War on Crime. This obsession, he said, was the reflective of the country’s collective unconscious trying to come to grips with its racial/colonial history and practices. With respect to the United States’ *global* “War on Terror,” following the above, it is possible to argue that Newton had his finger on the pulse of the spatial-temporal workings of the coloniality of racial/colonial power. Nevertheless, the battleground of such “war” has taken on many fronts. While Afghanistan and Iraq have come to symbolize the landscape of this global war, the U-S///Mexico border has also increasingly become a focal point of various politicians and anti-immigrant groups who argue that the defense measures of Homeland Security—as part of the same *war*—requires further militarization of the southern border.

FIGURE 16: This map was circulated online by anti-immigrant groups, and is altered to depict troop movements from Mexico into San Diego County. San Ysidro is notably absent from this map as well, failing to register on either the Government Accountability Office (GAO) or anti-immigrant groups’ radars.



One image that has been actively circulated among civilian patrol group networks, for example, is originally of a map delineating the proposed border wall buildup in San Diego County. The depiction (above), however, has been altered by one of the civilian patrol groups to include arrows signifying troop movements on a military battlefield where the proposed buildup will occur. Yet another civilian patrol group altered an image of a map to suggest other battlefield plans of the “War on Terror” on the U-S///Mexico Border, interestingly at its intersection with proposed legislation at the time. In the photograph below, the collapsing of racial/colonial politics and war is evident as it is an image of Osama Bin Laden, presumably looking at a map of

Afghanistan, but it is instead one made to suggest the U-S///Mexico border, while saying: “Guys, don’t worry all we have to do is get across the border. Then once [26th District Republican Congressman David] Dreier’s amnesty program kicks in we will be both US Citizens and Terrorist!!! (sic) I got it all figured out. Mexico is the key...” It is worthy to note that Congressman Dreier is a Republican who in 2004 ran a difficult campaign amidst allegations that he supported an amnesty program. Those claims, which include among others the map above, led Dreier to take much harsher stances on “illegal immigration,” crime and the “war on terror” in his 2006 reelection bid. However, border enforcement and immigration policy had, at the time of this writing, been generally stalled, in part due first to then-President George W. Bush’s conflicting sets of supporters—restrictionist, anti-immigrant Republicans such as Pat Buchanan on the one hand, and neoliberal, free trade, business interests that rely on immigrant labor on the other. Nonetheless, stricter border enforcement measures without comprehensive immigration reform have since moved along through piecemeal legislation at the federal level, which along with deportations have continued at a faster pace since the election of President Barack Obama. Equally troubling, restrictionist laws at the state and local levels have also proliferated and intensified.¹² In retrospect, however, it is clear now that official policy being ambivalent in either direction, at the time helped give rise to the most recent populist formations of anti-immigrant civilian patrols lamenting what they call a porous U-S///Mexico border. As in Congressman’s Dreier’s shift to harsher policies from 2004 to 2006, the solidification of a push from civilian patrol groups helped to drive “the center” further to the right.¹³

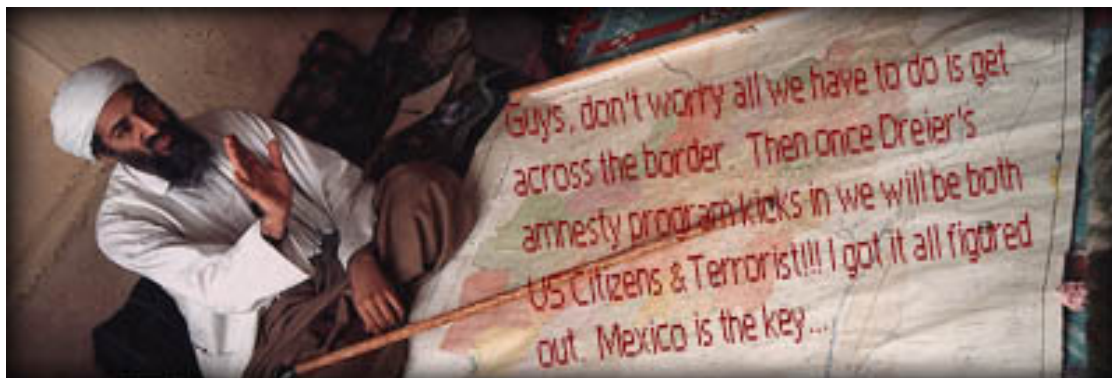


FIGURE 17: Osama Bin Laden pointing at map and speaking of the U.S.-Mexico Border

¹² See Monica Varsanyi, ed., *Taking Local Control: Immigration Policy Activism in U.S. Cities and States*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.

¹³ The civilian patrol movement in many ways can be seen as a pre-cursor to the “Tea Party movement” that has shaped the more recent political transformations. In this chapter, however, I focus solely on the civilian patrols, though the research here, mostly conducted in 2004-2008, can elucidate how the Tea Party gained the political clout it now lays claim on.

The re-emergence of such civilian patrol groups, particularly since September 11, 2001, has also meant an increase in anti-immigrant hostilities, and in some cases, outright physical violence. However, when viewed historically, one sees a continuum emerge: one that geophysically, discursively, as much as bodily, follows a trajectory from early notions of ‘the frontier’ to current images of lawlessness associated with the border in the American imaginary, on through the uneven spoils of globalization that occur in spite of borders said to contain the nation-state (and presumably its violence).

By examining the history of violence in the frontier, as well as the recent patrolling of the U-S//Mexico border by groups such as the Minutemen and the post-9/11 ‘War on Terror’ with its “preemptive strike” paradigm in the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, this chapter asks the following questions: What, if any, are the connections between the violence of the frontier, the ongoing violence on the border and the violence accompanying globalization, particularly in its post-9/11 manifestations? What are the foundations, premises and operative mechanisms of such violences (frontier-border-globalization) and how are they mobilized in San Ysidro?

Proceeding to more contemporary questions regarding the civilian border patrols, what connects contemporary civilian patrols to historical incarnations of vigilante formations? How have the civilian patrols facilitated a shift in the rhetoric around the issue of immigration, as it relates to questions of legality, the inability of the state to “control” its borders, property and citizenship? Specifically, how do the patrols “jump scale” (Smith 1992; Mains 2002), shifting between discourses of *home* and *nation* to (re)spatialize and obscure constructions of an immigration “problem” (Roy 2003, 475), and therefore its root causes and the possibility of seeking fundamental justice and remedies?

I ask the above questions in relation to the resurgence of anti-immigrant vigilante groups patrolling at the U-S//Mexico border by employing Ananya Roy’s conceptualization of “*propertied* citizenship” (2003, my emphasis). I draw from Mark Granovetter’s elaboration of the concept of “embeddedness” (1985) vis-à-vis Karl Polanyi’s “socially instituted processes” (1957), as well as Wayne Cornelius’ usage of the two in his articulation of the “structural embeddedness” of Mexican labor (1998) to ask, are anti-immigrant vigilante groups and the concomitant violence on the border a *structurally embedded* feature of geopolitical boundaries? And, if so, how does their presence legitimate a gendered/racial state?

While a right-wing nativist “intelligentsia,” composed of figures such as Samuel Huntington, Pat Buchanan, and Victor Davis Hanson, has helped fuel the flames of anti-immigrant sentiment, I am mostly interested in interrogating how the “ground troops,” or “Civilian Homeland Defense” as one group calls itself, function to bring about a rearticulation of legality and belonging that extends earlier equations of whiteness and citizenship to *reluctantly* include some within the nation (“assimilated” Latinos or Asian Americans, for example, or here we can think too of the attempts to recruit a cadre of African Americans into several of the civilian patrols) at the expense of those deemed perpetually external to it (foreigners/immigrants/terrorists). It is my contention that “fringe” groups said to exist outside the state—extralegal, extrajudicial elements, such as

the Minutemen, vigilante-types—nonetheless function as an integral, internal mediating mechanism that allows for the state to posture as neutral in the face of such blatant racism. In other words, vigilantes as fringe elements, in their extremism, are, I argue, themselves a *structurally embedded* mechanism, a *triangulated constitutive outside* or *inside/outside*¹⁴ that allows for the legitimizing of a presumably moderate inside, the State, (White 1993), making it seem tolerable, while nonetheless systemically racist. Democracy Now’s Juan Gonzalez’ statement that “racists letters” he has received make Lou Dobbs seem “positively warm and cuddly” exemplifies this point. While Lou Dobbs has vanished from the public eye, he nonetheless has been instrumental in legitimating anti-immigrant sentiment; Dobbs has also been key in ensuring that immigration is perceived as specifically a U-S//Mexico border problem or an anti-Mexican or anti-Latina/o problem despite his claims to the contrary.

Through my research on civilian patrols, this chapter interrogates how citizenship, traditionally equated with formal *membership* in nation-states is rearticulated by civilian patrols as *propertied* citizenship whereby membership is transformed into the embodiment of “the (white) American dream” of (home) ownership, while presumably ‘transient,’ predominantly dark-bodied immigrants, themselves their own separate, second rate sovereigns, become a distinct nation-less or “homeless” in this context; *constitutive outsides*, criminalized and equated to thieves and burglars in someone else’s (American) home/nation and therefore seeking undeserved shelter and privileges at best, criminals at worst.

Structural Embeddedness and Colonial/Racial Objection

Drawing from Karl Polanyi’s (1957) work on “socially instituted processes,” Mark Granovetter (1985, 483-487) offers a critique of what he sees as oversocialized and undersocialized considerations of social structures, particularly though not exclusively, economic structures (i.e. the market). Instead Granovetter articulates how structures are constructed from various social networks that function as structurally embedded intermediary mechanisms (between the micro and the macro), and which themselves constitute the necessary *sociality* of social structures even when articulated as purely asocial, as in the case of “the market” or “the secular bureaucratic state” as autonomous spheres.¹⁵ Wayne Cornelius (1998) draws on Granovetter to interrogate immigrant labor in California and argues such labor is “structurally embedded” in the economy by

¹⁴ The use of “constitutive outside” is used here in the way it is used by Chantal Mouffe, where the real or perceived violations of norms serve to reify the very same norms that are being violated (See also Roy 2003, 464). I choose this term to emphasize the racial and othering nature of anti-immigrant hysteria that in my opinion supersedes what Wayne Cornelius has called and “ethnocultural objection” (2002, 180), a term that I feel does not capture the complexity and historicity of anti-immigrant sentiment.

¹⁵ See also Greta Krippner, et al., “Polanyi Symposium: A conversation on embeddedness,” *Socio-Economic Review* (2004) 2, 109-135, which is an edited transcription of a conversation at an April 2002 Conference “intended to illuminate current debates about the use and abuse of the embeddedness concept” (2004, 109). Conversation participants included Mark Granovetter, Gilian Hart, Giovanni Arrighi, and Michael Buraway, among others.

focusing on two issues. Cornelius points to how employee social networks function to recruit new workers with little or no effort on the part of employers and to the role of immigrant entrepreneurs' practices of hiring from a predominantly immigrant labor pool. In both cases, the demand/supply of immigrant labor, Cornelius argues, remains steady and largely unaffected during fluctuations in the economy (1998, 125-128). While conceding that historically major changes in the economy have affected migrant labor pools, Cornelius suggests recent social networks of immigrant workers and their relationships with (largely) immigrant employers dependent on such labor are "structurally embedded" and as such not dependent on the economy.

A corollary to Cornelius' argument made only four years later, follows that there is an "ethnocultural objection" to immigrants that exists and is itself not subject to shifts in "the market" but dependent on "*noneconomic* factors (especially ethnicity, language an culture)" (2002, 165, 180 original emphasis). In other words, anti-immigrant sentiment exists not just in times of economic hardships, but due to a rejection of migrants more generally. It is from this engagement with structural embeddedness and ethnocultural objection, that I extend Cornelius' argument to say there is something else at play, a dynamic or logic that is itself colonial/racial (as opposed to "ethnocultural") and is also structurally and *historically* embedded in the United States in/through the colonial/racial social structures that preceded the formal founding of the nation.

Further still, this colonial/racial objection doubly incorporates immigrants as a *constitutive outside* that reinforces the sense of a socially constructed inside, an imagined "we" of the nation (Anderson 1983; Huntington 2004a, 2004b), while simultaneously being dependent on vigilante groups or "racial extremists" on the other end as a distinct form of a *constitutive outside* whose (potential for) violence functions to legitimate the systemic inside/center (i.e., the State) or an internal anti-immigrant sentiment of a particularly racial/colonial kind. I trace this argument, by briefly elaborating on the history of a racial exclusion vis-à-vis violence and the role of the frontier as the "out there" that normalized the "here and now" of a colonial enterprise (Little and Sheffield 1983, 796-797) and the subsequent nation-building and "progress," and then turn to the contemporary militarization and violence on the border and the role of civilian patrols such as the Minutemen in maintaining a propertied sense of belonging and citizenship through discourses of nation and home that constitute migrants as outside the home/nation.

Race, Nation and Citizenship: Frontier History and the Question of Belonging

The United States prides itself as having been built on the principles of equality, democracy and justice, yet its trajectory has been a living experiment in ethnocentrism, slavery, land theft, violence, and racism (Feagin 2001). Separating themselves from a regime that did not administer their rights, the "founding fathers"—beyond any simple replication of power and privilege—committed atrocities against various indigenous peoples "in the frontier" and enslaved Africans in the colonies worse than any British act any white American colonists ever endured (Takaki 1979). While Takaki distinguishes two socio-spatial places as sites of violence, the two share their points of reference as

that of the perpetrators of said violence. Central to that moment of “colonial independence” was a select group from the state militias, referred to as the Minutemen, who were said to be prepared to fight for the freedom of the early colonists in a minute’s notice were the British troops to arrive. The militias were themselves composed of “free able-bodied white male citizens” who would provide for an “inherently racial . . . ‘common defence’ . . . in the context of slaveholding on the one hand and frontier settlement on the other” (Jacobson 1998, 25). Thus the militias, and the Minutemen in particular, alongside the ‘Founding Fathers’, played an important part in the founding of the nation and the accompanying national imaginary thereafter.

Upon independence from Britain however, the colonists continued existing practices of slavery, displacement, exploitation and imperialistic expansionism. As such, “Mexicanas/os” in the newly established nation to the (then) west-southwest, who had also just achieved in 1821 their own “colonial independence” from Spain, would also come within the clenching grasp of a merciless westward movement; peace, life, and human dignity, all godly attributes said to guide protestant values, yet unheard of in the wake of what was billed as “God’s will”: Manifest Destiny (Horsman 1986). The push west would eventually result in the deaths and removals (to reservations) of many Indigenous peoples further west and later some to urban centers. Not long after, a war with Mexico would be triggered and the U.S. Census would make its declaration of the “end of the frontier” in 1891 following the massacre of hundreds of Lakota women and children at Wounded Knee (Takaki 1979, 263-264). Frederick Jackson Turner’s proclamation of the significance of the frontier is telling, for the frontier, Turner argued, offered “free land” that was once outside the reach or control of the westward moving “progress” embodied in Euro-american men. He further defined the frontier as “the meeting point between savagery and civilization” (ibid.). The end or taming of the frontier thus signified a savage wilderness or territory “under control”, as Spanish and then briefly Mexican “control” of lands was itself seen as no control at all.

Attitudes of Anglo superiority over Natives (and dark-bodied “Mestizos” by extension) that led to the “civilizing” of the frontier, eventually led to usurpation of nearly half of Mexico’s territory at the time, turning many Mexicans that remained into “foreigners” over night. The violence of the frontier, upon which the American character came to define itself (Slotkin 1973; White 1993) was soon complemented and replaced by violence on/across the newly demarcated border, the geopolitical boundary designating the “limit” of the “tamed” frontier. Many have documented the history and legacy of antagonism and violence since 1848 on the part of “marauding Indians” and “Mexican bandits” on the one hand, and Texas Rangers, Border Patrol and other vigilante-like formations on the other (Mirandé 1987, 112; See also Paredes 1958; De León, 1983). The war between the United States and Mexico and the resulting legacy of antagonism has since left generations of Mexicans, in both nations, resentful of the United States, yet economically dependent on it (Gutierrez 1995). Ironically, the dependence is itself a byproduct of the same U.S. military, political, economic, and cultural invasions that created and still perpetuate the same resentment today, and is most evident in the ongoing history of migration between the two nations.

Although historically the United States' move to have national discourse redefine this country as "a nation of immigrants," did not occur until after the 1960s in response to social movements demands for decolonization,¹⁶ a distinction in practice between legal and illegal immigration has long been used to keep many out. This official distinction, as well as the lack thereof (in practice) has become a vital source of discrimination, particularly for those who enter, or are believed to have entered, the country *from* Mexico, "legal" or "illegal". Despite the questionable effectiveness of current immigration policy, vis-à-vis Cornelius' thesis of structural embeddedness, such policies nonetheless ignore the vital role *foreign* and trade policy play in creating the conditions abroad that inevitably force people to migrate. Rather than addressing such economic complexities that protect and serve to benefit United States interests, immigrants have been historically designated as friends or foes in the United States' imaginary according to economic necessities.

In times of economic turbulence, immigrants are targeted as the perpetrators of most societal ills. But as the economies flourish, so does the *relative* acceptance of immigrants that provide a source of cheap and exploitable labor. While some point to the historical discrimination against, for example, the Irish or the "Okies", as evidence of the overcoming of differences and eventual inclusion into the dominant society, these cases instead illuminate the reasons for my rearticulation of "ethnocultural objection" as "colonial/racial objection". Although Cornelius (2002) has argued that there is an "ethnocultural objection" overriding economic trends, such objection has co-existed with the need and continued use of immigrant labor and political (racial) efficacy in maintaining such order. So even though some groups of people have been historically excluded, only to be later included, the point here is that "later-included" groups that were initially excluded on the basis of ethnicity or culture (even if articulated as "race"), were subsequently included precisely through "race" or their racialization as part of (or into) the dominant "white" racial group, as suggested by the intersection of coloniality and race. That is, given how race operates to order social relations they have *become* "white" despite ethnic differences. Meanwhile, for others (non-whites) their rejection has been and continues to be on the basis of "race" as marked on their bodies, thereby limiting their possibilities of ever attaining any "racial inclusion".¹⁷ Conversely, while some "ethnic" Latinas/os may be included into dominant society, this usually occurs

¹⁶ Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, "Stop Saying This is a Nation of Immigrants!" *Monthly Review Zine* (May 29, 2006) <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2006/dunbarortiz290506.html> [accessed October 18, 2010].

¹⁷ Frantz Fanon's articulation on the "fact of blackness" as an over-determination "from without" speaks to the ways in which conceptions of race are visually marked on dark-bodies. See Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins/White Mask*: (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1967), 116. Similarly, Mary Waters argues "racially" white individuals can *choose* to accentuate their difference (ethnicity), for example on St. Patrick's Day or during Oktoberfest, while those racially categorized as non-white do not share the luxury of such "option," as their bodies are markers of (racial) difference on an everyday basis. See Mary Waters, *Ethnic Options: Choosing Ethnic Identity in America* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990).

only to the extent that they are visually/scopically, that is, “racially” white.¹⁸ Such schizophrenia in popular sentiment and policy can have devastating consequences and complicate corresponding immigrant advocate responses.

In the last five decades following World War II the United States developed another enemy; a new outside was articulated in both fascist Germany, but more substantially and prolonged in communist USSR. The subsequent fall of the Soviet Union, which marked the official end of yet another war, the Cold War, also prompted a search for a “new” enemy/outside to rationalize a multi-billion dollar budget for the Defense industry. As the United States applauded the toppling of the Berlin Wall in 1989, plans for a similar wall, the 15-foot tall steel-fence that now divides the United States and Mexico, were well underway.

Given the importance (to the defense industry) of maintaining a militarized front, at home—keeping an entire nation fear-stricken of an imagined *outside* evil—and abroad to protect United States’ investments, the “enemy” (of focus) constructed to promote the United States’ “national security” spending became foreign “terrorists” years *before* the September 11, 2001 attacks (Hernández 1999, 3). Although current national discourse is one of defending the homeland against terrorism, the stereotypical image of passionately anti-American, dark-haired, turban wearing, bearded Middle Eastern men accelerated the targeting of communities of color and immigrants at large. Despite the Timothy McVeighs, Ted Kazinskys and Nazi insignia-wearing high school kids spraying bullets on school campuses across the country it is still the Rodney Kings, Amadou Diallos, those who drive while black (or brown), and increasingly Muslims or Arabs, who “fit the description.” Accordingly, in response to the bombing of a federal building in Oklahoma—a terrorist attack by a “white” US-born, right-wing “extremist”—Congress passed and then-President Bill Clinton signed into law the Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act in 1996, which among its provisions, targeted both legal and illegal immigrants, requiring immigration officials to detain and deport legal immigrants convicted of felonies, even if they have already served time in prison for the crime (Williams 1996). This law marked the beginning of the current shift and blurring of the anti-immigrant and parallel anti-terrorist discourse. The post-Cold War “enemy” has thus taken various shapes across the United States, varying geographically, depending on and feeding off of the fears of particular populations.

¹⁸ See Daphne Taylor-García, “On Border Subjectivities and Subaltern Temporalities.” Paper Presented at the “Workshop on Philosophy, Theory and Critique in Ethnic Studies,” in association with the “Mapping the Decolonial Turn: Post/Trans-Continental Interventions in Philosophy, Theory and Critique” Conference. University of California, Berkeley April 21-23, 2005 (manuscript in author’s possession). In contrast, see Eva Marie Garroutte, *Real Indians: Identity and Survival of Native America* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2003) as a nuanced account of the intricacies of Native American identity that while brilliantly interrogating issues of belonging, fails to complicate how one can be ‘ethnically’ Cherokee (or Diné, Lakota, Kurok, etc.) at the same time that one is scopically/racially ‘white’ and therefore benefiting of the historically attendant privileges.

The Border Patrol, “Concerned Citizens” and Terrorism

While the latest “war” has manifested itself in various forms, its primary domestic battleground has become the U-S///Mexico border, where immigrants have become the most visible and viable “enemies” and defense against terrorism has translated to defending the border. This fear and *nativist* impulse (Perea 1997) has led to a resurgence of vigilantism or extralegal, as well as legislative or legal efforts against immigrants. Despite the build-up of policing that emerged as a centerpiece of Clinton’s administration with policies such as *Operation Hold the Line* in El Paso, Texas (1993) and *Operation Gatekeeper* in San Diego, California (1994), and which were exacerbated under President Bush and President Obama, anti-immigrant nativists commonly argue the government has failed to do its job of controlling the border. According to Peter Andreas, this is a “nostalgic narrative” that at once imagines a border *once* “under control” and provides a rallying call to “regain control” (2000, 142) as was done with the frontier. While the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the one-time parent agency of the Border Patrol, has been reorganized as U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Enforcement (CBE), and Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) under the new Department of Homeland Security, and it has since become one of the fastest growing federal agencies, some are still not satisfied. As the largest federal law enforcement agency, with 21,00 agents (more than twice its membership numbers in 2001), the Border Patrol is ironically now 52 percent Latina/o. While according to Timothy Dunn the Cold War has shifted to a low-intensity war at the nation’s edge (1996), under the rubric of the new War on Terror what some nativists want is a full-scale militarization of the border. To date some of their wishes have been answered as there are now more Border Patrol agents than ever before, increased use of the National Guard and even several unmanned Predator B drones hovering high above the U-S///Mexico border, yet calls to “regain” control of the border echo louder and louder than ever from San Ysidro to Washington, D.C.

The Border Patrol’s growth over the years has been accompanied by the “help” of several groups of “concerned citizens” some paramilitary in orientation, who have unofficially joined their ranks to assist in “controlling” the border. This is not new; it has been occurring in San Diego since the 1970s, yet a renewed wave began in the mid-1990s. In San Diego, as early as 1994 amidst the Proposition 187 debate—a measure that sought to deny services to “suspected” undocumented migrants—a group calling itself the *Citizen’s Patrol*, began illegally impersonating federal officers as they combed through the San Diego Lindbergh Field International Airport asking Latinas/os for their green cards. Reported attacks by another group, the *Border Militia*, on unsuspecting, would-be border-crossers east of San Diego also signaled that such “vigilante” efforts were on the rise.¹⁹ Chris Simcox, co-founder along with Jim Gilchrist, of the Minuteman

¹⁹ For extensive consideration of vigilante and quasi-vigilante violence on the border and surrounding areas through the 1980’s and 1990’s see Michael Novick, *White Lies White Power: The Fight Against White Supremacy and Reactionary Violence* (1995), especially Chapter 7, “Sin Fronteras: Anti-Immigrant Hysteria and the Rise of the Racist Right,” pp. 167-202; and Steven Bender, *Greasers and Gringos: Latinos, Law, and the American Imagination* (2003), Chapter 8, “No Mexicans or Dogs Allowed: Subhumanity”, pp. 114-153, especially pp. 127-134.

Project interestingly makes this point: “We are three years post September 11, 2001, and still our government is more concerned with securing the borders of foreign lands than securing the borders of the United States” (Minuteman Civil Defense Corps 2005a). Veiled in a newer language of compassion and citizenship, freedom and benevolence, the Minutemen have also gone to great lengths to appear mainstream, citing for example, the likes of President John F. Kennedy on their homepage: “Today, we need a nation of Minutemen, citizens who are not only prepared to take arms, but citizens who regard the preservation of freedom as the basic purpose of their daily life.” They have additionally embraced a language of benevolence towards immigrants in their campaigns against them:

We Minutemen are not content with a solution that rewards those who capitalize on the misery of others. But the status quo is good enough for the so-called “human rights activists” who are not offended when people are treated no better than chattel (Minuteman Civilian Defense Corps 2005c).

The group’s Mission Statement continues,

When Minutemen stand against the open borders coalition, we stand against systematic rape, abuse and exploitation of our fellow human beings. We bring water and food to those who are dying in the desert. We did not invite them, others did; but we will not abandon them to die as their enslavers do (Ibid).

The Minuteman Civil Defense Corps, a reorganization of the initial Minuteman Project of 2005 still however make allusions to the threat of terrorism in their rationale for policing the border, while attempting to connect themselves to the Minutemen of 1775:

Minutemen fought valiantly for liberty across New England and, together with the regular Continental Army, brought an end to British tyranny in the Colonies . . . In recent times, the legacy of the Minutemen has been honored by Americans who share a concern for homeland defense. ... since the infamous terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the term has also been applied to groups of volunteers that seek to protect America’s borders from unwelcome intruders. (Minuteman Civil Defense Corps 2005b)

Although the “enemy” has been defined as “terrorists,” presumably Islamic fundamentalists in the United States’ current imaginary, nativist groups have advocated sealing the border to stop illegal immigration as a way of keeping “terrorists” from coming into the country, implicitly blurring the distinctions between the two, making both traditional call to arms with modified “Uncle Sam Wants You!” posters, alongside new call to arms. For example, the civilian watch group, California Border Watch’s webpage, “Starting Your Own Border Watch Group” exemplifies this trend most clearly:

Starting a Border Watch unit is what every red blooded citizen and *legal alien* should be doing these days. The number one threat to everything you know and love is not so much overseas anymore. It is a porous border! The enemies of our well being (sic). The destroyers of our children's futures are among us, including Al Qaeda, says the rank and file Border Patrol Agents, says union leader TJ Bonner (sic). . . . Al Qaeda is across the street planning the next slaughter of millions and you sit on your hands and watch "I love Lucy" reruns. You need to be on the border with or without Border Watch. Form your own small or large unit and go for it. (California Border Watch 2005)

Making an appeal for presumably fellow "concerned citizens" and "legal aliens" to form their own border watch group, and "go for it", the California Border Watch make it a point to include "legal alien[s]" and jump from "overseas" to the border to "across the street." The nation, in their eyes, is figured here as the home where one watches *I Love Lucy* and the site from which one must seek out the neighbors in the homes across the street as they might be Al Qaeda planning the *next* "slaughter of millions".

While one might wonder where the group gets its figures from, on a different article on their website, "Minuteman Tim Donnelly" gives audiences a colorful idea about how this might happen: "Terrorists who wish to convert by tyranny all who oppose their warped and radical version of Islam are free today to walk across the border unchecked with chemical, biological and even nuclear materials. This is an unacceptable level of national security risk in a post-9/11 world" (Minuteman Civil Defense Corps 2005c). Weapons not known to be in the arsenal of any non-State "terrorist" group are here said to be within walking distance from U.S. homes. While not everyone gets up from sitting on their hands and forms a border watch group, the efficacy of these groups lays in that they have effectively managed to shift the debate over national security following the attacks on September 11, 2001, into a broad argument for securing the U-S//Mexico border from migrants. From their "outside" position as "vigilantes" they have facilitated the move of the political landscape from the center further to the right, legitimating anti-immigrant policy proposals.

Through the opening up of the discursive terrain that equates immigrants with terrorists, anti-immigrant violence since 9/11 has also been directed not only at Muslim or Arab immigrants, but Sikhs, Indians, and Latinos—in all cases regardless of nationality or citizenship status—who increasingly "fit the description," and are confused for or assumed to be "terrorists." This has given rise to a new wave of immigrant bashing through perpetuation of the logic of the frontier: fear of the "outside", fear of the "other", the immigrant, the "terrorist," and any *other* "enemy". While this latest surge of vigilantism has sought to tie itself to the post-9/11 discourse of security and homeland defense, history again show us it is not at all new.

Vigilantism, San Ysidro and the Shifting Discourse of Citizenship

The rise of recent vigilante groups is occurring at the intersections of reactionary nationalist moments (and movements) whose refusal to accept the realities of an increasingly globalized world have galvanized into a populist drive against immigrants. Vigilantes have a long history, both in the United States and Britain, as well as in several other countries, most notably as civilian groups organized to protect communities from robberies (Abrahams 1987). What distinguishes vigilante groups in the United States is the extralegal activities they have engaged in and their specific historical and popular connection to the idea of the western *frontier* and accompanying notions of lawlessness (Brown 1975; Burrows 1976; Rosenbaum and Sederberg 1978; Dimsdale [1866] 1953), both real and imagined. While the frontier has been widely written about, the dominant trope has been that of a wilderness, a territory beyond the reach or control of formal judicial and policing boundaries. According to Abrahams, areas “where the long arm of the law . . . is significantly diluted or resisted have a frontier quality” (1998, 24). Similarly, Johnston has argued that the frontier are territories noted for their “transitory” state, from a “untamed” to a “civilized” form of order and control, as well as between other forms of “social transition” (1996, 796-797). To such spatial definitions, Melbin has added the idea of a temporal frontier vis-à-vis the eventual “settling” of extended hours of the night, upon the end of the settling of territorial frontiers (1978, 5-6). Lastly, Slotkin has theorized the frontier and the hunter-hero as mythical tropes constituted in and through violence for the purposes of a regenerative vindication of the racialized expansionism of the “pioneers” (1973). Nevertheless, Abrahams points to the role vigilantes had as securing the frontier from “hostiles” in the 18th and 19th Century (1998, 78). Interestingly, vigilante groups also had a significant presence in the U.S. Southwest in the years immediately following the 1848 acquisition of more than half of Mexico (Mirandé 1987, 100-116), particularly in Gold Rush California (Senkewicz 1985; Myers Myers 1966) and Texas (De León 1983, 30-33), arguably frontiers themselves.

While many Minutemen identify with the above history, James Huberty also felt a sense of doomsday affiliation paralleling the protagonist of *The Turner Diaries*, as he stockpiled an arsenal of weapons and food before leaving Ohio for Tijuana and then San Ysidro.²⁰ Traditional vigilantism, however, has at times been considered “self-help criminal justice” (Little and Sheffield, 1983, 797) and has largely been about maintaining certain social orders; the question is which social order and in whose interests? (Abrahams, 1998, 74-79) In San Diego, one of the first vigilante formations in the last couple decades can be traced to Ku Klux Klan figureheads, Tom Metzger and David Duke’s Klan Border Watch in 1977 (Novick 1995, 168). Both Metzger (Omi and Winant 1990) and Duke would eventually run for public office. Various other “Light up the Border” groups would follow the Klan Border Watch lead and form groups of their own through the 1980’s and 1990’s.

Legislatively, passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1986 granted what was seen as amnesty to nearly 3 million undocumented migrants, but it

²⁰ Ronald M. Holmes and Stephen T. Holmes, “Understanding Mass Murder: A Starting Point,” *Federal Probation* Volume 56, Issue 1, (March 1992): 53-61, 55.

would also trigger a backlash that would emerge by the early 1990s as represented by California's Proposition 187 focusing on immigrants as the cause of economic burden, which would pass by a two-to-one margin. Paraded as a way to stop to illegal immigration, Proposition 187 would have done nothing to curb immigration, but rather increase the difficulties for migrants already residing in the state by denying essential services and justifying the official labeling of all Latinos as "suspects." Operation Gatekeeper in San Diego was also a part of the backlash as it signaled a shift to prevention by deterrence boundary and social policing in response to the new displacement of agricultural workers in Mexico following the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on January 1, 1994.²¹ At a "Good Fences Make Good Neighbors" rally organized by a group named American Patrol in early 1997, anti-immigrant protestors, including many white senior citizens bused in from as far as Long Beach 120 miles north and wearing red, white and blue attire, placed a large Confederate flag directly on the 15-foot tall steel border fence in San Ysidro (personal observation) as rallygoers shouted down counter-demonstrators "Go back to the stinking swamps that you came from you stinking cockroaches," a line now memorialized in the documentary *New World Border* (Peek Media, 2001).

The latest efforts were galvanized initially in Arizona in 2003 by the Barnett brothers and company—a group of armed ranchers claiming to be protecting their properties from "invading hordes" of undocumented migrants by openly holding them at gunpoint—and later under the banner of the Minuteman Project, guided by the leadership of Jim Gilchrist and Chris Simcox in April 2005 (Southern Poverty Law Center 2005a, 2005b). The media-savvy Minuteman Project would draw a lot of attention and would itself be later reorganized as the Minutemen Civil Defense Corps under the direction of Simcox, following a break with Gilchrist. It nonetheless helped spawn various vigilante groupings of sorts,²² which have been emerging in numerous parts of the border and internally in states far removed from the nations' borders such as Tennessee and South Carolina. Most recently, Minutemen chapters have also attempted to patrol the Northern border with Canada, in the states of Vermont, Montana and Washington in particular (Fahrenthold 2005). However, neither the efforts on the southern, nor on the northern borders have proved as successful as they have claimed, though the extent of their morphing into the Tea Parties remains to be seen.

Amongst the Minuteman offshoots in California, San Diego County became a focal point of activity. Following the media-boasted relative success of the April 2005 launch of the Minuteman Project in Arizona, a group calling itself the California Minutemen would patrol the border east of San Ysidro three months later in Campo.²³ Led by Jim Chase of Oceanside, who openly advocated the carrying of guns by his

²¹ Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper*, 3.

²² Leslie Berestein, "Border-watch squabble" *San Diego Union-Tribune* (July 6, 2005) <http://legacy.signonsandiego.com/news/mexico/tijuana/20050706-9999-1n6watch.html> [accessed October 19, 2010]

²³ Greg Magnus, "Vigilantes at border won't be tolerated," *San Diego Union-Tribune* (July 16, 2005) <http://legacy.signonsandiego.com/news/mexico/tijuana/20050716-9999-7m16border.html> [accessed October 12, 2010].

volunteers, nearly 40 civilian patrol members either sat on lawn chairs or roamed areas of the border during the scorching mid-July heat. On that same weekend, however, two Mexican migrants were shot in the area—one while still in Mexico, only twenty or so yards from the actual border, and the other having already crossed at least 200 yards into the United States.²⁴ While authorities and the *San Diego Union-Tribune* dismissed the shootings as the work of “bandits” in the area who allegedly target would-be crossers, the shooting victims themselves tell another story. According to their accounts, they were both approached in similar ways by what they described as masked gunmen, who upon being only a short distance from them respectively, shot and then ran away into the dark night.²⁵ In neither case were either of the two shooting victims approached and robbed, as has been the case elsewhere on the U-S///Mexico border when “bandits” have indeed attacked and robbed migrants. For his part, Chase denied that any of his men were involved in the shootings and argued instead that his patrols were the ones that were shot at from Mexico. Sheriff deputies were unable to confirm Chase’s story and found no bullet marks or casings anywhere near his encampments.²⁶

Chase had already been the subject of controversy before his mid-July patrol in East San Diego County. Earlier disagreements between Chase and another civilian border patrol crusader, Andy Ramirez, led to a split between the two after Ramirez accused Chase of “condoning the use of snipers” against migrants.²⁷ In his defense, Chase’s choice of words would bear an eerily resemblance to his defense following the July 16th shootings, themselves almost 21 years to the date of the McDonalds massacre: “‘I keep hearing all these things: I’m a rogue. I’m a Rambo. I want to shoot the heads off people,’ Chase said. ‘I’m a flower child compared to Gilchrist and Simcox.’”²⁸ While Chase maintained that in Campo those patrolling the U-S///Mexico border with him had “not discharged one round yet, not even in practice,” he did state that he had come across several other people who were conducting their own patrolling of the border. “The rogue theory is absolutely true,” Chase added.²⁹ Two points are worth noting here, first the idea of “rogues” that Chase points to, and second, the way in which he too tries to differentiate and distance himself from Gilchrist and Simcox. The mention of a “rogue theory” serves to highlight precisely what I have been arguing in this chapter. That is, that the civilian patrols, as do right-wing anti-immigrant politicians, strategically point to an external referent, a *constitutive outside* presumably more “extreme” than themselves, so as to legitimate their own questionable practices. In this case, Chase points to the Minuteman Project co-founders as his own constitutive outside and also acknowledges that the various patrols additionally attract “non-affiliates” or lone individuals out doing their own patrols. In the same instance, however, Chase, as do other civilian patrols, refuses to take any responsibility for the violence that the patrols

²⁴ Leslie Berestein, “2 Mexicans are shot at border area near Campo,” *San Diego Union-Tribune* (July 26, 2005).
http://www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20050726/news_1m26border.html [accessed October 12, 2010].

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Leslie Berestein, “Border-watch squabble.”

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Leslie Berestein, “2 Mexicans are shot at border area near Campo.”

foster at the hands of so-called exceptional “lone wolves,” even if not within their own official volunteer ranks. Of note also, is the Rambo reference, which, in Chapter 2 I argued, was one of the constitutive elements of the “Vietnam lifers” on the border.

Following the split with Jim Chase and the California Minutemen, Andy Ramirez, a Chino-based man who had twice run unsuccessfully in the mid-1990s for the California State Assembly as a Democrat, would announce plans for a second patrol in the San Diego area, this time under the name of yet another civilian patrol organization, Friends of the Border Patrol. Ramirez himself was no stranger to politics, as noted above by his failed electoral bids. Moreover, Ramirez was also a collaborator of Ron Prince, co-author of California’s Proposition 187 in 1994 and through the Friends of the Border Patrol (FBP) began eyeing a run for a federal seat. Nevertheless, the “FBP Border Watch,” as he called the planned patrolling for mid-September 2005, was yet another example of the mixed success of the civilian border patrols, as well as that of the legal observers responding to the border watchers. While claiming over at least 125 people had been trained leading up to the event, and one time claiming as many as 2000 supporters, “Ramirez said that the only armed participants [would] be active or retired law enforcement.”³⁰ On the eve of the event, Ramirez further claimed 400 supporters would be present. The group Friends of the Border Patrol purposely chose the anniversary of Mexico’s colonial independence, September 16, for their rally and began with a press conference in San Ysidro, to then later patrol east of San Ysidro in Calexico.³¹ The Friends of the Border Patrol would subsequently cancel their activities planned for that weekend only hours after it was scheduled to begin when only about 20 to 30 volunteers showed up.³² Among those that did show up were Ron Prince and Donna Tisdale, an East County San Diego resident who had been involved with civilian border patrol efforts before.³³ Ramirez would later claim that the dismal showing at the San Ysidro//Tijuana border on September 16, 2005, did not result in the cancellation of activities as previously claimed, but rather in their group “going underground” and continuing their patrols on privately-owned land in the Boulevard area where Tisdale owned a large ranch (Bennett 2005).

Despite the low turnout, American Civil Liberties Union, Border Angels and other legal observers (myself included) were still out in full force to monitor for any civilian patrol activity. While the belief that their presence, along with the lack of FBP volunteers, led to cancellation of the border watch, and subsequent celebrations among the observers, the latter ended abruptly when roving patrols of observers later reported that there was an immigrant reportedly shot out in the Boulevard area near the Tisdale ranch. The celebration was short-lived, as questions surfaced over whether this was the

³⁰ Leslie Berestein, “Group has 125 trained to watch along border,” *San Diego Union-Tribune* (September 17, 2005) <http://legacy.signonsandiego.com/news/mexico/tijuana/20050917-9999-2m17watch.html> [accessed October 12, 2010].

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Leslie Berestein, “Border-watch group reaches crossroads,” *San Diego Union-Tribune* (September 19, 2005). http://www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20050919/news_1m19border.html [accessed October 12, 2010].

³³ Leslie Berestein, “Group has 125 trained to watch along border.”

work of the Ramirez and the FBP volunteers or “rogues”, which were potentially still out patrolling. In either case, the fact remained that even if the FBP event was cancelled, it still created the possibility for yet another violent attack on migrants in the area.

The weekend ended on a somber note. Observers returned home but only for temporary rest since another group, the Simcox-affiliated Minuteman Civil Defense Corps Inc., was next in line.³⁴ Their leader Tim Donnelly had already announced another patrol, this time in Jacumba for the weekend of October 2nd, 2005, which in San Ysidro and San Diego more broadly had long been commemorated by the local Mexican community as the anniversary of the Massacre of Tlatelolco in Mexico City on the eve of the 1968 Olympics. The third patrol in the San Diego area in less than four months went largely without a hitch, as civilian patrols and observers again roamed the rugged terrain of East County.³⁵ Meanwhile, Ramirez and his Friends of the Border Patrol sought out real estate to purchase near the border for a permanent training and patrolling encampment for border watchers.³⁶ Amidst the growing tension in the summer and fall of 2005 in San Diego, a Border Patrol agent shot and killed a migrant while trying to cross the border just east of the port of entry in San Ysidro.³⁷ It is in this context of state-sanctioned and extralegal violence that California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger welcomed the “Minutemen” border watchers to his state.

‘Block by Block’ and Back Again

One crucial distinction that the recent Minuteman craze has had from previous vigilante groups is their carefully crafted discourse, irrespective of their actual activities, as noted by an American Civil Liberties Union, American Friends Service Committee and Project Witness documentary, *Rights on the line: Vigilantes on the Border* (2005).³⁸ The “new” incarnations of Minutemen have gone to great lengths to appear mainstream, citing even Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on their homepage.

³⁴ Leslie Berestein, “Border watch planned for East County,” *San Diego Union-Tribune* (September 30, 2005).

http://legacy.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20050930/news_2m30watch.html [accessed October 11, 2010].

³⁵ Chris Moran, “Volunteers begin border watch,” *San Diego Union-Tribune* (October 2, 2005). <http://legacy.signonsandiego.com/news/mexico/tijuana/20051002-9999-1m2border.html> [accessed October 12, 2010].

³⁶ Leslie Berestein, “Border watch group could rent or buy Campo home,” *San Diego Union-Tribune* (September 30, 2005).

http://www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20051021/news_7m21property.html

³⁷ “Man is killed by agent near border,” *San Diego Union-Tribune* (October 2, 2005).

http://legacy.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20051022/news_6m22briefs.html [accessed October 12, 2010].

³⁸ The documentary and related materials are available online through Project Witness at the following URL:

<http://www.witness.org/option,com_rightsalert/Itemid,178/task,view/alert_id,43/>.

The language of terrorism and that of compassion for immigrants has been paradoxically accompanied by an inclusive discourse claiming acceptance and concern for other *American* “minorities”: “Something has to be done about the unsecured border,’ said one speaker. “Take back Los Angeles block by block. They're going to run all the Americans out of there, Blacks, and whites, everybody who is not Hispanic and there are a lot of good American Hispanics who feel the same way I do.” (Johnson 2005). The issue of belonging thus inevitably is brought back to a re-articulation of citizenship as one of ownership. Taking back Los Angeles “block by block” marks a jumping of scale from the nation to the neighborhood and back again, in which the “sanctity” of the home and its surrounding blocks must be protected at all costs by securing the U-S//Mexico border. Blacks and “American Hispanics” are included in the above equation, though somewhat reluctantly, pointing to the ambivalence that the civilian patrols have themselves with non-white peoples generally.

The discourse of home and immigration as home invasion is even more evident in the following comments by Minutemen supporter John Main at a Sacramento rally in support of a California Border Police initiative: “you keep *your* door locked, if you have a welcome mat, that means you have a right to choose who comes in and who doesn't” (Sacramento Bee 2005). California Border Watch leader Britt Craig echoed the above sentiments: “It's a matter of sovereignty,” said Mr. Craig, . . . “If you don't claim your right to real estate, you lose it” (Washington Times 2005). Perhaps one of the more glaring examples of such scale-jumping and the use of gendered discourse is the formation of a group that came together as MAIA, or Mothers Against Illegal Aliens. Their emblem reads: “Protect our Children, Secure the Border.” Here, the protection of the nation, its social fabric, and its borders is equated with the need to “protect our children” in the home that is imagined as under threat of invasion.

While the border has become the spatial manifestation of the contest over immigration, it is the broader imagined home (i.e., the nation) that has become the axis of such debate and increasingly violent confrontations on the border. Recently, the Southern Poverty Law Center reported that Sheriff Robert De La Garza of Goliad County, Texas, upon visiting a local offshoot of the Minuteman Project was alarmed at their questions of him as Sheriff. De La Garza recounted how a “trigger happy” crowd's comments were dominated by questions looking for excuses and justifications to be able to *legally* shoot immigrants in “self-defense”:

‘They kept talking a lot about shooting illegals, and what they could and couldn't do to make it self-defense of life or property,’ De La Garza said. ‘One woman kept asking, "Well, what if they reach for a rock, can we shoot them then? What if they're on private land? Can we shoot them for trespassing?"’ (2005b)

Whether the woman cited above was a member of Mothers Against Illegal Aliens remains unclear, but the idea of “trespassing” into the nation/home should not. Barbara Perry points to the victimization and “revictimization” endured by migrants at the hands of both Border Patrol agents and vigilantes alike “because of their particular fears of reporting abuses by civilians and state agents” (2000, 220). It is precisely this

victimization and consequent fear of and the inability to seek due remedy that casts migrants, both “legal” and “illegal”, as always outside. Yet their presence to fill the necessary labor needs of the nation, maintains them physically present while socially external, and therefore a constitutive outside that reinforces the imagined nation.

In a similar light, the structural embeddedness of immigrant labor, despite an ethnocultural objection (Cornelius 1998, 2002), or rather a racial/colonial objection, has served to normalize an anti-immigrant sentiment and complimentary civilian patrols patrolling such social boundaries, through different historical moments. While occasionally discussed as spontaneous citizen formations, many of the group leaders and rank and file members are longtime law enforcement officers themselves, or have other related experience, background or political aspirations. In his book on the original Minutemen, David Hackett Fischer states, “The muster of the Minutemen in 1775 was the product of many years of institutional development...it was also the result of careful planning and collective effort. By the time of the Revolution, Massachusetts had been training, drilling, and improving their militia for well over a hundred years” (1994, 151). Similarly, the recent Minuteman Project and all its affiliate and non-affiliate offshoots must not be understood in a vacuum.

Instead, like the Vigilance Committees of San Francisco in the 1850s, which sought to overthrow what they saw as a corrupt government, the long-term planning and engagement with mainstream politics reveals that they are not so “outside” the mainstream or extreme even though constructed as such. A nuanced look at the current “vigilante groups” and the run for office of Minuteman Co-Founder Jim Gilchrist or of Friends of the Border Patrol’s Andy Ramirez in the mid-1990s, as well as talk of Chris Simcox also considering running for office strikes of some stunning parallels to the vigilance committees of the 1850’s and of Metzger’s and Duke’s attempts at office in the 1970’s and 1980’s. In other words, they are very much a part of the political landscape even if not recognized as such. In fact, in another example, an October 11, 2005 Letter to Editor of the *Washington Post* pointing to the violence the civilian patrols have engaged in or triggered (Hernández 2005), received an immediate response by Simcox four days later (2005) who made an effort to establish how the Minutemen efforts have influenced policymakers to take action, thereby attempting to foreground their sense of civic duty and a *relative* “inside” position. Ironically, President George W. Bush would coincide with some immigrant rights advocates in calling the civilian patrols vigilantes. It was then-President Bush’s comments that actually triggered my interest in this line of argument, as it forced me to ask: what does it mean or what is the function of the civilian patrols if President Bush is referring to them as vigilantes?

Still largely constructed as and considered extremists or outsiders their efforts thus serve to rationalize increasingly anti-immigrant policies in Congress, both by their own accord and by what we have seen in the last several years. As Susan Mains has argued “While immigration concerns are made more concrete by focusing on physical sites of border crossing, these sites are frequently signifiers for much broader, wide-ranging, and punitive efforts to police national identity” (2002, 211). The efforts of the Minutemen have indeed proven to construe a particular image of national identity by spatializing immigration as solely a border, and therefore, national security issue, at the

expense of a larger (inter)national discussion about the root causes of immigration, not only from Mexico to the United States, but from the larger Global South to the Global North. While the border has become the spatial manifestation of the contest over immigration, it is the broader imagined masculinized home (i.e., nation) that has underpinned such debate and increasingly violent confrontations on the border.

Conclusion

So who are the Minutemen? Who are those engaged in the civilian patrols? Are they all depressed unemployed angry white men who see themselves as victimized by Mexican and Latina/o migrants who they think are taking their jobs? Are they like James Oliver Huberty ready to shoot at people at a local McDonalds at a minutes' notice? The answers to these questions are yes and no, as not all are poor and unemployed. In fact, a number are either current or ex-military, current or ex-law enforcement officers; some are retired and some are unemployed; some are professionals and some are blue-collar workers; most are male and white, but many are female and some are even Latinas/os or African Americans. The relatively diverse profile (economically and occupationally-speaking, less so racially) of these civilian border patrols reveal precisely that anti-immigrant sentiment or colonial/racial objection is not necessarily subject to the fluctuations of the economy, and like demand for migrant labor, is also a violent yet structurally embedded mechanism of the interstate system mediated by the U-S///Mexico border.

As such, it follows that if immigrant advocates continue to discursively construct the racism of vigilante formations as “extremism” and “outside-ness”, then they too implicitly corroborate in the legitimating of a corresponding “inside” to which the vigilante groups function as a constitutive outside; one that differs in form, yet not in substance or in logic. Instead, immigrant advocates should proceed from the understanding that the so-called “fringe” groups are indeed structurally embedded in the logic of home/nation—the annoying cousin if you will, but nonetheless a family member that informs the broader spectrum of mainstream politics—Democrat, Republican, or Green, respectively yet all rooted in the same western secular liberal episteme of modernity/coloniality.

Ironically, many of the efforts to respond to the civilian patrols have manifested themselves in equally masculinist ways, with well-meaning immigrant advocates yelling at the top of their lungs challenging the Minutemen-types to fistfights or commenting on their groups' moniker as reflective of their lack of sexual potency. This scenario raises the question, then, of how to proceed against the civilian patrols in ways that do not reproduce the same entangled dynamic of presumably strong virile and “masculine” men on the border protecting seemingly weak and defenseless women/nations, in this case embodied in some of the migrants the civilian patrols pursue? In other words, if we are to work towards “a just world” and one without borders, then we must inevitably revisit not simply the constructions of particular borders in which such debates play out such as the U-S///Mexico border, but the premises, the logics and the episteme that underpin them. That is, that we must interrogate the division of the globe into separate

and supposedly independent nation-state units, the interstate system of the current historical system, or the modern/colonial, capitalist, patriarchal world-system more broadly, while being intellectually, politically, and ethically committed to not reproducing any of coloniality's power-laden hierarchies of social relations. How, one might ask? A few examples come to mind.

First, by finding practical, anti-sexist tactics such as those that were being used to disrupt the activities of the civilian patrols: the use of radios to throw off their motion/sound detecting systems. And, on a discursive level, another example is cartoonist Lalo Alcaraz' parody of the historical amnesia of the question, "Why do they hate us?" after September 11, 2001 and the response sought by images of the twin towers with the words "Never Forget" above them. Instead, Alcaraz' image in solid red and black includes the words "Never Forget" but the towers are replaced by two tee-pees, as it asks of us to indeed not forget, yet forces the viewer to expand the spatial and temporal dimensions of our own historical memory. I am reminded too of Boaventura do Souza Santos' call for us to have an expanded notion of the present, not as past, as in a series of temporally distant events, but as a "long present" so as to make better sense of our social reality today in a way that is keenly aware of how patterns of colonial/racial objection playing out on the border and elsewhere have a long history as they constitute modernity/coloniality's raced/gendered underside.



FIGURE 18: Lalo Alcaraz' syndicated cartoon following the attacks of September 11, 2001.

To have an understanding of a "long present" is to work against the workings of epistemicide that normalize national-territorial boundaries and construct the United States as a nation of immigrants by erasing the indigenous presence of the land in similar ways to the erasing of different knowledge and mourning systems, or to the

cartographic erasing of San Ysidro from maps of San Diego at the very same time that it is hypervisible in the contest over “illegal” immigration. Moreover, to maintain a vision of a long present against the workings of coloniality is to make visible the contradictions expressed by the U-S///Mexico border, even as they manifest themselves so explicitly as to make one desensitized. While San Ysidro and U-S///Mexico border residents have long resisted coloniality, be it in the form of territorial claims, racial or cultural violence, in the next chapter I turn to other *fronteriz@s* who have sought to *think, write, and produce* from the border itself as a way of [countering erasure and] bringing the long present into being.

CHAPTER FOUR

SONIC GEOGRAPHIES:

WE DIDN'T CROSS THE BORDERS, THE BORDERS CROSSED US

What must be done is to restore this dream to its proper time, and this time is the period during which eighty thousand natives were killed—that is to say, one of every fifty persons in the population; and to its proper place, and this place is an island of four million people, at the center of which no real relationship can be established, where dissension breaks out in every direction, where the only masters are lies and demagogu.

-Frantz Fanon (1967)

With strong whirling sounds, increasingly louder and louder, the surrounding brush violently forced to sway from side to side, nearly uprooted, the helicopter hovering overhead nears and you hear the desperate words,

“Levantate compadre /
¿Que pasa? /
¿Oyes ese zumbido? /
Si, compadre... /
es el helicoptero... /
Métete debajo de esos matorrales / de volada, apurate. /
Híjole, se me hace que ya me agarraron /
Eso es lo de menos compadre / se me hace que ya nos llevo... /
la que nos trajo compadre.”

(Get up compadre / Do you hear that noise? / Yes, compadre / it's the helicopter... / Get under those bushes / quickly, hurry up. / Oh shit, I think they got me... / that is the least of it, compadre / I think the one that's taking us / is the one brought us here, compadre.)

Such words are the opening exchange to the 1998 Tijuana NO hit song, “La Migra” (The Border Patrol) whose land and soundscape bears an eerie resemblance to the terrain just blocks from my childhood home near the Tijuana River Estuary, where the metal wall extends into the Pacific Ocean, enabling a rhythmic rumbling sound as wave after wave crashes up against the corrugated steel that makes up the U-S///Mexico border in the area once known as Friendship Park.

Elsewhere, the swooshing sounds of strong currents in a torrential river gush through the trenches and valleys of the Rio Grande basin, increasing in strength and force as they empty into the Gulf of Mexico, and in early June of 2000, to the fleeting sound of “agarra la cuerda...” (Grab the rope...) the rapid waters swallow two migrants attempting to cross the border near Brownsville, Texas. Much like the San Ysidro

McDonalds Massacre in 1984, this horrifying scene and accompanying screams and gasps of worried onlookers and attempted rescuers are all caught on a news reporter's camera and broadcast in national Spanish-language news for days to come, making *local* U.S. news only in passing. While by far not the only drowning victims in that region of the border, nor the only ones caught on camera, one could hear the last gulp of air into the drowning victim's lungs and hear the subsequent bubbles audible to those on the riverbanks.¹ Such are the sonic geographies etched on the landscape of walls and rivers along the U-S///Mexico border through long histories of state-sanctioned and extralegal violence. In this chapter, my aim is to make audible the materiality of the U-S///Mexico border and to understand the contested nature not only of the region itself but also of various narratives that have sought to make sense of the borderlands. The purpose of engaging in such a study, with the structural location of San Ysidro in mind, is to better understand the implications and stakes of the salient debates around the spatial and temporal frameworks used in the study of the U-S///Mexico border through a consideration of "border music." Specifically, through a close reading of three songs—Tijuana NO's "Stolen at Gunpoint" featuring Kid Frost (1998); Los Tigres del Norte's "Somos Mas Americanos" (2001); and, Aztlán Underground's "Decolonize" (1998)—I will argue for a distinct spatialtemporal frame than the dominant focus on 1848 in much Chicana/o Studies and border studies literature. A different spatialtemporal frame elucidates the lived experiences of *fronteriz@s*, and in turn, dislodges San Diego's designation as a border city.

If we are to fully appreciate the soundscapes outlined above, we must consider how border theory has been approached given the geopolitics of knowledge, or where one is "thinking from" in relationship to power. In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) characterized the border region as an open wound, "una herida abierta where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country—a border culture" (3). Forged in blood, Anzaldúa's borderlands, like those I have known growing up in San Ysidro, are grounded in the historical and material realities of the present day 2,000 mile geopolitical divide, but extend to include many borders—racial, sexual, linguistic, psychological, among others. That is, the borderlands that define and divide places and populations, while at once "a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary" (*ibid*) are also very real material sites of conflict. Thinking, feeling, and speaking from "this thin edge of barbwire" she calls home, Anzaldúa points to the borderlands' many inhabitants as those who borders fail to easily define: the squinted-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the mulatto, the mongrel, the mestiza, etc. Following Anzaldúa, a broad array of scholars have drawn on her work and deployed the trope and metaphor of "the border" in the service of highlighting multiple crossings, hybridities, and borders in their respective objects of study and disciplines.² Often missing in such invocations of Anzaldúa, however, are the material histories and legacies

¹ The drowning is considered in depth in the gripping documentary *New World Border* (Dir. Casey Peek, 2001).

² Examples of such use of "border"/"borderlands" abound. A review of various fields, from Anthropology to Queer Theory, Film Studies and Literary Criticism to History to name a few, will yield resonances of Anzaldúa.

of violence constitutive of her articulation as critique of modernity's juridical-political partitioning of the globe into geopolitical units (nation-states) reflected in her graphic depiction of the "staking [of] fence rods in [her] flesh" as a way of visualizing the embodied experience of colonization.

The Borderlands Academic Complex and Cultural Production

While the metaphor of the border has generated several insightful analyses, there are some applications of it that instead obfuscate the workings of power and violence formative in the work of Anzaldúa. An example of the often-problematic uses I refer to as the *borderlands academic complex* can be found when, for example, Josh Kun writes of "the aural border" as one of mixing, hybridity and fluidity of languages, genres and sounds, seemingly devoid of a conflictive history that informs such mixing.³ By borderlands academic complex, I mean politically safe and institutionally supported adaptations of Anzaldúa's border that, even if inadvertently, conceal power. Institutional support is received through acclaim and circulation, a hegemonic counterinsurgency strategy whose function is to dislodge its counterpart, an emerging discourse on violence and the militarization of the border that began gaining currency in the mid-1990's.⁴ To be clear, my argument is not reducible to a humanities/social science divide. José David Saldívar's "transfrontera contact zone," for example, draws on Mary Louise Pratt to make colonization visible and is thus cultural studies work in the tradition of Anzaldúa.

Rather than examining the cultural production of, for example, Pepe Villarino on the San Ysidro Massacre or of Chunky Sanchez on the community takeover and creation of Chicano Park in 1970,⁵ Kun points to *Pocha Nostra Productions*, and suggests "the border is mobile and fluctuating, no longer bound to one specific geographic configuration; it belongs to a continental map of communities in motion and cultures in contact."⁶ For Kun the "musical and technological mergers" embodied in the performances of Guillermo Gomez-Peña and the "hybridized and recycled" sounds of Rock en Español at the heart of Kun's work, stand in contradistinction to the sonic geographies along the U-S///Mexico border in familiar shrieks of desperation in response to the state-sanctioned violence of policing movements of people across man-made geopolitical boundaries or the extralegal violence of the civilian patrols. Moreover, the only thing visibly recycled in San Ysidro is the corrugated steel landing mats once used in Operation Desert Storm in Iraq that now make up the bulk of the U-S///Mexico border wall in the area. Void in much of the work of the "borderlands academic complex" and its many practitioners, beyond just Kun, are the embodied understanding and intersections of violence and colonization central to Anzaldúa's theorizations.

³ See Josh Kun, "The Aural Border" *Theatre Journal* 52 (2000): 1–21.

⁴ Tim Dunn, *The Militarization of the U.S. Mexico Border, 1978-1996: Low Intensity Doctrine Comes Home*; and, Joseph Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the 'Illegal Alien' and the Making of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary*.

⁵ See for example, the documentary *Chicano Park*. Produced by Mario Barrera and Marilyn Mulford. Directed by Marilyn Mulford. New York: Cinema Guild, 1989.

⁶ Josh Kun, "The Aural Border" *Theatre Journal* 52 (2000): 15.

For their part, corridos have long narrated and made the border audible to listeners both near and far from the 2000-mile line.⁷ Yet, in seeking to archive a genealogy or border soundscape, “understanding the aural border as both an archaeology and a genealogy of ‘subjugated knowledges’ or ‘disqualified knowledges’ that unveils the many multivalent ways the very idea of the border gets constructed and disseminated through sound and music,” Kun only briefly points to corridos.⁸ While, to his credit, this can be read as wanting to expand the scope of what is understood as border music, since corridos have long held this distinction, his frame of reference of rock en español as “transborder performance” reveals his conceptualization of “the border” vis-à-vis the borderlands academic complex. The latter, itself functioning to “border” actual lived experiences, cultural and knowledge production along the national-territorial divide.

In a widely read article, “The Aural Border” (2000), Kun opts for the hybrid sounds of rock en español and the audial tracks accompanying the performances of Guillermo Gomez-Peña and *La Pocha Nostra* collective to mark a future where the border is erased through the unrelenting mixing of peoples, cultures and sounds. He argues “that in terms of musical geography and sonic migration, the ‘borderless future’ that Gomez-Peña performs and theorizes has already been realized by the music of rock en español itself, which has been a key point of cultural contact—a sort of musical hyperspace—between Latino/a communities on both sides of the border.”⁹ It is important to note that the performance art and written work of Guillermo Gomez-Peña (along with that of Nestor Garcia Canclini) has, indeed, been cited by some authors such as Victor Ortiz-Gonzalez¹⁰ as illustrative of a depoliticized claim to cross-border hybridity that I denote as the orientation of the borderlands academic complex. However, Gomez-Peña’s work is much more complex and exemplary of the constant tension between the desire for a borderless world and the stark material realities of the actual existence of border walls written in violence. As early as 1990, in *Border Brujo* for example, Gomez-Peña’s science fiction-inspired performance tells of a prophecy of the future existence of maquiladoras built right on the border, bisected by the national-territorial boundary itself, with the factory floors on the Mexican side and corporate headquarters on the United States side. In this “twin-plant,” Mexican laborers are relegated to the assembly line south of the border, while managers and supervisors are able to cross freely into the United States and Mexico. While this scenario has yet to happen, and the *Las Americas* mall actually comes close to the idea heralded by Gomez-Peña, what is key here is that like Anzaldúa, Gomez-Peña also does not lose sight of the materiality of geopolitical and economic difference signaled by the border. So, while rock en español, and other musical formations such as the Monterrey-based rap of Control Machete or the ska-punk-rock sounds of Maldita Vecindad are indeed as “transnational” as Nike or McDonalds, I am instead interested here in tracing a different genealogy or sonic geography made audible not by *mobility* across borders or hybridity at borders as posited by Kun (and other members of the borderlands academic complex), but by their rooted-ness and insistence

⁹ The corrido is most commonly known as a type of popular folk ballad made famous during the Mexican Revolution. It exists primarily along the U.S.-Mexico border region, although other variations exist in numerous regions throughout Mexico.

⁸ Josh Kun, “The Aural Border,” 1.

⁹ *Ibid*, 21.

¹⁰ See Ortiz-Gonzalez, *El Paso*, especially the Introduction.

the materiality of the border and on *another cartography and calendar of knowledge* altogether.¹¹ In other words, I am interested in how anti-border musics reconceptualize the inherited spatialtemporal frames of the modern/colonial nation-state through a focus on the embodied experience of crossing borders and being crossed by borders. What then does a different cartography and calendar of knowledge sound or look like? In answering this question, corridos enter and are woven through this account, and merit consideration, but the story and song does not end there.

Corridos and Chicana/o Cultural Production

Focusing on cultural production as knowledge production, in this chapter I engage a few corridos and other border music to interrogate border violence and the subjugation of non-european knowledges into the realm of “culture” and “folklore.”¹² I posit the early to mid 1990’s as central to understanding shifts in Chicana/o popular culture and cultural production, as a burgeoning recession gave rise to a renewed wave of anti-immigrant sentiment felt most prominently in California’s Proposition 187 in 1994, long before the creation of the Minutemen Project or the Tea Parties. The ascendancy of political mobilizations among California’s Chicana/o-Latina/o youth in this period also corresponded with the three main songs that form the subject of this chapter—and which themselves were arguably inspired and reflective of the political currents at the time. California’s Proposition 187 in particular is often held as the prime catalyst for a renewed wave of Chicana/o cultural production. Instead, I argue a distinct spatialtemporal frame foregrounding 1992 and the protests of quincentennial celebrations of Columbus’ voyage provide a crucial lens for understanding cultural production in the borderlands. I thus consider the creation of the U-S//Mexico border as one interface of an interstate system and its current militarization—both processes constituted in violence—as the sociopolitical and historical context marking the borderlands as a contested terrain and site of oppositional “cultural” production as knowledge production.

Various types of “folk” music, according to many scholars, also serve an important role in the conveying of popular happenings to a broad audience, and constitute a form of knowledge.¹³ Corridos have equally been long noted as the “informative press of the

¹¹ My usage of this phrase is twofold. First, it is a reference to Africana Philosopher Lewis Gordon and the Caribbean Philosophical Association’s call for a “shift in the cartography of reason” as a decolonial project rooted in epistemic shifts such as interventions like Ethnic Studies. Second, it refers to Subcomandante Marcos’ attempt to sketch out “cartography and calendar” of theory, difference, resistance, land, fear, memory, and war, in a seven-part series of talks titled “Neither center, nor periphery” at the Coloquio Internacional Andres Aubry in December of 2007.

¹² Elsewhere, I interrogate three “incidents” marred by violence and the consequent corridos that narrate the events, to illustrate how corridos, in serving as oppositional accounts, are not simply folklore or “cultural” production, but articulations of subaltern knowledge as an underlying logic and sense of knowing (Hernández 1999).

¹³ See Angela Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* (New York: Pantheon, 1998); Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap music and black culture in contemporary America* (Middletown: Wesleyan university Press, 1994); and Clyde Woods, *Development Arrested: Race, power, and the blues in the Mississippi Delta* (London: Verso, 1998).

people” (Mendoza, 1954), yet the predominantly male heterosexualist positionality of most corridistas has often reproduced impingements upon Mexicana/Chicana subjects.¹⁴ Not surprisingly, such masculinist cultural production often mirrors Mexicano/Chicano political and scholarly emphasis on a presupposed universal subject, assumed to be male, able to enter into “contract among equals” (other males), reflected in attention to 1848 and The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo as birth of the Chicano as historical subject. This position is ironically mirrored in much of the discourse of immigrant rights’ advocates, including those responding to the civilian border patrols in San Diego County, who often are content with simply invoking the territorial claim of a previous colonial independent nation-state as the basis of defending migrants’ rights. This can be seen most clearly, for example, in pronouncements such as, “This used to be Mexico!” that I often witnessed when I was among the legal observers shadowing the civilian patrols. Needless to say, the above position also stands in stark contrast to the embodied understanding of colonization etched on the female body as noted above by Anzaldúa and other Chicana feminist scholars who have also drawn on the U-S//Mexico border as a source of political and intellectual inspiration.

As such, Norma Alarcón has argued that claims to any nation-state (Chicano or otherwise) are limited for “the juridical text is generated by the ruling elite, who have access to the state apparatus through which the political economy is shaped and jurisprudence is engendered, whereas representations in the cultural text may include representations generated by herself [raced/sexed woman]” (2003, 357). Inevitably then, for Alarcon nationalist or nation-state projects relegate women to the “home” or the private realm much like the discourse of the civilian border patrols both consciously and unconsciously did, without allowing the means or spaces for the nations/women to voice themselves. It follows from Alarcón then that other transnational sounds as cultural texts have also shaped Mexicana/o and Chicana/o experiences, and ways of relating such experience, despite receiving less scholarly attention.¹⁵

While recognizing border music’s historically masculinist/paternalistic limitations—I nonetheless argue for the possibility of corridos and other cultural texts of providing alternative gendered ways for explaining how it is we come to know our social world. I draw on Maria Lugones’ call for a “decolonial feminism” that recognizes the possibility of “male” feminist positionings and articulations through her critique of a rigid male/female binary constituted in what she calls a colonial/modern gender system.¹⁶ In short, I argue cultural texts’ ways of conceptualizing, creating, and conveying the world around them provide alternative epistemic views and counterdiscourses that simultaneously articulate and disrupt raced/gendered violence constitutive of la frontera. This is the case, in the face of the juridical text and the dominant state-figured narrative that foregrounds a naturalized sense of the

¹⁴ See Maria Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido: A Feminist Analysis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); and Emma Perez, *The Decolonial Imaginary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999)

¹⁵ A few exceptions include Saldívar, Calderon, Kun, Deborah Vargas, Michelle Habell-Pallán, and Victor Viesca.

¹⁶ See Lugones, “Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System” *Hypatia* 22.1 (Winter 2007): 186-209.

presupposed boundary for the sake of “national security” and protecting of the national interests in San Ysidro and elsewhere, however imagined or dictated by the necessity of the times. I am referring here to how the events of the 11th of September in 2001, Operation Gatekeeper before or even Operation Wetback much before both, for example, have served to further “naturalize” an otherwise unnatural boundary. A related argument in this chapter then is that the centrality Chicano male scholars give to 1848 reproduces logics complicit with colonization as lived through the raced/sexed body.

In this chapter, I am interested in how the border itself is figured not only in corridos, but also in sonic geographies of various (cross)-border or “transnational” groups that cater to Mexican, Chicana/o and other audiences alike. My analysis of the above songs points to limits and implications of the borderlands academic complex. In particular, I focus on three tracks that not only “cross” the border or make the Rio Grande and the helicopters hovering over San Ysidro audible, but that rather take a firm political, intellectual, and indeed ethical stand against both the U-S///Mexico border and the modern/colonial juridical concept of nation-states that boundaries demarcate more broadly. Specifically then, through a close reading of three songs—Tijuana NO’s “Stolen at Gunpoint” featuring Kid Frost (1998); Los Tigres del Norte’s “Somos Mas Americanos” (2001); and, Aztlán Underground’s “Decolonize” (1998)—I attempt to delineate what I call an anti-border politic that places bordered violence at the front and center and points to the possibility of cultural texts produced by “males” to articulate a feminist sensibility, cartography and calendar.

Chicano Studies and the Sonic Geographies of the U-S///Mexico Border

I take heed from Hector Calderon, who focusing on Maldita Vecindad y los Hijos del Quinto Patio, aimed to move “beyond scholarly, linguistic, and political borders,” when he noted that “Chicana and Chicano studies as practiced in the United States has become, especially in literary scholarship, almost exclusively an English-language study of the U.S. Southwest.”¹⁷ For Calderon, “U.S. scholars engaged in ‘border studies’ more often than not stop at the border. The same is true of Mexican scholars engaged in the Mexican version of border studies.” For many on both sides, he continues, “a clear political and disciplinary borderline divides the greater Mexican cultural diaspora that has existed in North America since the sixteenth century.”¹⁸ While Calderon, focuses on a particular rock band, Maldita Vecindad, he provides a longer and more expansive genealogy of cross-border music than does Kun, noting that Maldita Vecindad was influenced by, and began as a group that often invoked “the music of Pérez Prado, Tin Tan, Lalo Guerrero, and Don Tosti fused . . . with rock, punk, ska, Algerian, and Moroccan rhythms to end up playing “un funky mambo, o la cumbia punk o el chacha

¹⁷ Hector Calderon, “The Mexico City–Los Angeles Cultural Mosh Pits: Maldita Vecindad, a Chilanga-Chicana Rock Banda de Pueblo,” *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 31:1 (Spring 2006): 95-118, 97.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

reggae.”¹⁹ Calderon’s genealogy thus charts a distinct cartography and calendar than the crossing of the U-S///Mexico border post-1848 that has been paradigmatic of Chicano Studies. The three songs here offer us an opportunity to intervene, with and beyond Calderon, in both Chicana/o Studies and Border Studies debates, while bringing the two fields in conversation with Aníbal Quijano’s and Maria Lugones’ respective work on the colonality of power and gender.

Born out of expansionist aggression, la frontera has been a fertile home for violence and conflict. However, the extent and political nature of the violence and bloodshed, as is the case in the musical offerings herein, is often silenced and undermined by historical accounts and official information outlets alike.²⁰ In the United States, the discourse of “border violence” gets constructed with a US-centered, xenophobic and anti-“immigrant” emphasis on hyper-sensationalized stories of immigrant invasion and drug violence. It usually projects a problematic discourse of ‘anarchy’ and ‘lawlessness’ associated with drug and human trafficking divorced from a historical and material political economy that makes such extra-official business enterprises possible. Spanish news outlets, in contrast, tend to only serve local markets. Much like with knowledge production generally, where “if you publish in Spanish, normally publications do not go beyond the local circuit,”²¹ up until recently the same could be argued about music, though this is increasingly less the case. Although corridos are primarily written and sung in Spanish, in reference to Los Tigres del Norte, José David Saldívar nonetheless notes “...border music is simultaneously national and transnational in that it affects everyday life in the local (Silicon Valley) region and thematizes the limits of the national perspective in American Studies.”²² Moreover, in the case of corridos generally, as well as other music I consider below, the lyrical content of the songs often draw on the lived experiences of Mexicanas/os on both sides of the frontera. The groups in this study also voice their lyrics in Spanish, English, Spanglish, and a few indigenous languages. Rather than assuming a subordinate position in relation to the hierarchies of language and knowledge, however, I illustrate how they function as critical interventions about lived experiences with the U-S///Mexico border. So rather than a “translation” of the ska-punk-rap-rock-corridos’ lyrics, I attempt to elucidate “an other thinking/logic” that underpins border music speaking to the violence that has shaped la frontera and navigate them across geopolitical, linguistic and disciplinary borders alike.

Voz de nuestra gente/un grito reprimido/... / eso es el corrido

Although corridos serve a variety of purposes, tackling numerous themes and issues, this chapter focuses on corridos and other songs that bring light to the violence

¹⁹ Ibid, 114.

²⁰ See Michel Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon, 1995).

²¹ See Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*, xiii, 71. In a related vein, Mignolo has argued that the subalternization of knowledge, which occurred initially as a result of European colonial expansion, also has linguistic dimensions.

²² José David Saldívar, *Border Matters*, 3.

and politicized nature of the shared border between the United States and Mexico, while at once shifting the spatialtemporal frame through which we more commonly understand the U-S//Mexico border. Several studies on Mexican corridos have focused predominantly on their role and contemporary origin in the Revolución Mexicana. Most notable are Vicente T. Mendoza (1939, 1954, 1964), Merle E. Simmons (1957) and Celedonio Serrano Martínez (1973).²³ Serrano Martínez, contrary to most accounts that trace the corrido's poetic form to the Spanish *decima*, instead argues that the corrido is derived from Nahuatl (Aztec) poetry or la itotolca nahuatl.²⁴ Noted Chicana/o scholars, Américo Paredes (1958), José David Saldívar (1986, 1997), María Herrera-Sobek (1990), Ramón Saldívar (1990), Alfred Arteaga (1985) and José E. Limón (1992), have also paid equal attention to corridos written on both sides of El Rio Bravo/Rio Grande.²⁵ Although some distinguish between Mexican and Chicano corridos, others uphold a sense of continuity between the two. Here, I am concerned not with making such distinctions, if they indeed exist, but rather with looking at how corridos written *about*, *from* and *on* both sides of la frontera are subsequently reflected in other musical genres that also consider the U-S//Mexico border as a central problematic. Importantly, the corrido tradition, according to Paredes, is grounded in narrating histories of border violence. This is precisely an element that binds the three songs that are the focus of this chapter.

Los Tigres del Norte—considered by their fans Los Reyes del Pueblo, the kings of the people—symbolize the “simultaneously national and transnational” nature of corridos. Having themselves crossed the border in the 1960s and relocating in San José, California, it would be several years and locally produced albums later that their third album, *Contrabando y Traición* (1974), and its main song by the same name—sometimes popularly referred to as La Camelia, after one of the songs' main protagonists—would make them a household name. In part, the appeal of the song “Contrabando y Traición” (Contraband and Betrayal) rested on the protagonist, Camelia, who unlike most female characters in Mexican songs at the time, emerges as an active agent in determining her own circumstances. After crossing the U-S//Mexico border with her lover Emilio, and delivering a drug shipment, she shoots him and takes both their cuts of the money, rather than allowing him to return to another lover he had in San Francisco. The 1974 song is equally popular and pointed to for marking the beginning of a particular brand of corrido, the narco-corrido, with its open and brazen lyrics about the trafficking world, even though other songs had made occasional references to the industry.²⁶ Yet, while

²³ See Vicente T. Mendoza, *El romance español y el corrido mexicano*, *El corrido mexicano* and *Lírica narrativa de México*; Merle E. Simmons, *The Mexican Corrido as a Source for Interpretive Study of Modern Mexico (1870-1950)*; and Celedonio Serrano Martínez, *El corrido mexicano no deriva del romance español*.

²⁴ As to the critical implications of Serrano Martínez, with regard to the issue of subaltern knowledge production, see Roberto Hernández, “Violence, Subalternity and El Corrido Along the U.S.-Mexico Border” Unpublished MS.

²⁵ See Américo Paredes, “*With His Pistol in His Hand*”; José David Saldívar, “Towards a Chicano Poetics” and *Border Matters*; María Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido*; Ramón Saldívar, *Chicano Narrative*; José E. Limón, *Mexican Ballads, Chicano Poems*; and, Alfred Arteaga, “The Chicano-Mexican Corrido.”

²⁶ Luis A. Astorga A., *Mitología del "narcotraficante" en México*, (México/UNAM: Plaza y Valdés, 1995), 127.

spawning a whole genre of its own, which included several follow-up corridos and movies detailing the exploits of Camelia, another important aspect of the song is its popularly recognizable opening lines, “Salieron de San Ysidro / procedentes desde Tijuana / Traían las llantas del carro / repletas de hierba mala...” (They left San Ysidro / coming from Tijuana / they had the car’s wheels / full of bad herb [marijuana]). The purpose here is not to dwell on the drug trafficking, which as explained in the Introduction often serves to obfuscate other relations of violence, but to highlight that for Mexican migrants and Chicanas/os alike, San Ysidro has long been etched in the popular imaginary as the border city counterpart to Tijuana.

Following their first Grammy Award in 1987 for the album *Gracias America “Sin Fronteras,”* (1986), in their album *Corridos Prohibidos* (1989), Los Tigres debuted their song appropriately titled “El Corrido,” as a tribute to the very genre that made them famous. The opening verses attempt to illustrate some of the traits, characteristics, and qualities of the corrido as a vehicle for social and political protest, while making vivid references to El Rio Bravo/Rio Grande that forms the border proper through Texas and part of New Mexico and is often seen as the region that birthed such musical form.

Como la corriente
de un río crecido
que baja en torrente
impetuoso y bravillo.

Like the current
of a grown river
that flows torrentially
impetuous and fierce.

Voz de nuestra gente
un grito reprimido
un canto valiente
eso es el corrido

Voice of our people
a repressed scream
a valiant song
that is the corrido

For Los Tigres, it is through the corrido that the voice of the people is heard, rising from a repressed call to attain the ferocity of a river, unstoppable and daring. It is with the force of a river that the corrido tears through the blank pages that omit a community’s story—voicing the histories once silenced from the written record of master narratives. The corrido is thus a valiant song that carries with it the story of a people. The above characterization is thus one of creative dissent as they serve to illuminate a popular history or history from below. The corrido then continues,

Voz del oprimido
Un retrato hablado
Calificativo
Y hasta exagerado

Voice of the oppressed
A spoken portrait
Qualitative
And even exaggerative

Tribuna que ha sido
del pueblo juzgado
ese es el corrido
ese es el corrido
que me han enseñado.

Tribunal that has been
the court of the people
that is the corrido
that is the corrido
That I have been taught

The corrido serves as voice for the oppressed whose force lies in its collective strength, like that of a grown river. The corrido is poetically referred to as a spoken portrait. In this image, the corrido captures a moment, as in a photograph or painting and then relates it, bringing it to life, conceptualizing, creating, and conveying the world around it. Here it is useful to remember the essay's opening vignettes, the rushing of the river itself, the fierce gushing sounds. While they acknowledge that at times a corrido can exaggerate an account, the transparency serves to remind the audience that within often-colorful tales, there nonetheless exist important facts to relay. The second stanza further illuminates that the corrido is grounded in an oral tradition, passed on from corridista to corridista. Each generation of corridista thus exercises his or her obligation to the people by publicly reciting the verses passed on to them from previous generations of corridistas, as would storytellers in various Indigenous traditions. In other words, corridos, like the sounds of the river that tell us tales of the many lives lost in its currents, speak to us and share with us subjugated knowledges of U-S//Mexico border crossings and many other migrant tribulations.

Los Tigres del Norte bring el corrido itself to life by characterizing it as a roaring river, whose fierce torrent breaks the silence of barren land when it rises over the banks that aim to contain it. It is from this description of the corrido, and its influence mirrored in/on distinct border music genres, that I turn to a discussion of the three songs noted above and their function as a production of knowledge that sets in motion an alternative discourse with epistemic potential for countering hegemonic and colonial/racial realities by mapping and chronicling a different cartography and calendar of knowledge and an inherently anti-border politic. The focus of this study is therefore an examination of the analysis, critique and challenge to hegemonic discourses found in what I identify as *anti-border* music that seeks a critical approach to the violence at the nations' shared edges, but moreover, contests the logics of nation-state borders altogether.

Border Music and Anti-Border Manifestos

My aim in this chapter has been to explore the logics and implications of cultural production, corridos in particular, grounded in historically nuanced understandings of the materiality of the U-S//Mexico border, as it impinges upon the lives of those who cross it or are crossed by it. In what follows, I focus the above lens on three distinct performers across different musical styles, located in different urban spaces, and each with distinct experiences with relation to the U-S//Mexico border, who nonetheless speak to similar concerns. First, however, a preliminary note on border and anti-border music is in order. While we have become accustomed to calling corridos—and in the case of the hybrid sounds of numerous rock, punk, and ska bands—border music, I am concerned here with how through such designation, in the very act of naming them as such, we run the risk of re-inscribing them into a national-territorial narrative, premised upon said borders, that many of them are eager to abandon. To illustrate my point let me provide a distinct yet related example. In reference to immigrant rights advocacy at the time of California's anti-immigrant initiative, Proposition 187 in 1994, Linda Bosniak noted the conundrum many activists found themselves in:

“The point is that progressives' acquiescence to national border enforcement works at cross-purposes with their commitment to defending the interests of the undocumented. For to the extent they retain the attachment, or acquiescence, to borders, they ensure that the immigrants will continue to be marginalized; but conversely, to the extent they effectively attack the marginalization the immigrants suffer, they necessarily must challenge the enforcement of borders as well. The two commitments (against marginalization of persons and for borders around the community) are mutually incompatible, at least where the status of undocumented immigrants are concerned (593).²⁷

In other words, for Bosniak, the naming of “*immigrant* advocacy” as such, serves to structure the limits of political discourse into a frame of competing national-territorial bodies of which migrants cannot be divorced from and thought of as human beings in their own right, for they are seemingly bound almost naturally to the body politic of one modern nation-state (sending country) or another (receiving country). The border is thus inadvertently normalized and naturalized in the very act of taking a stand in the favor of those on whom it impinges.

In a similar vein, yet speaking to the rise of transnational union labor organizing, Bosniak continues:

It is no doubt premature to characterize this tri-national, grassroots effort against NAFTA as one that entirely transcended the conventional national political imagination. For while forging cross-border alliances . . . the ultimate objective of these alliances still remained that of compelling individual nation-state governments to better protect the interests of nationstate members from the damaging effects of corporate-driven economic globalization (610).

In a paradoxical way then, the transnational activism of the anti-NAFTA campaign, as well as other transnational efforts, are often recognized as a “necessary strategy,” perhaps the most effective strategy, for pursuing justice but this occurs *within* the individual states whose very legitimacy is reinforced in the act of challenging the excesses of global capital. With regards to border music, it is worth taking a step back and considering how the same can be argued of transnational or cross-border music. That is, in crossing musical borders, the border is itself rendered present and visible albeit crossable by the engaging in a *trans*-national act that nonetheless maintains “the national” however much it is problematized. In light of the questions posed by Bosniak, it is my contention that the three songs of Los Tigres del Norte, Tijuana NO with Frost and Aztlán Underground need to be thought of as principally anti-border rather than cross-border or transnational music.

²⁷ See Linda S. Bosniak, “Opposing Prop. 187: Undocumented Immigrants And The National Imagination,” *Connecticut Law Review* 28 (Spring, 1996): 555-619.

Specifically then, I am interested not in a reading of, but in *thinking through* the three anti-border songs: “Stolen at Gunpoint” by Tijuana NO with Frost; what might seem an odd pairing, Los Tigres del Norte’s 2001 hit “Somos Mas Americanos”; and perhaps more familiar to English-speaking audiences as it relates to this chapter’s subtitle, Aztlán Underground’s “Decolonize.” In these examples, the three groups, in one case featuring an additional solo performer Kid Frost, each drawing from distinct musical traditions and locations on both sides of the border, or in Tijuana NO’s case “from” the border itself, share explicitly in their lyrics in one way or another, the exact same line: “We didn’t Cross the Borders, the Borders Crossed Us.” It is this mutually shared lyrical phrase that forces us to think about the nature of the border beyond the physical, discursive and/or musical crossing of the U-S///Mexico national-territorial boundaries, and instead to think of the history and role of nation-state borders themselves.²⁸

What does it mean when three groups speak to the same problematic, albeit from the significantly different musical traditions of Ska/Punk, Rap/Hip-Hop, and Norteñas/Corridos? From different places: San José via Sinaloa, Los Angeles or City of Angels via Manifest Destiny and Tijuana via Mexico City? Where do San Ysidro, the Kumeyaay, or Chicanas/os who are crossed and bordered by a number of overlapping colonial/racial histories fit in these lyrics? How do the conceptual similarities in the themes informing the three songs point to deeper fundamental issues regarding Chicana/o and Mexicana/o cultural production and the ever-present, seemingly natural and timeless, yet strictly post-1848, U-S///Mexico Border? While the three musical genres in question each have attendant linguistic and even regional, yet simultaneously transnational sub-cultures, my detailed analysis of the three songs, and in the context of their music broadly, point to shared concerns across the seemingly different sets of cultural formations. What then are the politics that underlie the distinct yet shared sonic geographies of “Stolen at Gunpoint,” “Somos Mas Americanos” and “Decolonize”? What are the implications of the connections among these musical offerings/ofrendas and the collective sensibilities I argue they point to? What is the future of U-S///Mexico border cultural production and what does it attempt to imagine into being?

With these questions in mind, rather than a close reading of the songs I’ve approached this research in a different way. To outline briefly, like Anzaldúa, I first ground my reading of these sonic texts in the material conditions that have most greatly contributed to the relatively recent popularizing of the common line at issue here: “We didn’t cross the borders, the borders crossed us”. By this, I mean the slogan’s popular familiarization beyond Chicana/o communities, since for many it has become such a common *dicho* or saying that one may not be fully grasping the underlying politics and implications of such slogan. In order to trace the phrase’s popular history, some have pointed to the most recent round of immigrant rights’ marches dating back to 2005. I consider this explanation, as well as some of the other scholarly and popular attempts to

²⁸ While a number of Chicana and Mexicana musicians and artists, such as Cihualt-Ce, Cihualt Tonalli, In Lak Ech, Lila Downs, and Mujerez de Maiz, have long engaged in the shifting of the cartography and calendar of knowledge that forms the basis of this article, my choice of the three songs is based strictly on this shared phrase.

explain the origins of the above slogan. Then, I turn to the lyrics themselves. And lastly, I conclude the analysis by elucidating what I argue are the politics, poetics, and implications of the shared lyrics, and how such lyrics point to a shared collective memory with a long historical, indigenous, feminist and anti-border sensibility that forces us to think beyond the U-S///Mexico border, and perhaps even Chicana/o Studies and Border Studies as currently conceptualized.

So, When Did We *Not* Cross the Border?

To begin, as a political slogan, many, both in the various forms of print and electronic media and academic circles alike, have pointed to the recent immigrant rights marches as the moment and site in which “We didn’t cross the borders, the borders crossed us” gained broad currency. If so, we must then ask, where is the Chicana/o impulse in this analysis if at all, to which I will return and also hopefully problematize as well. Many seasoned observers including Ruben Martinez—in an article titled “Prop 187: Birth of a Movement?” among other scholars—have also pointed to the 1994 mobilizations against California’s Proposition 187 as the moment when and where this saying “We didn’t cross the borders, the borders crossed us” emerged as a widely-circulating narrative aiming to disrupt the criminalization and illegalization of a Mexicana/o and Latina/o presence in the United States. In a related vein, others still have attempted to draw a more direct lineage to the Chicano Movement politics of the 1960’s and 1970’s and the popular slogan “somos un pueblo sin fronteras” (we are one people without borders) of the Chicano Movement organization Centro de Acción Social Autonomá (CASA) that also published a newspaper titled *Sin Fronteras*. These histories in some ways also intersect. In Chicago, for example, one of the main organizational bases for the 2005 and 2006 immigrant rights mobilizations was Centro Sin Fronteras, which also has a distinct yet shared history with CASA in California.²⁹

Vicki Ruiz, in *Latinas in the United States*, takes us further and points to several turn-of-the-century women writers such as Leonor Villegas de Magnon, Sara Estela Ramirez, and sisters Andrea and Teresa Villareal, as the first expressing the sentiment in response to being separated from their families after 1848 when Mexico lost nearly half its territory to the United States.³⁰ In each of these cases, whether one points to the popularization of the saying in 2005 or 1994, the 1960s and 1970’s, or the late 1800s, one thing is clear: the reference point is the changing of the physical location of one national-territorial boundary, the pre-1848 U-S/// Mexico border, from its prior location to its current location, and the related historical moment resulting in the “transfer of land” from a presupposed and unquestioned colonial independent nation-state to another vis-à-vis the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In other words, in thinking about the familiar chant, “We didn’t cross the borders, the borders crossed us,” many scholars, activists, and critics, have attempted to place its origin as hinging precisely on 1848 in particular. While we see this reflected to varying degrees in the three songs, “Stolen at Gunpoint,”

²⁹ The forthcoming dissertation of Myrna Garcia is very instructive in this regard.

³⁰ Vicki Ruiz and Viginia Sanchez Korrol, eds. *Latinas in the United States: A Historical Encyclopedia*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 301.

“Somos Mas Americanos,” and “Decolonize,” I contend that we also see a different cartography and calendar of resistance emerging in said tracks.

In *Perspectives on Las Americas* (2003), a transnationally-oriented edited collection that bridges a divide between Latina/o Studies and Latin American Studies, the editors Lynn Stephen, Patricia Zavella, Matthew C. Guttman and Felix V Matos Rodriguez, in their introduction *based on the 1848 calendar*, suggest not only “1848 as reference point” for the field, but the notion of “We didn’t cross the borders, the borders crossed us” as “paradigmatic in Chicana/o Studies” pointing to Rudy Acuña’s *Anything but Mexican* (1996) and Americo Paredes’ *Folklore and Culture on the Texas-Mexico Border* (1993) as markers of such link. While most Chicana/o Studies scholarship has been constructed in such a way that privileges 1848 as a starting point to Chicano History and the CASA slogan of ‘Sin Fronteras’ is common in such narrative, the explicit pronouncement, “We didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us,” has not figured as prominently in Chicano historiography until very recently. A related issue in need of some discussion is that CASA is commonly seen as “winning” a political and ideological battle against a rival Chicano Maoist organization, August Twenty-ninth Movement (ATM) in the 1970’s, who argued that the Southwest was a distinct Chicano Nation (with its own border separating it from Mexico). This is in contrast to CASA’s view, which argued for the socialist “reunification” of Old Mexico and Stolen Mexico, but retaining its pre-1848 border with the then-smaller U-S in the north and Guatemala in the south. In either case, national borders remained but were simply relocated, and with the August Twenty-Ninth Movement a new colonial independent nation would have been arguably born vis-à-vis the various indigenous peoples who consider areas in the United States’ Southwest their traditional ancestral homelands.³¹ In contrast, as noted earlier, Chicana feminist historiography, including Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands*, has long argued for a different spatialtemporal frame whereby colonization as an embodied sociohistorical process lived through and enacted on bodies is traced back to what Frantz Fanon calls its proper place and its proper time. In other words, to the initial encounter of westward bound sailors and their arrival upon this hemisphere in 1492 and its consequent partitioning of the globe along nation-state lines.

Stolen at Gun Point

So why focus on these particular songs? Let me highlight a few points in each. First, by way of introduction, Tijuana NO is a Ska, Rock/Punk Mexican band, from the border city of Tijuana, often characterized by the penetrating social critique of its lyrics, in which the group has openly expressed its support for the indigenous uprising in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas in 1994. Furthermore, they have also made reference in their songs to ongoing international conflicts revolving around issues of race, colonialism, apartheid and immigration policies in the United States. Frost, who they partner with in “Stolen at Gunpoint,” is known as a pioneer of Chicano rap, made famous

³¹ The contrasting views are detailed in the August Twenty-ninth Movement’s most known pamphlet, *Fan the Flames*, circa 1972.

by his hit single “La Raza” (1990).³² In “Stolen at Gunpoint,” Tijuana NO and Frost begin by making a direct reference to 1848 when the vocalist awakes “feeling suddenly in [his] throat un veneno” (a venom) upon “dreaming about Lopez de Santana,” Mexico’s multi-term and long time president during the mid and late 1800s, realizing that “this mother-fucker gave the gueros our terreno” (the light-skinned our territories). Indicating that “we wouldn’t mind to share it with Los Gabachos” Tijuana No’s lyricist bitterly references Santana’s handing over of the current day U.S. Southwest with a stroke of a pen while held at gunpoint, a moment many Mexicans resent and credit for bringing an end to the US-Mexico War. “Asking myself where is Pancho Villa?” who presumably could have thwarted the United States’ advances had he been alive at the time, the singer points to “a full scale invasion” and a fight with “the Ku Klux Klan y el pinche Gobierno”. The first series of verses end, nonetheless, with a stark reminder in resoundingly deep voice, “Nosotros llegamos primero” (We got here first!), before a chorus and shift to Frost.

Whereas the chorus sounds off the various states that changed hands in 1848, “California, Stolen at Gunpoint! Arizona, Stolen at Gunpoint! Tejas, Stolen at Gunpoint! Nuevo Mexico, Stolen at Gunpoint!” Tijuana NO proceeds to include a few other lines, “El Alamo, Stolen at Gunpoint! Aztlán, Stolen at Gunpoint!” Here, the invocation of El Alamo, a key contested site that has long served as a rallying cry for US nationalism, functions to dislodge from the American imaginary the image long associated with this now memorialized historical museum. Aztlán on the other hand is often symbolically used as a name for the U.S. Southwest, despite its original invocation by the poet Alurista to signify a spiritual homeland, which was later coupled by Chicano Movement leader Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzalez with a specific territoriality.³³ Notably, in “The Aural Border,” Josh Kun writes that Tijuana NO “duet[s] with LA Chicano rapper Frost on ‘Stolen at Gunpoint,’ an urgent demand for the mexicano reconquest of what became the US southwest after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.”³⁴ What Kun fails to mention, apart from his problematic invocation of a much feared “mexicano reconquest” of the Southwest often heralded by the civilian patrols and other like-minded anti-immigrant groups, is that the chorus continues with two additional lines, “Puerto Rico, Stolen at Gunpoint! America, Stolen at Gunpoint!” to the fading repeated sound of “We’re gonna get it back...” “We gonna get it back...” Does this last line, “We’re gonna get it back...” or the prior one, “Nosotros llegamos primero” (We got here first!), refer to the Southwest or to the unmapping of hemispheric-wide borders?

Kun’s re-inscription of the 1848 frame that posits the Chicano decolonial imaginary as one grounded in a “reconquest” of the Southwest obfuscates, I argue, a different cartography and calendar operative in “Stolen at Gunpoint.” Rather than

³² Richard Rodriguez writes a piercing critique of Frost’s heteronormative masculinity in his construction of nation/family. I concur with Rodriguez, yet his presence in “Stolen at Gunpoint” points to the contradictory subjectivity of colonized Chicano subjects struggling against their emasculation and dehumanization and should be examined in this multi-faceted way in light of such complexity. See Richard T. Rodriguez, “The Verse of the Godfather: Signifying Family and Nationalism in Chicano Rap and Hip-Hop Culture,” in *Velvet Barrios: Popular Culture and Chicana/o Sexualities*, ed. Alicia Gaspar de Alba (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 107-122.

³³ Email exchanges with Alurista, in author’s possession.

³⁴ Kun, “The Aural Border,” 19.

boxing this indeed anti-border anthem into a constricting frame suggestive of 1960's nation-statisms such as those of CASA and ATM, the inclusion of Puerto Rico, which was occupied in 1898, points to a broader anti-imperialist and internationalist impulse in "Stolen at Gunpoint". Furthermore, the line "America, Stolen at Gunpoint!" makes fairly explicit that what is also at stake for Tijuana NO and Frost is not simply a matter of the return to an earlier geopolitical arrangement whereby the previous pre-1848 border of Mexico is reinstated, but rather appeals to un-mapping of nation-territorial and juridical boundaries altogether. In other words, they point, as have many Chicana feminist scholars, to colonization and the imposition of borders rooted not in 1848 but 1519 and 1492 more broadly as the mention of American and Puerto Rico are both suggestive of the arrival of Columbus in the Caribbean in present-day Dominican Republic and Haiti. While Frost's vocals following the chorus sonically return the listener to the specificities of 1994 California with a direct challenge to then-Governor Pete Wilson, Frost speaks of the border in plural form, "You say we crossed the borders, shit, the *borders* crossed us" (my emphasis). What is important here is that Frost sonic geography makes clear the scale-jumping from Aztlán to Puerto Rico to America to California, and back again, emphasizing the many borders that crossed the various peoples of the Americas. So what we see in "Stolen at Gunpoint" is a longer historical sensibility, even if just for a bit, that is suggestive of both Chicana and Native American³⁵ concerns with colonization of the Americas pre-1848 and a concern for how indigenous peoples generally have been crossed by nation-state boundaries, as I expressed in the complex legal history of the city of San Diego in Chapter One.

Somos Mas Americanos

Los Tigres del Norte, in addition to "Los Reyes del Pueblo," are also regarded by many as the 'voice of the immigrant'. Indeed, many of their songs have long held immigrants in high-esteem and sought to afford them the dignity they deserve as they sing the terrifying tales of crossing the border and dealing with Border Patrol abuse, along with other stories of the hardship of immigrant life.³⁶ In "Somos Mas Americanos," Los Tigres continue this long trajectory of defending the rights of migrants in their music, but with this song, I would argue, they exceed their previous pronunciations. Above and beyond their 1986 hit "America"—titled in reference to the continent, and not the United States discursive claim to represent the entire western hemisphere—that proudly proclaims "De América, soy yo" (Of America, I am), pointing to how America is a continent and not just the United States, in "Somos Mas Americanos" we are treated to a more defiant Tigres del Norte, whose lyrical precision offers an important and poignant history lesson elaborating on their 1986 song.

³⁵ While not explicitly the subject of this chapter or dissertation, see Steve Crum "Border Crossings/Crossing Border: Native Americans and the Issue of Border Crossings" in *Indigenous Peoples and the Modern State*, Ed. By Duane Champagne, et al (2005); and, Eileen M, Firebaugh-Luna, "The Border Crossed Us: Border Crossing Issues of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas" (2002), where they respectively point to how the border has divided the Kumeeyaay, Tohono O'odham, Iroquois and Blacfeet into separate nations.

³⁶ For a study of their famous song, La Jaula de Oro (The Golden Cage), see Saldívar, *Border Matters* (1997).

The corrido “Somos Mas Americanos” begins with the vocalist recalling his many unpleasant encounters with the likes of the civilian patrols.

Ya me gritaron mil veces
que me regrese a mi tierra
por que yo no quepo aqui
Pero quiero recordarle al gringo
que yo no cruce la frontera
la frontera me cruzo a mi

(They have already screamed at me thousands of times / For me to return to my land / Because here there is no space for me / But I want to remind the gringo / I did not cross the border / The border crossed me).

Los Tigres continue,

America nacio libre
fue el hombre que la dividio
Ellos pintaron la raya
Pa' que yo la brincara
Y ahora me llaman invasor

America was born free
It was man that divided her
They painted the line
So that I could jump it
And now they call me invader

It is at this point, that the historical correction emerges,

“Es un error bien marcado
nos robaron ocho estados
¿quien es aqui el invasor?”

It is a well-marked error
they stole from us eight states
Now, who here is the invader?

These first verses end with “soy extranjero en mi propia tierra / y no vengo a darles guerra / soy hombre trabajador” (I am a foreigner in my own land / And I do not come to give them war / I am a working man). Making an appeal to the fact that the issue is not one of reconquest, as Kun suggests with “Stolen at Gunpoint,” but of coming in search of work and livelihood, Los Tigres nonetheless make clear where they stand with regards to history and the existence of the U-S///Mexico border, and the dividing up of all of the American continent, which in their view was once free. It could be argued, however, that their claim to “eight states” is indicative of a concern with 1848 (yet again), and while it is present in the song, Los Tigres quickly expand their cartography and calendar in their repeated and unapologetic chorus.

Spoken in a serious, slow voice and tone the interlude qua history lesson continues with the following lines,

Y si la historia no miente
nos sentamos aqui en la Gloria
una poderosa nacion.
Entre guerreros valientes
Indios de dos continentes

And if history doesn't lie
Here sat in glory
a powerful nation.
Amongst valiant warriors
Indians of two continents

mezclados con Español.

Mixed with Spaniard.

Y si a los siglos nos vamos
Somos mas Americanos
Somos mas Americanos
Que el hijo del Anglo-Sajon

And if to the centuries we go
We are more American
We are more American
Than the son of the Anglo Saxon

The reference to “Indian of two continents,” much like the calling upon centuries of history that precede the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, here too, as with Frost and Tijuana NO, points to the Los Tigres del Norte’s keen awareness of a longer historical experience of colonization that informs the U-S//Mexico border. An important aspect of the complexity in the vision of Los Tigres del Norte is they acknowledge the mixing with Spaniard blood (even if historically limited and on uneven terms) and the different set of colonial relations when the Indians of *two* continentes encountered the Spanish. In their final analysis however, Los Tigres’ invoking of a long line of indigenous descent is contrasted to the shorter spatialtemporal frame that the children of the Anglo-Saxon have spent in the Americas. Despite a name-by-name listing of the southwestern states in the verses that follow the spoken interlude, the border is figured in their sonic geography, not only as the U-S//Mexico border, but rather as the ones that crisscrossed the two continents of the western hemisphere and its inhabitants.

In the final lines, Los Tigres del Norte reiterate their *longue durée*, continental and embodied understanding of those deemed migrants in the United States,

Soy la sangre de Indio
Soy Latino
Soy Mestizo

I am the blood of the Indian
I am Latino
I am Mestizo

Y si contamos los siglos
aunque le duela al vecino
Somos mas Americanos
que todititos los gringos

And if we count the centuries
Even though it may hurt the neighbor
We are more American
Than each and every last one of the gringos

In line with the increasingly brazen and pointed critiques that Los Tigres have offered in many of their corridos over the years, and specially recently, “Somos Mas Americanos’ stands as a key moment and track in which, while making reference to 1848, Los Tigres also explode the limits of said narrative and recount a longer historical trajectory bringing into question not only the existence of the U-S//Mexico border, but borders throughout the Americas. In doing so, they express their long-held hemispheric sensibilities reminiscent José Martí’s “Nuestra América” but a sensibility that is at once racially inflected in terms of an indigenous and mestizo presence in las Americas. Proudly standing with those pictured in Samuel Huntington’s “Hispanic Challenge” article, Los Tigres’ analysis is indicative of an anti-border politics that precedes not only 1848, but the formation of the modern nation-state proper.

Decolonize

In Aztlán Underground's 1998 song "Decolonize" we have perhaps the most direct usage of the shared phrase, "We didn't cross the border, the border crossed us." As the longest track, over seven minutes long, "Decolonize" includes a complex interweaving of lyrics, sounds, instruments, languages and tempos, and is AUG's premier anti-border anthem. Based out of Los Angeles, Aztlán Underground has long been known to capture the anticolonial psyche and transcend listening groups with a fierce rhythm that is used to convey a message of self-determination and decolonization. While the lyrics in "Decolonize" begin with "We didn't cross the border, the border crossed us!" shouted out three times, they point explicitly to 1848 soon after that, at the beginning of the song. Yet, we see a quick jump to colonization more broadly, "Stranger in your own land under exploitation / this is the state of the indigena today / under the oppression of the settlers way." Aztlán Underground's pointed naming of settler colonialism is important, as it stands in contradistinction to most Chicano/1848 understandings of colonization. Instead, it speaks more to a common understanding within Native Studies discourse of colonization in the Americas as primarily a settler enterprise.³⁷ Originally espousing a more nationalist politic, they developed an indigenist and hemispheric consciousness over the years. Not long after lead-singer Yaotl repeats the line, "this is the state of the indigena today / under the oppression of the settlers way," we get a shift to a thunderous and booming use of the line "We didn't cross the border, the border crossed us," as the musical chorus, repeated in sequence three times "Yet the settler nation lives in disgust!" is cheered by jumping and moshing throngs of fans. This sequence, on their album from a live recording, is repeated three times yet again, with cheering fans sounding back in unison the memorized lines of AUG's anti-border sonic geography, "We didn't cross the border, the border crossed us!" "We didn't cross the border, the border crossed us!" "We didn't cross the border, the border crossed us!" Yet the settler nation lives in disgust!"

Much like Los Tigres del Norte's racially-inflected "Somos Mas Americanos" Aztlán Underground also analyze with clarity how race operates in the United States, and in doing so also bring about a reconfiguration of the cartography and calendar of Chicana/o cultural resistance.

"You try to be white and its very respectable /
But be Xicano and its highly unacceptable /
Then we're termed Hispanic as if we were from Spain /
Trying to insert us in the American game /
and we're called wetbacks like we've never been here /
When our existence on this continent is thousands of years."

In these lines, Aztlán Underground, like Tijuana NO with Frost, and Los Tigres del Norte before them, force us to expand our spatialtemporal frame and quickly remind us (twice), "this is the state of the indigena today / under the oppression of the settlers way." Yet

³⁷ For a thorough review of the literature see, for example, Andrea Smith, "Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* Volume 16, Number 1-2 (2010): 41-68.

most importantly, they also assert that as self-described *indigenas* and *xicanos* their understanding of what it means to “Decolonize,” as their song title suggests, entails a critique of settler colonialism and nation-state borders, as noted by their oft repeated lyrics: “We didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us!” “We didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us!” “We didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us!” Yet the settler nation lives in disgust!” Writing of the emotional effect of *rancheras* (northern ballads) on its audiences, Chicana scholar Yolanda Broyles-Gonzalez states that there exists a “consonance of bioenergies across generations and geographies” of listeners.³⁸ Such release of energies and moments of collective consciousness and rehumanization are evident amidst AUG’s audiences, as ad hoc moshes at their performances often intensify yet again and again with the lyrics’ changing tempos, and as dance floor settles, we hear yet another shift to a slower, melodic indigenous floor drum and the sounds of a conch shell being blown in the background, calling everyone to attention.

This multifaceted shift is at once disorienting, yet calming, perhaps unusual to some in the audience not previously familiar with Aztlán Underground who came seeking their hard punk sound—yet soothing nonetheless. “To the Earth... / To the Air... / To the Fire... / To the Water...” the audience hears, as the indigenous chants of a Lakota Honor Song in the background begins to get louder and louder; the drum, deeper and deeper. “The Eagle and Condor have met...” is announced, in reference to the Peace and Dignity Journeys, a spiritual and continental run started in 1992 and completed every four years, aimed at bringing together indigenous communities from throughout the Americas.³⁹ The Honor Song and the drumbeat is now the only sound we hear for a short while, then it is followed by the slow-spoken, subtle yet stern words:

“We must realize / our connection to this land. /
From Xicano to Lakota we’re all sisters and brothers / ... /
from the top of Alaska to the tip of South America /
Abya Yala, Anahuak, Turtle Island.”

The various names above, each a distinct indigenous reference to the North *and* South American continents as one, are recited, as a different sonic geography expanding over “506 years of indigenous resistance” is mapped and chronicled.

The Honor Song continues amidst a proclamation of *cihuatl* (women) reclaiming their place in a balanced set of social relations, then it ends and we have one more time, “We didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us!” “We didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us!” “We didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us!” Yet the settler nation lives in disgust!” However, this time it is followed by an unambiguous, “GET THE F*CK OUT, GET THE F*CK OUT, Get the f*ck, Get the f*ck, Get the f*ck, Get the f*ck

³⁸ Yolanda Broyles-González, “Ranchera Music(s) and the Legendary Lydia Mendoza: Performing Social Location and Relations” in *Chicana Traditions: Continuity and Change*, ed. Norma E. Cantú and Olga Nájera-Ramírez (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 183-206, 198.

³⁹ See Roberto Hernández, “Running for Peace and Dignity: From Traditionally Radical Chicanos/as to Radically Traditional Xicanas/os,” in Ramón Grosfoguel, Nelson Maldonado-Torres and José David Saldívar, eds. *Latin@s in the World System: Decolonization Struggles in the 21st Century US Empire* (Herndon: Paradigm Publishers, 2005), pp. 123-138.

OUT! This sequence itself repeated four times before a final “GET THE F*****CK OUT!” While the “hardcore” lyrics are indicative of the musical genre and subculture of Aztlán Underground and many of their fans, their concluding lines and post-track remarks at this live recording, “Y que Viva el Ejercito Zapatista de Liberación Nacional” (And Long Live the Zapatista National Liberation Army) leave no doubt as to whether the group adheres to a 1848 reading of colonization or to one ground in over 500 years of resistance that the Zapatista National Liberation Army also invokes as the basis of their group’s rebellion and struggle. While as early as 1990, Adelaida del Castillo noted that the timeline of 1848 that often takes precedence in Chicano/a Studies discourse might be in need of some revision, Aztlán Underground’s sonic geography enacts a broader and longer cartography and calendar of Chicana/o historiography. AUG’s “Decolonize” instead highlights what I have attempted to elucidate as anti-border music, that not only transcends national-territorial boundaries, as does Rock en Español, but that also challenges simplistic nationalist frames that retain allegiances to nation-state borders.

Conclusion

While at once referencing the U-S///Mexico War of 1845-48 and Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in all three songs, it is my contention that these musical ofrendas must not be considered border music, for we risk compartmentalizing them to certain (trans)national narratives and temporal and spatial schemas. Rather, we should recognize these sonic texts for the work they do to shift the cartography and calendar of decolonial knowledge. The tendency, as I pointed out earlier, to place the origin of the phrase, “We didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us!” in either the immigrant marches of 2005, the protests against Proposition 187 in 1994, or the 1960’s and 1970’s pairing with CASA’s “Sin Fronteras” motto, misses a different articulation at play. While Proposition 187 was in 1994—the same year of NAFTA and the Zapatista uprising—what are we to make about the year 1992 that is often left out of the phrase’s genealogy? Prior to the 1994 election there were a series of mobilizations in California, the Southwest, and throughout the Americas, to protest the quincentennial of Columbus’ arrival in the Americas. The phrase, “We didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us!” as I have argued, points to the colonization of the Americas and the emergence of nation-state boundaries as a modality of population management and social relations, and its popular currency can instead be traced to the lead-up to the quincentennial protests activities.

To accept “We didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us!” is grounded in a narrative that merely replaces one colonial independent nation-state (the United States) with another (Mexico), or simply blends the two into a new hybrid and unproblematized aural border as does the borderlands academic complex, is to underestimate its political trajectory and implications. Such a position, 1848 as paradigmatic reference point, does not interrogate how Mexico has also functioned to effectuate an erasure of indigenous peoples within its juridical boundaries, akin to San Diego’s erasure of San Ysidro. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo frame further limits the possibilities for a decolonial feminist analysis, like that of Anzaldúa, by reducing colonization to a contest between two nation-states, rather than an embodied, lived condition as many Chicana feminists have long argued by also pointing to 1492 and its aftermath. Instead, I locate the shared

sonic geography of the three songs analyzed here, “We didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us!” as a critique to a modern/colonial eurocentric political project resulting in the contemporary geopolitical alignments of nation-states today. Decolonization, in this regard, entails not a re-drawing of national borders, but an active attempt to stand against all borders and the inter-state system they enforce rooted in a modern/colonial episteme that seeks the management of bodies through raced/gendered discourses of home and nation on the one hand or through treaties among men on the other. We should thus take heed from Los Tigres del Norte who insist on America as a continent, and to the extent that they recognize the current materiality of the U-S///Mexico border, they place it where the migrants and others like Camelia who have to cross it for their livelihood (legitimate or not) recognize it to be: in San Ysidro rather than San Diego.

CONCLUSION

Shopping Without Borders
- Motto of the Las Americas Mall

Alto al Guardian! (Stop [Operation] Gatekeeper!)

-Mural art on Tijuana side of the border wall

As Operation Gatekeeper enters its seventeenth year, the contradiction represented by the phrase, “we didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us,” shared by the three songs discussed in the previous chapter, finds a peculiar manifestation in a shopping mall that was built right up against the border fence near the port of entry. A lot has changed in San Ysidro from the days when it was still an unincorporated area, and even from the dreadful day that James Oliver Huberty walked into the McDonalds and turned the community upside down, yet a lot remains the same. San Ysidro has grown in size and population, with several new housing developments and a redevelopment corridor down the main boulevard, but it remains a predominantly Mexican community. Amidst such growth, talk of another de-annexation attempt in the late 1990’s never materialized, and the City Council District partitioning also remains the same. The 8th District is still split between the Barrio Logan, Sherman Heights and Golden Hill areas to the north and San Ysidro, Otay Mesa and Nestor in the south, connected only by the 300 foot strip of water within the Coronado Bay. The two portions of the 8th District continue to compete for their elected representative’s attention while their last city councilman awaits an appeal for a recent conviction of bribery.

While one of the stated purposes of the original annexation of San Ysidro and the South Bay to the City of San Diego was to increase representation of area residents within the metropolitan core of the expansive county, questions remain about the unequal access and distribution of resources across city districts. The McDonalds that reopened blocks from the massacre site remains in business, while year after year on July 18th family, friends, and residents converge at the memorial monument, converting it into an altar to commemorate those who lost their lives there in 1984. The Southwestern Community College satellite campus itself was recently redeveloped and expanded into a two-story complex, broadening its maquiladora management course offerings, while the monument remains in a cage. Immigration continues to be a hot-button political issue. The civilian patrols have (temporarily) given way to the Tea Party who have since refocused their anger on President Barack Obama generally, yet calls to secure and “regain” control of the U-S///Mexico border continue despite the increased number of raids and police cooperation with immigration officials under the new administration. Meanwhile, artists, musicians, immigrant rights’ advocates and cultural workers remain as busy as the Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, countering the latter’s efforts through various means, including

music as that considered in Chapter Four or continuously shifting artwork on the border wall itself that calls for an end to Operation Gatekeeper, among other policies.

The irony of such contradictory tensions is not lost on the landscape as two other developments worth noting demonstrate most clearly. First, in 1997, only a few years since the launching of Operation Gatekeeper in the San Diego Country region, plans were first unveiled for what was boasted as a state of the art shopping mall complex that was to span across both sides of the U-S///Mexico border and include a new walking port of entry, along with a number of high end retailers such as Neiman Marcus. The project advanced by Sam Marasco and the Landgrant Development Corp. sought to take advantage of recently declared blighted zones abutting the border wall in San Ysidro to the immediate west of the existing port of entry. The areas that were opened for (re)development included a largely open field with brush and other shrubbery from the Tijuana River only yards away. Also included were a few small lots owned locally by San Ysidro residents who had lived near the border for at least several decades, but were bought out in the process. Much like gentrification efforts in other urban centers and the fight for control of the border discussed in Chapter One, redevelopment had come to San Ysidro with an eye towards capitalizing on cross-border traffic to expand the local retail markets—already aimed at working-class shoppers—now to include wealthier Tijuana shoppers. The second development was a general redesign of the port of entry itself, whose current facilities were becoming outdated and unable of keeping up with the high density of cross-border traffic at the world’s busiest border crossing. The two developments also overlap with local efforts to revamp existing infrastructure and locate a model public transportation center just north of the pedestrian border crossing in San Ysidro. The idea of the transportation hub is to accommodate the San Diego Trolley (light-rail train system), taxis, Greyhound buses and other locally owned commuter buses in light of the high traffic to and from the U-S///Mexico border to points both south and north of the boundary.

While the initial proposal for the *binational* mall included plans for a hotel complex, a museum and a library, following the collapse of the World Trade Center buildings in New York in 2001, border expansion and redevelopment efforts dating to the mid-1990s began stressing security aspects of the national-territorial boundary despite neoliberal discourses of regional integration that suggested the contrary. Amidst continued emphasis on expanding free trade since the NAFTA, a parallel discourse of border security highlighted a tension between local needs and desires and national security and immigration enforcement policy imperatives. In his article, “San Diego-Tijuana: Reinventing a Border Crossing,” San Diego-based geographer Lawrence Herzog, for example, argues that the construction of the new border crossing facilities should resemble the aesthetics of airports both in their design and function, “visually appealing to the user . . . constructed of glass, filled with sculpture, art, bookstores, cafes, and restaurants,” in order to serve as a welcoming space upon people’s travels. The Department of Homeland Security and General Service Administration, however, circulated possible five designs for the new port of entry. The latter’s sketches all included high-tech, fortified cement structures meant to architecturally convey impenetrability and the inevitable surveillance of all movements and actions, while

Herzog's vision for the port of entry facilities ironically mirrored some of the early design sketches for the mall.

Herzog's premise of the San Diego-Tijuana border region being an integrated cross-border metropolis obfuscates a paradoxical reality that the border has a dual main function. On the one hand, it does serve to facilitate the "circulation of people, vehicles, goods, services, capital and technology *within a bi-national living space* (my emphasis)," while also functioning for the purpose of national-territorial security, which Mains reminds us is always already about patrolling social fabric of the nation. In this regard, Herzog's argues that the current port of entry complex he describes as a "cross between a prison and a military encampment," is obsolete—an outmoded and "ugly reminder of international boundaries of the nineteenth century" that has no place in the 21st century U-S//Mexico borderlands—which thereby betrays the border's second function as a conduit of exchange. He further suggests that most border "users" are not security threats, but cross-border commuters engaged in business, leisure and/or other forms of travel, and the port of entry should thus cater to their aesthetic sensibilities and not to the (real and/or imagined) exigencies of national security discourse.

While we can observe that for some the border region functions as a binational living space, relatively speaking, by generalizing and falsely observing the San Diego-Tijuana border region as an integrated cross-border metropolis, Herzog not only obscures competing narratives about the border, but he collapses multiple and competing interests together and suggests the integrated metropolis is a universally accepted framework. In contrast, my research demonstrates that while the border region may be economically integrated in some respects, it is still socially and politically marked by different forms of violence as a low-intensity conflict zone, particularly for Mexicanas/os, Chicanas/os, and Latinas/os living in San Ysidro both with regards to the City of San Diego and the U-S//Mexico border itself. As such, rather than illogical or a contradictory anomaly relegated to the past, the increased solidification and securitization of boundary enforcement serves a structurally necessary and logical function that aims to maintain, uphold and perpetuate what are the constitutive contradictions of developed/developing worlds. In other words, lending credence to the work of Andreas (1996) and Nevins (2002), the border functions as a way of appeasing concerns from the national body politic about the need to protect the border from the foreign, while still allowing the sufficient amount of foreign (labor) in to meet the demands of employers. In this regard, the paradoxical opening and closing of the border serves an economic, political, *and* social, or colonial/racial purpose that supercedes the hybrid, integrated, borderless or cross-border metropolis that Herzog, Josh Kun, and others long for in their work. This is not to say that a borderless future is out of our reach, but rather that these latter analyses fail to account for the materiality of the present border, while a long historical perspective brings to light both the changes undergone over the years, as well as the fact that more changes are in fact possible.

Based on this initial premise of the trans-border regions, for Herzog the border crossing design, like that of the binational mall, does not need to emphasize security concerns, but rather should serve as entrance of sorts, an open door that would logically be welcoming. This welcoming door or "gateway" idea is evident in the initial designs for

the trans-border shopping mall whose original name was “Gateway of the Americas” retained the “gate” as in Operation Gatekeeper, initiated in part due to NAFTA’s *projected* displacement of indigenous and rural populations in Mexico. In other words, whether one is migrating due to the forced displacement of neoliberal policies or shopping at a mall that also epitomizes said policies, the *gate* remains a present element of the U-S///Mexico border. In the case of the mall, now named *Las Américas Premium Outlets*, but referred to simply *Las Américas*, this remains literally the case, as one can actually park perpendicularly right up against the corrugated steel landing mats, with Border Patrol vehicles hovering nearby atop the Tijuana River control channel. A port of entry such as the one argued for by Herzog, would thus undermine the social function of the scopic existence of the border. Its hypervisibility, serving as a reminder not of outmoded borders of the past, but of the continued power differentials of not only the two countries but the *two* regions Herzog presumes are one integrated transborder metropolis—San Diego fifteen miles to the north and Tijuana to the south. What then are we to make of San Ysidro? Where is San Ysidro located in the transborder metropolis?

This dissertation began by asking questions about San Ysidro’s structural location and erasure as a border city with regards to the City of San Diego. What my research reveals, is that much like the argument that modernity has always had its underside, coloniality—the colonial/racial logics of violence and dispossession that conceal the success of the West of Global North—San Diego’s designation as America’s Finest City is also premised on its underside, San Ysidro and the South Bay. In other words, San Diego is not a border city in any proper sense. Instead, it is the southern neighborhoods of the South Bay that constitute the border city counterparts to Tijuana, and although they are equally invisibilized, they are key to sustaining San Diego’s prosperity and allure through access to cross-border trade, commerce, increased revenues, claims to diversity, etc., yet without the mutual commitment from downtown. The popular understanding that San Diego is the city bordering Tijuana, yet is “really” composed of the areas north of Highway 94, just barely including downtown and stretching far to the north and east, underscores the simultaneous claim to and negation of the border(ed) community of San Ysidro. Ironically, a recent publication *Under the Perfect Sun: The San Diego Tourists Never See* (2003), which aims to dispel the accepted history of sunbelt city boosterism that is often credited with giving rise to the city’s stature, does much to elucidate the hidden histories of labor struggle in San Diego, yet reproduces the erasure of San Ysidro and of the Mexican communities of San Diego more broadly. An understanding of this paradox and border(ed) location of the South Bay communities can thus play an important role in furthering research on the U-S///Mexico, coloniality, violence and national-territorial boundaries with significant implications for both policy and progressive politics that go beyond the normalized violence of colonial erasure. As violence, of both high and low intensities, continues to escalate in various U-S///Mexico border communities, it is imperative that social science, cultural studies, and border studies research be attentive to the past, present and long historical dimensions of the violence, as well as the local and global, and the material and discursive particularities of the sites under consideration as this study has demonstrated. It is in this way that we can envision and work to enact a borderless future without losing sight of power, and without reproducing any further colonial impingements.

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