

David Montejano

*David Montejano: Reflections on a Career in Chicana/o Studies*

Chicana/o Studies Oral History Project

Interviews conducted by  
Todd Holmes  
in 2018

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the University of California, Office of the President.

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David Montejano

## Abstract

David Montejano is professor emeritus of ethnic studies and history at UC Berkeley. Born and raised in San Antonio, Texas, Professor Montejano received his PhD in sociology from Yale University. In the years that followed, he held faculty positions at UC Berkeley, the University of New Mexico, and the University of Texas, Austin. He returned to Berkeley in 2002. A member of the Texas Institute of Letters, he is the author of many publications within the field of Chicana/o studies, including: "Frustrated Apartheid: Race, Repression, and Capitalist Agriculture in South Texas" (1979); *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836–1986* (1987); *Chicano Politics and Society in the Late Twentieth Century* (1999); "The Beating of Private Aguirre: A Story about West Texas in World War II" (2005); *Quixote's Soldiers: A Local History of the Chicano Movement, 1966–1981* (2010); and *Sancho's Journal: Exploring the Political Edge with the Brown Berets* (2012). In this interview, Professor Montejano discusses: his family background and upbringing; his educational journey from high school to attending University of Texas, Austin; his participation and thoughts on Chicano activism; his graduate experience at Yale and getting established in the academy; the Chicano Political Economy Collective at Berkeley; his reflections on the state of Chicana/o studies during the early years and how the field evolved over the decades; the aims and contributions of his scholarship to the field; developing the Top Ten Percent Plan in Texas; the reception of Chicana/o studies in higher education and at the universities he served; as well as his thoughts on important works, themes, and high points in the field's development over the last fifty years.

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## Project History

By Todd Holmes  
Berkeley, California

Over fifty years ago, UC Berkeley anthropologist Octavio Romano founded the publication, *El Grito: A Journal of Contemporary Mexican-American Thought*. In many respects, it was one of many actions of the time that sought to channel the educational aims of the Mexican American civil rights movement into the corridors of higher education. And in the years that followed, scholars on campuses throughout California and the West built upon those objectives, ultimately establishing the academic discipline that became known as Chicana/o studies.

The Chicana/o Studies Oral History Project was established in 2017 with the goal of commemorating fifty years of Chicana/o studies and documenting the formation of the field through in-depth interviews with the first generation of scholars who shaped it. As a research unit of The Bancroft Library, the Oral History Center has enjoyed rare access to the academy since its founding in 1953, compiling one of the richest collections on higher education and intellectual history in the country. Interviews with Nobel laureates and university presidents fill this collection, as do those with renowned poets and leading scientists. Thus, oral histories with the founding generation of scholars in the field of Chicana/o studies were a fitting addition. Moreover, documenting the formation of an academic field aimed at studying the Mexican American experience was a rare and special opportunity all its own.

The importance of the project was without question; the reality of executing a project of this size and complexity, however, ushered forth a host of logistical challenges. To that end, we at the Oral History Center forged partnerships with scholars and universities across the country, establishing what could be considered an unprecedented collaboration to document the history of Chicana/o studies and celebrate the scholars who played a vital role in its formation. I first created an advisory council composed of recognized junior faculty in the field. Establishing the council was important, as it not only brought a larger, community voice into decisions on the project's scope and direction, but also seasoned expertise to the nomination process for interviewees—a procedure that likely proved much lengthier and more complicated than anyone anticipated. Ultimately, the council helped develop a list of over twenty-five prominent and pioneering scholars to be interviewed for the project.

The second part of this collaboration developed with universities. The Oral History Center is an independent, soft-money research unit at UC Berkeley, which means the office receives very little direct support from the university. Endowments and fundraising underwrite the OHC's operations. For the Chicana/o Studies Oral History Project, a generous consortium of deans, provosts, chancellors, and presidents stepped forward to extend support. Stanford University sponsored the first two interviews, with the University of California Office of the President raising the bar by pledging to fund all UC-related interviews. The pledge not only sought to highlight the role of UC campuses in the field, but also served as a call to arms for other universities in the West to follow suit. Many university administrators answered that call. Deans at UT Austin, Arizona State, and the University of Arizona pledged support, as did administrators at Loyola Marymount, Gonzaga University, UT San Antonio, Brigham Young University, and the University of Houston, among others. Again, highlighting the leading role of



California in the field, the California State University system agreed to fund all CSU-related interviews for the project. The outpouring of support behind the Chicana/o studies project stands as an inspiring collaboration within the academy.

The scholars included in this project represent some of the most influential writers, educators, and activists in the field of Chicana/o studies. To be sure, their contributions to the field are many, from teaching and scholarship to mentoring and administration, with each playing a unique and significant role in advancing the study of the Mexican American experience from a mere idea in the late 1960s to a mainstay on college campuses across the country five decades later. I'm indebted to each for their generosity and participation in this project. They not only opened up their homes and offices for the interviews, but shared their work and experiences with sincerity and candor. They also exhibited a noteworthy level of humility, as each would be among the first to call this project far from complete. Projects are often imperfect, and this oral history series is no different. Some of those we wished to include, such as Juan Gómez-Quiñones, passed away before they could be interviewed, just as funding complications have delayed the inclusion of others. Thus, as the first installment of this project goes to press, we remember those who passed before they could participate and look forward to the new additions to be made in the years to come.

This project significantly advances our understanding of the development and evolution of the field of Chicana/o studies. Yet the development of Chicana/o studies, as captured in these interviews, is more than just the story of a discipline. It is the story of a generation of scholars who broke through barriers to take their place in the nation's universities, and spent their careers documenting the history and experience of their community. It is the story of educational reform, where scholars of color demanded that America's curriculum equally include all its citizens. In many respects, it is also a story that highlights another side of the civil rights movement, one where actions in the classroom, rather than those in the streets, proved the long-lasting vector of social change. It is my hope that this project does justice to that legacy.

### **Advisory Council**

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## Interview 1: June 4, 2018

01-00:00:00

Holmes:

All right, this is Todd Holmes with the Oral History Center at UC Berkeley. Today's date is June 4, 2018, and I am sitting down with David Montejano for the Chicana/Chicano Studies Oral History Project. We are here at his beautiful home in Berkeley, California. David, thanks so much for sitting down with me. This is the first of our two sessions together, which will explore your life and career, as well as your reflections on the development of the field of Chicano studies. But before we get to that, let's start with maybe a little bit about your family and background.

01-00:00:44

Montejano:

Okay. I was born in Del Rio, Texas, 1948. Both my parents are from Del Rio, Texas. My mom was basically a migrant worker. She was part of an extended family that migrated across the Midwest, usually. And my dad, after he got out of the military—he was a World War II vet—worked for the post office. They moved to San Antonio. He got out of World War II, and comes home, marries my mom. In 1950, two years after I'm born, they move to San Antonio and he gets a job in the post office.

Then he got a college degree, went to law school, yeah. He knew Henry B. González. He was part of that group, except, he never could pass the bar, and that was a major blow for him. He took it three times; he could only take it three times. It was a big blow for him, and he went in a tailspin after that. And so, I got to see both the ups and downs—without even knowing about it, right? Because you're growing up, and you don't know why your dad is so pissed off all the time. Only later do you realize, "Oh, okay, this is what was going on."

So basically, they separated during that time, when I was in high school. I was the oldest, and I was sort of taking care of the family. My mom was working as a seamstress at Finesilver Manufacturing Company. We're growing up in San Antonio, and she's sending us to Catholic school, which charged tuition, and there're three of us—me and my sister and my brother. Even though it was maybe minimal, she's still paying for you to go to Catholic school, [laughs] and so that really motivates you to study, to do your work and stuff like that.

Later as we're growing up, like in high school, that's when we started getting into labor stuff. You would hear about labor issues, and we ask, "Are you interested?" or, "why don't you join the union?" We were talking to my mom, and of course, the reason had to do with job security. You didn't want to jeopardize your only source of income. Anyway, we grew up fairly—well I didn't realize how poor we were, but [laughs] we were. Our neighborhood was a poor, working-class neighborhood.

01-00:04:52

Holmes: And your extended family, Del Rio, was that the home of both sides of your parents' families?

01-00:05:00

Montejano: Right. Yeah, Del Rio. Yeah, we took frequent trips to Del Rio. As a kid, I'd spend summers over there with my grandparents. Yeah, so Del Rio was definitely the family home, so to speak.

01-00:05:18

Holmes: It's very interesting, in talking to a few scholars who grew up in Texas and in talking about their extended families there, it's always the question: Did they settle in Texas, or did Texas settle around them—if we look at the history of that. How many generations does your family go back in Del Rio?

01-00:05:39

Montejano: On Mom's side, it goes back quite a bit, because her mother was born in Texas, in the Big Spring area, and then, she's a Losoya. The Losoyas are one of the pioneering Spanish colonizing families. There's a Losoya, Texas, outside of San Antonio. So she's a Losoya, and that tells us my mom's side, following the matrilineal line, go back pretty far.

Then my other grandparents crossed into Texas right at the turn of the century. They talk about migrations: walking from San Luis Potosí, or Múzquiz. If I wanted to probe my family background, I'd go to Múzquiz, because I remember talk of walking to Múzquiz. That was one migration. Then, there's a lot of revolutionary stuff happening, and they actually walk to Piedras Negras-Eagle Pass, and then settle in Del Rio. That was on my dad's side.

01-00:07:21

Holmes: Well, tell us a little bit about growing up in San Antonio. Most people know of the town, but its location is really at that nexus of South and Central Texas. What do they call it, the Texas Triangle? Discuss your experience growing up in the neighborhood there in San Antonio.

01-00:07:43

Montejano: Well, San Antonio was very segregated; we're talking about the 1950s and '60s. We were right on the edge of the demarcation line, called Culebra. It's very ironic; *culebra* meaning snake, right? But it was a pretty obvious line. On the other side of Culebra was the beginning of the middle-class Anglo neighborhood, and we were a working-class Mexican American neighborhood. But there were poorer neighborhoods around ours. That's why I didn't realize how poor we were, because we were better off than everybody else.

But across the street was Culebra and segregation was a pretty big deal, and as you're a kid growing up, you start to wonder, "Why is everything drawn so neatly?" And then going to Catholic school sort of separated me from the neighborhood kids. When I went to high school, basically, high school was

downtown. I didn't realize it, but I was busing myself to high school— basically that's what I was doing—to a college prep high school, which was very different from the public high school that we would've gone to, had I gone to the one close by. And so, my mom knew that, and that was why the sacrifice for paying for Catholic tuition.

01-00:09:46

Holmes:

How would you describe your interaction with the community? You said you were somewhat separated because you went to different schools, and there were different communities around. Did you mingle within the other communities, friends in the other communities, or was your experience much more solitary?

01-00:10:05

Montejano:

It's funny, because my sister, who is two years younger than me, jokes about how they would defend me from the neighborhood kids. I did have a friendship group, but it wasn't in my neighborhood; it was based around high school. Or when I was in grade school, it was based around that. But they didn't live in my neighborhood, so I didn't get to know the *vatos*, the gang guys, in my block, for example. That's when my sister says, "Ah, we used to defend you all the time." And I say, "What?" [laughter] But yeah, going to high school really separated me from the other kids my age in the neighborhood.

01-00:11:06

Holmes:

Let's talk a little bit about your high school years. What was the name of the Catholic high school that you attended?

01-00:11:10

Montejano:

Central Catholic.

01-00:11:13

Holmes:

And so you started attending there in what, 1962?

01-00:11:16

Montejano:

'62, yeah, '62.

01-00:11:21

Holmes:

During this time, of course, you also have a rising tide of activism over the war in Vietnam, or at least the start of activism on that during your high school years, as well as civil rights. How did this impact you? Did you experience any of that in your high school environment?

01-00:11:40

Montejano:

Yeah, I did, and how can I say, not in any kind of direct way. It was more, well first of all, you're absorbing all this religious philosophy about brotherhood, and so forth, and justice, and you're seeing some priests involved in the civil rights marches. And at the time, I got pretty involved in the whole Catholic justice network, and I got to know some of the priests and so forth. As a matter of fact, I became, during my high school what they called the

prefect. They have a religious club called the sodality, and they use the Roman nomenclature for their positions. So I was a prefect, which means I was the top dog.

Well, when I joined it, it was pretty much just dedicated to devout prayer and so forth, and going to Mass. But when I took over—and I had a vice prefect, similar to me—we changed it. We turned it into a social justice group. We started emphasizing activism. We formed an organization called CASA. I forget the full name now, but anyway, it involved different high school youth, from the different Catholic high schools. We'd go out on weekends and start doing basically social work projects. Dilapidated school building in the *colonia* needed a paint job—ah, perfect for us, man. We'd get twenty-five kids out there, and have a blast. We'd get the bus, go out there.

We started doing that kind of stuff, and then we started getting more political. When the poll tax was declared unconstitutional, I remember that. We joined the march. There was a march carrying the casket of the poll tax, but we got into trouble for that. [laughs] We were sort of stepping over the bounds of your, whatever. Well we drew a lot of publicity.

So yeah we transformed this religious organization into this social action group, which was a lot of fun. It had to do with some of the example that some of the priests were setting. Then, again, not to say that this was shared by everybody. The brothers and the clergy there were pretty conservative: they supported the Vietnam War, for example.

By the time I graduated, I was also the president of the debate and speech society, and that's interesting because the brothers put me to that right away as a freshman. They said, "Oh man, you have a thick accent." [laughs] I had a real thick accent apparently. I didn't know. I mean because before that, my grade school was all Mexican American. Then I go to a high school where it was 80 percent Anglo, basically. So, that was an interesting period, because this is where I had to finally learn how to compete. I had a lot of friends in the Chicano movement who had never had to compete with Anglos until they got to college, and then they would freak out. You know what I mean? So I sort of did that early.

But anyway, the brothers put me in the speech and debate society. They said I had a heavy accent, so, sure enough, I got into it, and by the time I graduated, I'm the president of the society. It was a great experience. I don't know if you know about the forensic leagues. They're competitions between different high school speech and debate societies. It was an invaluable experience for me, because you debate a proposition, and that's going to be the theme for the whole year, and you have to learn the pros and cons of that position, whatever it is.

I remember one year the question was: Should we abolish nuclear weapons? What are the pros and cons, and so forth? So, you do research, you prepare your points and so forth, and then you go out and debate other debate teams elsewhere.

So that was very important. The forensic congresses also have different, sort of like field events you can do, like extemporaneous speaking. That's where you're in a group and they give you your topic and you got two minutes to prepare a two-minute talk. That kind of stuff. But anyway, I was the president of the speech and debate society and the prefect of the sodality. And then, it was a military school, too.

01-00:18:52

Holmes:

Oh really?

01-00:18:54

Montejano:

Well, ROTC was mandatory the first two years, and then after that, you either had to be in the PE program or in ROTC. I was a cadet major. I was like fifth in command or fourth in command, something like that. I was in charge of the commissary. [laughs] This is all practice, man. You know what I mean? Junior ROTC. My God, I still remember asking the sergeant—they had Army instructors, actual Army personnel come and give us classes on tactics and things like that, and I would always be the one asking, "Well, who is the enemy?" They'd always be talking about the enemy. "Well," I said, "who's the enemy? Who is the enemy?" I mean [laughs] it was always "the enemy," right?

Anyway, it was basically a Junior ROTC, very strong. We had Chaminade Guard, a military drill team that was known throughout the state. A lot of the folks that graduated from the high school joined the military. One of my colleagues ended up being a general. You had a lot of majors. They go to Texas A&M, for example, from Central, which is another military school.

Well, most of my work is trying to understand my experience, the world I grew up in, and so it was in understanding the role that Central Catholic played in San Antonio, that I saw that other Catholic schools did the same in other segregated settings throughout Texas and really the Southwest. There's Cathedral in El Paso, there's Loyola in LA, and that was sort of like the leak in the caste system at the time. So, it's not surprising then, looking back, that the leaders in San Antonio's Mexican American community, are all graduates from that high school: Willie Velasquez; Henry Cisneros, who became mayor; Ernie Cortés, who founded Communities Organized for Public Service, a very important organization. They all graduated from that high school. They were several years ahead of me.

So the high school ends up being a pretty important strategic point for the Mexican American community at the time. It's no longer the case now. It

doesn't have that monopoly that it did at that time, but at that time, that was very important.

01-00:22:36

Holmes: I was going to ask too, when we're thinking of these issues such as Vietnam, such as civil rights, how did you—

01-00:22:43

Montejano: Oh, I know I want to finish a thought here, because you asked about this, and this is what got me talking about the speech and debate society, and the extemporaneous speaking sessions. I was in Houston, I remember, doing an extemporaneous thing on the Civil Rights Movement. It was interesting. I'm talking about black civil rights at the time. I'm not even thinking of Mexican American civil rights. It wasn't until later that I started thinking, [laughs] "Wait a minute, we might be in the same boat," right? It wasn't until later, but at that time, I'm pretty involved, participating in some of these marches.

01-00:23:48

Holmes: How did this type of activism, particularly when we're thinking of Texas and civil rights, how did you see this activism impact your community? Was there a generational divide?

01-00:24:06

Montejano: Oh yeah, of course. Yeah, there's a generational divide. Well, my parents were very upset with me and my sister. My sister and I were very much involved in a lot of this activism at the time. Of course, it all breaks out; just as Cesar goes out on the farm workers' strike in '65, I'm a junior in high school, and then that quickly spreads to Texas, and so yeah, I'm joining the boycott committees, that kind of stuff. My mom was like, she's not against it, she's just concerned. She's worried what's going to happen here. Anyway, yeah, that was a big generational divide. Vietnam split up my family.

01-00:25:09

Holmes: Oh really?

01-00:25:10

Montejano: Yeah it did, it really did. Well, my dad was a World War II vet, definitely saying, "You got to join," this kind of stuff. My mom was totally opposed to that, and supported me and my sister. My sister and I are the ones out protesting. My dad doesn't like what we're doing. My younger brother, who's three years younger, joins with my dad and joins the Marines.

01-00:25:59

Holmes: Oh wow.

01-00:26:00

Montejano: He joins the Marines, in direct response to what my sister and I are doing.

01-00:26:07

Holmes: Oh wow.



01-00:26:08

Montejano:

Yeah, so you can imagine, that was like, "Holy cow." So he's in the Marines, and we're praying that he comes back uninjured, whole, all this kind of stuff, but it was a pretty tense period. So yeah, Vietnam—there's a generational split. Anyway, so yeah, I was pretty much involved in a lot of stuff. I was arrested at UT. It had to do with protesting a racist incident. I was part of the Don Weedon Twenty-three. [laughs] We used to have—it's funny—at the time, you have the Chicago Seven; you have all this. We had the Don Weedon Twenty-three. There were twenty-three of us that were arrested. Anyway, we can talk about that if you want, but that happened in Austin, and the charges are later thrown out, but it as a way to really harass and contain the activism, and the activists.

01-00:27:36

Holmes:

Well I wanted to turn to your undergraduate years. So you entered UT Austin in 1966?

01-00:27:42

Montejano:

No, in '67. I went to Southwest Texas State in '66. It's now called Texas State, but that was fifty miles up the road. It's in San Marcos; it's in between Austin and San Antonio. I thought this was a small liberal arts college and go there, and find it's a cowboy college. It was a cowboy-run college, and it was like stepping back thirty years in time. It made segregated San Antonio feel very enlightened. This was stepping into a Southern town man, run by cowboys. Anyway, in summer 1967 the farm workers marched through San Marcos on the way to Austin, and I joined them, and I didn't look back. I stayed in Austin. I transferred.

So I started as a sophomore at UT, and yeah, and then got involved there pretty much. We formed a group called the Mexican American Youth Organization, MAYO. Well it was called MASO first, Mexican American Student Organization; we changed it to MAYO later. But we did a number of things: protesting police brutality, things like that.

So Austin was a very Southern town. The signs had just come down a couple of years prior, the "white only" signs. This is '67. But the attitudes were still there. You knew what places to avoid. And there weren't that many blacks or Mexican Americans there at UT at the time; we were a handful. Anyway, there was this guy, Don Weedon. He was a racist owner of a gas station right there on Guadalupe, close by campus, and he didn't like blacks, Mexicans, or hippies, white hippies. So we all knew that. But one night, he's at a bar, and he beats up a student, a black student. The guy was drunk. The student is in the hospital, and Don Weedon is fined twenty-five dollars. He pleads *nolo contendere*; he's fined twenty-five dollars, while the student's still in the hospital.

So the black student organization comes to us—we formed this Mexican American organization—we're going to go picket Don Weedon's gas station.

We say, "Yeah, we're going to join you." So we start picketing the place, and it was great. That first day, we shut the place down. Well, we caught everybody by surprise. And it wasn't just the black student organization and us; it was also the Students for a Democratic Society, SDS. Yeah, it was SDS, us, and the black student organization, so we shut the place down the first day. Of course, we weren't thinking at all in terms of tactics or anything. We should have been, because the second day we walked into a trap. The police were there; the dogs were there; the fire trucks were there; they were all there anticipating a second day of picketing. Everything is going smoothly; they just don't want us to obstruct anybody who wants to get gas.

So sure enough, this carload of the sorority girls—I remember it was a Lincoln Continental with these four white sorority girls in there laughing, giggling, deliberately try to go through to get gas. Well sure enough, this African American woman jumps on the hood, and says, "This car will not pass." [laughter] Oh my God! The Austin police send the only two black cops on the force to cart her off, which they do, and as she's being carted off, she's yells, "If you're with me you will not let this car pass!"

So you have to make a snap decision there whether you're going to sit down or not. So of course, twenty-three of us sat down, but it was dumb decision because we were the leadership. You know what I mean? In other words, we just played right into their hands because we ended up being out on bond for a year, which meant that we had to tell the local police, anytime we left Austin, where we were going. We just played right into their hands. We didn't even—you know, *no estamos pensando* [we are not thinking], man.

But anyway, yeah, that happened. You talk about protest, and activity, and all that, there was a lot going on in Austin. So that explains the family joke that comes up later, because I was pretty active, and all this, and I would end up going to Yale, right? One of my aunts hadn't seen me for a while and she said, "Where's David, *dónde está David?*" And my mom said, "*Está en Yale*, he's in Yale." And my *tía* said, "Oh, what did he do now?" [laughter]

01-00:35:20

Holmes: She thought she said "jail."

01-00:35:21

Montejano: Yeah. "What did he do now?" [laughter]

01-00:35:33

Holmes: That's funny—and not the first time I've heard that happening to people [laughter]. Well at UT, you were a double major: political science and sociology. What drew you to these fields?

01-00:35:52

Montejano: I started with social work initially in my freshman year in San Marcos, mainly because I was interested in understanding poverty, and then also segregation,

and that's when I discovered sociology, and sociology made all these promises too, like they could explain society and change. So that's what drew me to sociology. And then political science was just because, okay, it was politics. I was almost a triple major, by the way, in English, too.

01-00:36:38

Holmes:

Oh really?

01-00:36:38

Montejano:

Yeah, I almost had enough hours—I could've probably gotten another major there. I liked to write so I had been doing that. That was one great thing about the high school that I went to, was writing, every week we were writing something, even if it was short. We had to write book reviews every week. So writing became a habit, and then, being on the speech and debate society, you're doing research all the time, so, I got into that kind of stuff—

01-00:37:18

Holmes:

Kind of started laying that foundation.

01-00:37:20

Montejano:

Yeah, started laying the foundation for all that kind of stuff. But at UT also, sociology, there were some professors that were influential. I worked at the Population Research Center there at UT, for the last two years, and that's really what paid for everything. They had various grants. They had fertility studies, or whatever. They were doing family planning stuff on the Mexican American community, and I was married at the time. Got married young, man. My wife and I, we get thirty dollars for every couple you interviewed.

They would give us a list; we go out and interview. And so we had a baby—oh man, we were scoring, man. We were getting thirty dollars for a one-hour interview. She'd interview the wife, I'd interview the husband—thirty bucks. And then, we would get the declines from the other interviewers. If we could get a decliner to be interviewed, we'd get sixty dollars! Anyway, that really got me into sociology, even though I wasn't really that much into family planning. But anyway, the professors and I got to know each other, and—

01-00:39:10

Holmes:

Well it also seems like it was a great introduction to field work as well.

01-00:39:14

Montejano:

Oh yeah, definitely, oh yeah, yeah.

01-00:39:17

Holmes:

You've discussed a lot of your various experiences at UT, but maybe if you could just discuss UT itself, like the type of environment that university was. This was, if we're thinking like 1967, things are starting to, at least at other universities, they're starting to diversify a little bit, both the curriculum and student body. What was your experience at UT?

01-00:39:44

Montejano:

Yeah, we had to deal with some pretty overt racism. There were maybe 30,000 students, maybe 300 Mexican Americans at the time, a very small number, an even smaller number of African Americans. But I'll just give you one example: They used to celebrate Texas Independence Day every year. The university, if you saw the way the mall was structured, they have a big, grassy mall facing the capital. But at the foot of the mall though, right at the edge of campus, was this fraternity house, Sigma Kappa whatever, Sigma Chi, yeah I remember them.

Anyway, so, the official ceremony on campus was, they would fire this cannon towards the capital. Sigma Chi would get drunk the night before, they'd have an all-night party—and the next day, they come up charging up the mall dressed as Mexican soldiers. They're acting like stupid Mexicans, all right. They're dressed like Mexican soldiers. They come whooping up, like they're charging the Texans, and of course, they're falling and stumbling, and they're all drunk, too.

Well that was happening; that was part of a ritual, every year. I'm in my sophomore year, and I'm saying, "What the—?" So, yeah, that was one of the first things we addressed, and we went to the campus administrators, and it wasn't until we got the Mexican consulate involved that things changed. That was our first victory. [laughs] That's what UT was like: very segregated.

01-00:42:19

Holmes:

Within the classroom, too, I know at this time, history courses are starting to diversify. They're starting to add in voices that were usually glazed over, omitted, or put into stereotypes. What was your experience in some of the classes that you were taking there, particularly in the social sciences?

01-00:42:38

Montejano:

You know, what I remember noticing was just sort of like the absence, really. It was just an absence of Mexican Americans. And so, a lot of my term papers, when I'd try to do independent projects or whatever, they would always be like, trying to understand, for example, the low educational attainment of Mexican Americans. I'm an undergraduate. I'm doing research on this kind of stuff. I'd actually spend a year doing this, take independent studies, to do this research. I do research; I'm a writer. I turn in my paper, and the professor accused me of plagiarism. Yeah! After I spend a whole damn year working on this paper, accuses me of plagiarism. He writes, "This, is too well written," blah, blah, blah, all this, "oh you know, it's obviously not your work."

01-00:43:44

Holmes:

Wow.

01-00:43:45

Montejano:

Yeah! That was a political scientist. I went back and I confronted the guy. Fortunately, by this time, I was in the junior honor society. This philosophy professor headed it; he was a dean. I confronted the professor directly, but I told this philosophy professor about what happened. He must have intervened behind the scenes, somehow.

But anyway, I didn't understand at the time, but that sort of established my rep there in the department, in the political science department. People must have talked about it, because other professors later would say something like, "Well, your analysis is not up to par here," or whatever. [laughs] Like, I'd get an A minus, and "I expected a little bit more." Like, where did they get this expectation from, you know what I mean? There must have been some talk about this. "Watch out for this Mexican American; he can write. [laughter] He can do research or something."

01-00:45:29

Holmes:

Well, you had mentioned that there was some faculty advisors and some mentors at UT that helped you along the way. Can you say a few words about them?

01-00:45:41

Montejano:

Yeah, Harley Browning, he was the head of the Population Research Center, he's in sociology. Frank Bean, he's at Irvine right now; he's still active. He was in his first year, he was a young faculty member, and I'm taking a stat class, and I still kid him about him giving me a B. They were running this fertility study that I was telling you about, at the Pop Center, so they both were helpful. Also Ben Bradshaw. I didn't know Harley had gone to Yale, or Ben Bradshaw had gone to Brown. And then the philosophy professor, God, I'll have to think of his name, but also was a Yale PhD. So obviously those letters helped, yeah.

But Yale itself was an accident, because I didn't apply to Yale. I applied to Michigan, and Wisconsin. I was applying to another state school. The Ford Foundation had a fellowship program. The first year, I applied for it. I was a finalist, and the finalists get to be interviewed in New York City. So that was my first trip to New York City.

01-00:47:24

Holmes:

Oh wow.

01-00:47:25

Montejano:

Yeah. I'm twenty-one years old, going to New York City. They paid everything, and the professors, there were three of them who were interviewing me. Again, it's sort of like, I don't know what my horizons are here, you know what I mean? I had never thought of the Ivy League. But they had my profile in front of them and they're saying, "Why don't you consider Yale?" And I said, "What?" And they said, "Yeah, it's just up the road. This

Professor Rodolfo Alvarez is there, and he's been wanting graduate students. While you're here, why don't you just go up there?" So I did.

It was a direct connection, as a result of that interview with the Ford people. And Rudy, Professor Alvarez, who was a junior faculty member, took me to the dean's office, said, "Here he is," [laughter] because I guess Professor Alvarez had been pushing to recruit people. And so, "Here he is!" [laughter] Anyway, I guess I had very good GRE scores. Had I known, I would've applied to maybe the other Ivy League schools too. I don't know. But anyway, that's what happened, and Yale accepted me. They gave me a fellowship too, but I stuck with the Ford one. Ford was pretty good.

01-00:49:21

Holmes:

What began to inspire you to think about graduate school?

01-00:49:34

Montejano:

Well, I liked to do research, and I liked writing, and then I had these questions, again, that grew up with me, and I was interested in understanding the movement that I had been part of. I was interested in understanding segregation, and I was still interested in understanding poverty, why we had such inequality. And sociology offered answers, or proposed to offer answers. And then, all my friends were going to law school at the time. I thought about law school, but, I also thought that it was sort of boring. It just didn't attract me the way it did others.

01-00:50:40

Holmes:

And, were these mentors and advisors as you were talking about at UT Austin, were they the ones who were encouraging you to think about grad school?

01-00:50:50

Montejano:

Yes, oh most definitely, because I was there at the Pop Center, doing field work and so forth. That was important, yeah. Law school, three years, in and out, that was attractive, but, I said, "That's boring." [laughs]

01-00:51:24

Holmes:

I think if we're honest, every PhD has thought about that, particularly when you're at year three, 'If I was in law school, I would have been done by now.'

01-00:51:32

Montejano:

Right, right. Yeah.

01-00:51:34

Holmes:

And it's a more determined path, versus academia.

01-00:51:37

Montejano:

Yeah, well, I could have gone to law school in and out three times, by the time I finished. But I would still have done the same thing. I'm doing what I'm enjoying to do.

01-00:51:53

Holmes:

I wanted to ask, before we get a little further into your graduate experience at Yale—during this time what would become known as Chicano studies is beginning to take shape. Did you have any interaction with the field at this time? Was this developing field of Chicano studies on your radar, by the time you entered Yale?

01-00:52:34

Montejano:

No. First of all, I knew what I wanted to do. I knew I wanted to understand the Chicano movement, and that was my initial dissertation proposal. I knew what I wanted to do in terms of studying the Mexican American community, and so forth. But in terms of whether there was a field, I don't know at what point it becomes a field.

The first time I heard of the field was in '72. I already had been in grad school two years, and Rudy Alvarez was part of that development, by the way. He wrote a couple of important articles. So, we had articles. We had Rudy Acuña, *Occupied America*. We had Carey McWilliams who did his work in the late '40s. I was familiar with Paul Taylor's work that he did in the '30s. There was all this disparate stuff, but nobody had put it together in terms of a field, say, Chicano studies, but it was emerging. I taught the first class, by the way, at Yale, in Chicano studies—I forgot what we called it: the Sociology of the Chicano Community, or something like that. Yeah, but as an advanced grad student, I taught that class there.

01-00:54:14

Holmes:

At UT did you cross paths with Américo Paredes?

01-00:54:19

Montejano:

No, unfortunately not as an undergrad. In my last year, I signed up for this class with Paredes, and it was on literature. And I said, "Man, I'm finally going to get to have a class with Américo." It turned out to be Raymond Paredes, not Américo Paredes. But Raymond, by the way, ends up becoming an important figure in his own right. He ends up being a chancellor at UCLA, and currently he's still the head of the college system there in Texas.

01-00:55:05

Holmes:

If we look at this developing field, which would later be called Chicano studies, there is these points of kind of geneses that people point to. There's the 1969 El Plan de Santa Bárbara. You were in Texas at this time. Did you have any recollection that this event happened? I know there was, a connection between UT Austin and UCLA, a little bit.

01-00:55:41

Montejano:

What happens in my sophomore year, I'm very active, it's when I was part of the Don Weedon Twenty-Three and so forth, and I'm not doing that well in school. I'm just like, not going to class, and there's a lot of stuff going on. The Chicano movement is taking off. They'd say, "There's a meeting in Laredo,

Texas," so we'd get in the car and drive to Laredo, Texas. We're doing a lot of that kind of stuff, right?

So, anyway, I'm sure all young people go through these existential crises—I was going to drop out. I had been accepted to the Peace Corps. As a sophomore, I was going to go, and then come back. I already had my plane tickets to Puerto Rico for training. I was going to be stationed in Colombia, and I was looking forward to it. This was, to me, I thought, an extension of the activism that I was doing. Well, my long-time girlfriend gets pregnant. Holy cow! I had to make a decision here. And so, we got married. I didn't go to Puerto Rico, did not join the Peace Corps, and instead I got married. So I'm a junior, and I had to just buckle down and support my young family.

And so I'm working, and I'm trying to get good grades so I can get scholarships or fellowship support. So that's what happened: I buckled down the last two years at UT. I got straight A's all the way through, and then working with the Pop Center helped, and it took me out of the activism that I had been involved in. In other words, I know what's going on, but no, I didn't go to Denver. Then in New Haven, later, I'm also hearing of stuff going on, but I'm in New Haven. So, I felt like I was missing a lot of the activism, but the way I sort of rationalized it: I said, "Well I'm going to write about this. I'm picking up the tools so I can come back and write about it."

01-00:58:55  
Holmes:

Well also what we see right around this time—during your later years at UT Austin and early years during graduate school—is the field also developing some intellectual space. Journals such as *El Grito* out of UC Berkeley; *Aztlán: the Chicano Journal of Social Sciences and Arts* there at UCLA; and then the *Journal of Mexican American History* published out of UC Santa Barbara. Were these journals on your radar?

01-00:59:28  
Montejano:

Yeah! *Aztlán* was; certainly *El Grito*, definitely. They were the first, right? And I actually got one of my first articles published in *Aztlán*.

01-00:59:40  
Holmes:

Yeah, we'll talk about that here in a few minutes. [laughter] I have that on my list.

01-00:59:43  
Montejano:

Oh, you do? [laughs] I'm embarrassed by that article, man. I don't even want to include it in my CV at all. In sociology, they really try to constrain my writing. They said, "We need working hypotheses. Give us ten working hypotheses that you're going to test." They wanted me to write in that fashion. "This is the null hypothesis; this is the"—and that's when I started to distance myself a little bit from sociology. I said, "This is ridiculous." What is social interaction analysis, where you measure? And I say, "I know who the *jefe*



[chief] is; everybody calls him 'The Jefe.' Why do I have to measure this? This is ridiculous!" [laughter]

I started questioning sociology. This attempt to measure, or try to predict human behavior, basically where you have all these factors, and that's what the whole multiple regression analysis was all about. You put in all these factors, and then there's always that residual element that you can't predict. I would kid my colleagues, "Is that maybe human autonomy? Is that where maybe we can make a decision?" [laughs] Anyway, yeah, the quantitative direction that sociology took was something I did not participate in, and that's when I started gravitating towards history.

01-01:01:59

Holmes:

Before we talk about your graduate experience there at Yale, I wanted to actually ask you a little bit more about the Chicano movement. You've discussed your activism, growing up both in high school, then later at UT Austin, and the farm workers' movement seemed to be a very vibrant point in that. I know the movement came to Texas I think around 1966—

01-01:02:33

Montejano:

Yes, right.

01-01:02:35

Holmes:

Were you involved in that even in high school?

01-01:02:37

Montejano:

Yes! Well actually, I had graduated already, but Ernie Cortés, who also graduated from my high school, I didn't know him from Central, but he was at UT Austin when I got to Austin. I was a sophomore, he was a grad student, and he was organizing food caravans, down to Starr County, and I joined the caravans, and we went down; we're delivering food, going down to deep South Texas in 1967. Yeah, I was involved. We were trailed by cops. This is when you start seeing the ugly side of things, the power side that maybe you hadn't seen before as a high schooler. But anyway, yeah, I participated in that and the boycott activities at the supermarkets.

01-01:03:59

Holmes:

You were saying a few minutes ago of how that connection with your activism, your connection with the Chicano movement, began to raise questions that intellectually helped propel you along in your academic career—questions you wanted to study and research more. Did you see this happening within the developing field of Chicano studies? Did you see such activism coming to life among other scholars as well, and in the other work that was starting to come out during this time?

01-01:04:39

Montejano:

Well, at Yale, I was by myself. There weren't like— [laughs] Well, I could talk to Professor Alvarez, but—

01-01:05:25

Holmes:

Well maybe that's a good point, that in a sense going to Yale, did you feel there was a distancing from the movement then?

01-01:05:32

Montejano:

Yeah, I did. I did feel pretty much isolated. I wanted to get back as soon as possible. But I did feel isolated. I did meet some other folks in the Northeast who would end up being good friends. Martín Sánchez-Jankowski was at MIT, and I met him while I'm out there. We were both graduate students. The few of us that were there in the Northeast would get together. We'd sort of try to organize our own network. I organized a conference at Yale, during the time I was there.

But on campus itself, we had a graduate student group. We called ourselves The Committee, or *El Comité*, because there were only ten of us. This included the law school. This is across the board. And so, yeah, there were only ten of us, and we called ourselves The Committee, you're aware that there is a movement going on, you're sort of aware of the fact that you want to open up the university. One of the things I did while I was at Yale was go out on recruiting trips. They'd pay for it, but they're using us as grad students to go out to recruit undergrads and other grad students.

01-01:07:39

Holmes:

In the attempt to diversify the student body—

01-01:07:43

Montejano:

Exactly, exactly. Yeah, so I did that quite a bit. Yeah, we're aware of that, certainly.

01-01:07:51

Holmes:

Why don't you talk a little bit more about the environment at Yale during graduate school? You were just saying, there's The Committee, which is about ten, but you also had an advisor who was very supportive of your research, as well, of looking at the Mexican American experience—

01-01:08:16

Montejano:

Well, okay, advisors. So what happens with Rudy Alvarez unfortunately is he doesn't get tenure. He's gone. We overlapped two years, and he's gone. But fortunately there were others that I could rely on. The person that was probably most influential was Stanley Greenberg. He, himself, also didn't get tenure. He was a junior faculty member in political science, and he was a student of Barrington Moore.

So I was already familiar with Barrington Moore and Barrington Moore was sort of like the kind of sociology that really interested me. I had read Barrington Moore as an undergrad; now I was reading him again; now I was working with someone who was working in his fashion. Stanley wrote a book called *Race and State in Capitalist Development*, so he was trying to do a Barrington Moore-type analysis but bringing race into the picture, and so

yeah, that was very influential to me. Took a class with him, a seminar where we're reading his manuscript. That was a big part of that seminar. So that was very influential, even though he was only a junior faculty member.

01-01:09:51

Holmes:

How did the rest of the department view the kind of work that you wanted to do? Did you feel there was support there, or there was faculty that you could discuss this with?

01-01:10:00

Montejano:

Yeah, well, there were some faculty where they were trying to be supportive. Okay, so I don't know if you remember Lee Trevino. He was a golfer at that time. He was at that time at the top of his game, became a nationally known golfer, and they called him the Super Mex. Well that's what one professor called me. Okay? I mean, I know he's trying to be friendly, he's trying to establish a relationship, but he's calling me Super Mex. How do you take that? Then, Wendell Bell was the chair of my dissertation committee, and he was like the liberal in the department, and the individual who would take on a lot of dissertation topics that others wouldn't take. [laughs] And so he gave me that space, although at the end, he really—well, I'll get to that.

And then the other person: so it was Wendell Bell, chair, and then Kai Erikson was very important. Kai Erikson, unfortunately though, was chair of American studies at the time. He came on late in my dissertation, but he ends up being important because he convinces Wendell to sign off [laughs] on the dissertation.

So, anyway, because the first iteration was rejected, and it was because I was using terms like "frustrated apartheid," and "proletariat," and "bourgeoisie," and things like that. And I was already at Berkeley at the time, and Wendell Bell is, "What are you reading out there? What are you studying out there? What's going on?" He was furious. So they rejected the first, and I got pissed—it was helpful though, I have to say, even though I should have anticipated a rewrite. So instead of frustrated apartheid, I talk about Jim Crow segregation; instead of proletariat, farm workers; instead of capitalist or bourgeoisie, farm owners; yeah, commercial agriculture rather than capitalism. [laughter]

But, I was so pissed, I said, "I'm going to double the size here, because you don't believe me." So I spent another year adding another—so the dissertation was close to 500 pages long. Yeah. [laughs] I was pissed. "You don't believe me?"

Anyway, I jumped ahead. So I was distancing myself from sociology. I didn't like the quantitative bent, at all, and then they had certain fields that they were emphasizing that I was not interested in. Criminal justice, that's not what I wanted to do, so I basically carved out my own path there.

- 01-01:14:19  
Holmes: You also taught your own class, as you mentioned.
- 01-01:14:22  
Montejano: Yeah, I did.
- 01-01:14:24  
Holmes: Discuss that a little bit. As you stated. I think you're right, it's probably the first class that would be under the umbrella of Chicano studies.
- 01-01:14:34  
Montejano: Well that was because the undergraduates demanded it. In other words, so there were like ten of us in graduate school, in the different departments; at the same time, there were about a hundred undergraduates from across the Southwest, mainly Latinos or Chicanos. And there were no classes in Chicano studies. So just like so many times in my career, I got this job because of a student protest. The students demanded a class in Chicano studies. So they asked me if I would be willing to teach it. I said "Yeah, I'd love to, yeah." That was 1974.
- 01-01:15:28  
Holmes: That was your last year at Yale, is that correct?
- 01-01:15:31  
Montejano: Yeah, I left in '75.
- 01-01:15:33  
Holmes: That's when you took a position at UC Berkeley.
- 01-01:15:37  
Montejano: Yeah, right.
- 01-01:15:39  
Holmes: I wanted to talk a little bit here too, towards the end here of our session, about some of your early scholarship and research. You already discussed how the methodology of sociology, like the social sciences, was already starting that quantitative bend. But you were also reading history, so you begin to do more studies later on that was not just interdisciplinary, but it was also what you would call historical sociology. Discuss how you define that term. Is it a mixture of the two disciplines?
- 01-01:16:27  
Montejano: Yeah, it's a mixture of the two disciplines, definitely. Well, you know sociologists sometimes take a very arrogant view of what history's about, and I ended up, by the way— [laughs] Well, that's a whole other story we can get to, when we talk about the way *Anglos and Mexicans* was first evaluated or received by sociologists. But as storytelling, as a chronology, almost like a simple chronology, you just assemble and that's it, which, that's a pretty mistaken view of what history's about. First of all, it involves recovery—

there's a whole recovery of facts or knowledge that has to take place oftentimes. That in itself is, I think, an important step.

But I think what makes it sociological is, it's trying to explain what happens. In other words, it's not just storytelling but trying to understand why things unfolded a certain way they did. And you always have in your mind other cases, by the way. Even if you don't even include them in your writing, you're thinking of other cases that, in a sense, you're testing. When I did Texas, I was always thinking of California, or New Mexico, even though it's not explicitly in the text. But the comparative perspective is very important. That's very sociological.

01-01:18:45

Holmes:

Well, and the methodology—if we look at some of your work, you're using archival research; you're using field work; you are using statistics or census reports. It's like what we would see in a lot of work within Chicano studies, as a lot of it is about recovery, and if we're trying to recover the past and analyze it, one needs a larger methodological tool box, I guess, than what is usually expected.

01-01:19:18

Montejano:

Yeah, yeah. Definitely. Well, I think I mentioned that a project that I have in mind is trying to write a volume on theory and methodology, to sort of tie in or make explicit, because someone told me I have fashioned a marriage here, and it'd be good to sort of flesh that out. "Okay here's what I did; here's the way I was thinking; this is the way I'm working," and so forth.

So the comparative perspective is important. I'll give you an example. When I was trying to think of, what was the situation in occupied Texas immediately after the Mexican War, it's occupied. What is that like? And so, I would then read literature that had nothing to do with that time period, and it led me to the occupation in Japan, and the whole discussion that the Allies were having about how to handle occupying Japan. So I was doing that comparison. It was interesting that, then you get into the question of, "Well, can American servicemen be tried by Japanese juries, for example, in a Japanese court?" That kind of stuff. Well the same kind of issues are happening in Texas at the time! Same thing. So anyway, that's what I mean by having the comparative perspective.

01-01:21:21

Holmes:

Well that's interesting too because by that comparative perspective—a historian is trained usually in a certain time period, area of study, where, as a sociologist, you're coming at history in a much kind of global perspective. What you're observing here seems to fit in with other experiences around the world.

01-01:21:45

Montejano:

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

01-01:21:49

Holmes:

I wanted to ask you too, before we start moving on to have you discuss some of your early works, I wanted to ask, what were some of the questions and interests that, particularly by the time you left Yale to come to UC Berkeley, were driving you intellectually?

01-01:22:14

Montejano:

Well, I was interested in understanding the Chicano movement, and I felt I sort of had a pretty good grasp of what was going on, except for the Brown Berets—these crazy guys, these street youth that had become political. And so that really fascinated me. I thought, if I can understand how they became political, maybe I could discover—it's sort of naïve, but maybe I could discover a key, some kind of formula that then could be replicated. That's what I was thinking, to find out how and why these guys became politicized, and then take it on the road or something, I don't know. So that was my initial interest, yeah. [laughs] And so then, it's only later that I discover how naïve my formulation was, but that's how it started, yeah.

01-01:23:27

Holmes:

Well let's talk about your article, which I think it was in 1977, published in the *Institute for the Study of Social Change*, titled "Race, Labor Repression, and Capitalist Agriculture: Notes from Texas."

01-01:23:41

Montejano:

Yeah. Okay. Well that's not the first one. The first one is the one that's not on my CV. [laughs]

01-01:23:54

Holmes:

That's the one in *Aztlán*, right?

01-01:23:57

Montejano:

Yeah, that's the one in *Aztlán*, yeah. That's the first one. Yeah, that's when I was trying to adhere to the sociology, this whole approach to working hypotheses, and so forth, and measurement—

01-01:24:26

Holmes:

Do you remember the title of that?

01-01:24:28

Montejano:

"Towards Understanding the Politicization of Lumpenproletariat," or something like that. I had "Lumpen" in there, yeah. So you can already see the language that was going to get me in trouble! [laughter] The lumpenproletariat, yeah, so I'm definitely coming in with a Marxist perspective here, but then trying to apply some sociology measurements to understand the makeup of this group, which, later, I said, "This is ridiculous, what they call quasi-statistics, to try to measure interaction and everything, when I can just write about it. I know who The Jefe is. He calls himself 'The Jefe.' Everybody calls him 'The Jefe.' He acts like the *jefe*. What am I doing?"

I was so embarrassed by that piece. I mean that. And by the way, that interactional statistics, this is what Stanford sociology is known for. In other words, I'm not this. [laughs] I ended up really criticizing the whole enterprise, man, of the whole methodological enterprise. I guess that's what was good about that exercise. I said, "I don't need this."

01-01:26:19

Holmes:

Well, let's talk about the 1977 article. Well this was after grad school, so you've been out, at least left Yale—

01-01:26:42

Montejano:

I left. Okay so what happens is, well, Berkeley comes knocking. What's happened is, Berkeley had a pretty active affirmative action program. They had like ten or twelve Chicano and Chicana graduate students in sociology. But they were not well integrated, or whatever. There was a concern among the department, and so there's this position announcement, man, and I'm ready to leave. I had already met my residency; I was tired of being in snow-bound New England, and isolated too. So I actually apply, and I was surprised that I got the job, because I was ABD, and this was the time when obviously that could happen. You could actually be hired and be ABD. I gave a talk; my talk was on Parsons, Talcott Parsons. Can you believe that?

01-01:28:01

Holmes:

Oh wow. [laughter]

01-01:28:03

Montejano:

It was a critique of Talcott Parsons—my God, Talcott Parsons's Parsonian sociology was like the dominant paradigm at the time. And so I felt I had to understand it, to see if there was anything there. And it was the same approach like I've done other projects: I spend a year or whatever, and you end up concluding there's nothing there. It was really hollow. It was a self-contained interpretive framework, but it was clearly meant to be an alternative to Marxism, or Marxist thought, or class analysis. Then it wasn't class; this is a functional picture of society, functioning like a machine.

Anyway, so I had a critique of Parsonian sociology, and he had his called AGIL system, each letter standing for something. I turned it around to spell it LIGA, L-I-G-A. Rubber band. I said, "It's a rubber band." That's probably what got me the job at Berkeley, because I give this talk criticizing Parsonianism, and calling it the rubber band, the LIGA, and so forth. And anyway, I got the job but what was really good was, I got to teach a graduate seminar. What was the name? Was it Social Change in the Southwest, or something like that?

Anyway, this is where all the grad students, we all came together, and some of the grad students were older than me. I was still the grad student, the way I felt too, and I was undergoing a whole different education than the one I had received at Yale. And now, there were no class theorists at Yale. We had

visiting Marxist scholars but that was it, nothing. So here at Berkeley, I'm undergoing a whole different education, though it was great. But in the seminar, we were all interested. We had Tomás Almaguer, Felipe Gonzalez, all sorts of different folks that were all interested in trying to interpret the Southwest, what's going on, the Chicano movement. Recovering history was very important, and so that we started a working paper series.

Well, first of all we formed a group. The seminar, we had a great seminar; it was incredible. We all wrote papers. We all wrote papers, it was a great seminar, and we wanted to keep on going, so we formed the Chicano Political Economy Collective (ChPEC), and we met regularly. And we would critique our papers; we'd write papers. We took those papers that we wrote from my seminar and we worked on them. Immanuel Wallerstein heard about our group—well, I met Immanuel Wallerstein when I critiqued him in Santa Cruz. [laughs] That was funny. I wrote a paper called, "Is Texas Bigger than the World System?"

Anyway, he was interested in the group. He saw the papers. He offered to do a special issue. So actually that was a major accomplishment of ChPEC. We started the Working Paper series, through the institute, and we already had five or six papers, when Wallerstein offered to put them together in a special issue of *Review*, his journal.

01-01:32:33  
Holmes:

Yeah, his journal, *Review*, yeah. So you publish the "Race, Labor Repression, and Capitalist Agriculture: Notes from Texas" in 1977, and in this one, you're using Paul Taylor's, his actual notes from his time there in the 1920s and '30s.

01-01:33:06  
Montejano:

Yeah! So what happens is, I came to Berkeley. My dissertation topic was still trying to understand these crazy guys in the Chicano movement, and I had already written two chapters, but I was stuck, and I was really having a hard time, writing about the Chicano movement. This is 1975; Ramsey Muñiz gets arrested in '76. It does not look like a good story here, the Chicano movement as a whole, certainly in Texas, and then the Berets are also breaking up, and some of them are going back to their previous underground economy habits, and self-destructive habits. So I was having real issues. They wanted a romantic portrayal. That's why they let me hang out with them, and I just couldn't do that.

So I'm having trouble finishing the damned dissertation, and in the meantime, my history introduction keeps growing, and I was already familiar with Taylor's published stuff, but I didn't know—1975, he's still having office hours in Barrows Hall—he's in the floor above me.

01-01:34:47  
Holmes:

Oh wow.



01-01:34:48

Montejano: Yeah, he's in the floor above me, and so I got to meet him. I went to his office—we started talking and all this kind of stuff, and he tested me. He had had a stroke, man. His eyelids were taped to his forehead. He actually had tape, to his forehead, but he was still pretty much in command of his faculties because he tested me. Because I said, "I know your work," and he said, "Well, what's the name of my book, who published it, and in what year?" [laughs]

01-01:35:22

Holmes: Oh wow! That's a big task!

01-01:35:24

Montejano: Yeah! And I said, "*Anglo-Mexican Frontier*, University of North Carolina Press, 1934." Well after that, man, he said, "Did you know that I only used 10 percent of my interviews? All of them are right here at the Bancroft Library." He invited me to go look at them. And I did. And they weren't organized the way they are now. They were not organized. But I went over there, and I started reading them, and I was hooked. I mean, I was like, "Holy cow." I was hooked.

So I had to make a decision at some point, and I did, to switch my dissertation topic, let the Chicano movement material go, put it to the side, and then start with the interviews to work on the history, because here, I just saw, my God, a lens into the past, the smoking gun. Here were the smoking guns. The motivation for segregation, that was one of the things that had interested me, so I could talk about the making of segregation. So, that's where that "Notes from South Texas" on agriculture, that was the first slice at that.

01-01:36:55

Holmes: On that topic, I'd actually like a quote from that that piece. Here you were looking at the agricultural development in South Texas during those two decades, and you say, "racism did not diminish with the march of capitalist agriculture, but proved its companion." And if we go back, because that's actually really fitting into a lot of farm worker literature that's also beginning to explore the history of agribusiness, as you were saying, like Carey McWilliams and Paul Taylor.

01-01:37:32

Montejano: Yeah, yeah. Right, right.

01-01:37:36

Holmes: Your next piece also builds on that—

01-01:37:38

Montejano: One of the things that I remember doing was to explicate; in other words, it would've been too easy to dismiss everything as racist, to just list the practices, then call it racism, and that's it. And I thought, 'well wait a minute; there's a logic here that we got to uncover; we got to work at this here.'

Racism can express itself in different ways, so what is logic here? What's underlying? Then so that's where the economics comes in, right?

01-01:38:29

Holmes: World systems.

01-01:38:29

Montejano: Yeah, the world systems; that's where the particular labor arrangement comes in. So it's not just amorphous racism. The practices are tailored to actual, concrete arrangements.

01-01:38:48

Holmes: Well and this seems what it leads to, which I believe was a chapter in the anthology, *World Systems of Capitalism Past and Present*, and that was where you first used that phrase, "frustrated apartheid."

01-01:39:00

Montejano: Oh yeah, yeah. That was. Well that ends up being the rejected dissertation. [laughter] But those pieces come out before the dissertation's done.

01-01:39:16

Holmes: Yeah, yeah. And if we look at too, this is really feeding off of Wallerstein's world-systems theory which I think he introduces in 1974.

01-01:39:29

Montejano: Yeah. Yeah, we're all, we're reading, we're studying, we're developing a lot of these ideas. The notion of race formation, for example, that comes up later, with [Michael] Omi and [Howard] Winant. And this is where, by the way, your own actual experience ends up influencing your intellectual thought, because being in New Haven, being outside of Texas was important, because I saw that the so-called group that we call Anglos, in New Haven, were broken down in different groups. There were Irish; there were Italians; there were Jews. But in Texas, they're all lumped together in one group called Anglos.

In New Haven, there were different groups, and my Irish friends would say, "Well don't call us Anglos, man. We hate the Anglos; we've been fighting them for—," you know, and the Jews would say, "We're not Anglos," and then of course, the Italians would say the same. So the Anglo category broke down, and so if the Anglo category can break down, well then you assume the other categories are also subject to that same kind of potential disintegration or complexity.

And so being Mexican, for example, at the time in New Haven, I was exotic, man. I remember looking for an apartment. The lady, woman, Ukrainian, I find out later: "Are you Puerto Rican?" [laughs] "No, not Puerto Rican; I'm Mexican American." "Oh, I love Acapulco! Oh, you know, blah, blah, blah," Of course I know nothing about Acapulco, or anything. So again, the same kind of thing. Being Mexican means different things at different places, and

probably over time. So that fluidity of identity and what it meant, was in part sparked by living in New Haven and what I was encountering there.

01-01:42:11

Holmes:

What I thought was also interesting too is that it's not just the different stages and the different facets of racial formation, as you were just discussing, but you also begin to look at class, and class analysis within that. I wanted to ask, because you begin to use world systems as kind of a frame of analysis, or at least playing with some of those ideas, what were your thoughts of world systems versus the internal colonial model, say, advanced by those like Rudy Acuña and Mario Barrera?

01-01:42:49

Montejano:

Yeah, Mario was part of our ChPEC group, by the way. So, the internal colonial model had very attractive features. I could see why it fit—you're contained within a certain zone; you're policed. All this kind of stuff just made a lot of sense. However, the problem was that it did not really contain a very good social change mechanism, I mean an explanation for social change. In the classic example of a colony, you have a struggle for national liberation. So the internal colony model also sort of fit with some of the Chicano movement's impulse for self-determination, for Aztlán and this whole notion of another country, whatever, however romantic that was.

And so you could see how internal colony fit. But what did it mean then to become decolonized? What kind of struggle does that mean? That was a problem. What does decolonization mean? Is it the same as national liberation? Those are the kind of discussions we were having. It sounds pretty strange now, but there were some groups seriously talking about national liberation at that time, some of the Marxist-Leninist groups. You read some of the stuff—August Twenty-Ninth Movement, CASA, all that stuff—there was a lot of fervor, a lot of activity, a lot of thinking going on at the time.

Anyway, so the internal colony model, to me, was good, but it was too static. It did not have any dynamism to it, and this is where, obviously then, where the world systems, and capitalism, capitalist development, comes into play, and class analysis and so forth.

01-01:45:44

Holmes:

Then also in 1981, you write that special issue that Wallerstein publishes. You pose that question: Is Texas bigger than the world system? Discuss that a little bit, because it's getting down to, on one side the internal colonial model, and on the flip side, we're looking at a larger system. But you were also, it seems in this piece, arguing that local case studies are important.

01-01:46:15

Montejano:

Yeah. So yes, okay, I do like the world-systems approach, but I thought their claims were sort of exaggerated. They were imposing too much. They were starting with a theoretical framework, and then imposing that on the reality

that you found on the ground, rather than letting the reality, or what you find on the ground, influence the way you're going to conceptualize this. And so that was a point behind that.

So, Wallerstein liked to say his metaphor for his methodology was to use a telescope, and I say, "Well, I think we can discover a lot of things if we use a microscope, [laughter] and then see that it's a bit more complex, and there are certain things that we can explain using the microscope that we couldn't using the telescope." Basically that was the argument. But yeah, I wasn't saying that world systems doesn't tell us things.

01-01:47:37

Holmes: No, you make that clear in there, too.

01-01:47:40

Montejano: Yeah. [laughs] It was a fun piece.

01-01:47:43

Holmes: Well, I wanted to discuss the dissertation, which you've already discussed a little bit, how it changed along the way. Maybe discuss that story a bit more. So you wanted to look at the Chicano movement, but realized that you had to set that one aside. So, discuss this journey, which it is called *A Journey Through Mexican Texas*. The dissertation for you was a journey, and it seems that it was through this process that you also begin to really dive into historical sociology.

01-01:48:21

Montejano: Oh yes, no question about it. The more I got into it, at some point, I realized, this is what I have to do. I have to uncover this history. There's a big vacuum here; there's a void. And that's what I started working on, and the Paul Taylor papers obviously were critical, like I said, and also, they were inspiring, because they're talking to Taylor, and using language that they would never use today, I don't think. Well maybe today, I don't know, [laughs] but, they were pretty blunt. Taylor's asking them, "What do you think of the Mexican, or what do you think of the Mexican problem?" and folks were just telling him, and in no uncertain terms. And so I'm reading about this stuff that I've never encountered before. And so, I was like, "Holy cow, I've got to run with this."

So again, this is the distinction between doing history and then sociology, because I could have just done maybe storytelling, and just using these grower interviews stored away and just tell the story. But I thought, "Well wait a minute. There's an analysis here that I want to do." I decided to focus on the one thing that struck me the most, because remember, you're reading interviews; you're getting a gestalt look at the past. There's so many things that you can focus on, and I decided to start with the one thing that struck me the most, and that was all these references to labor controls that I had never heard about, that nobody ever really talked about. This was debt peonage, of

course, but also attempts to restrict the ownership of cars, the use of chains, the use of vagrancy laws, pass system, or the Raymondville peonage case, where you needed a signed pass by growers if you wanted to be able to have some kind of mobility, otherwise, you'd be arrested as a vagrant—that kind of stuff. All this was like, "Oh man, what's going on here?"

So, I had my hundred interviews with Texas growers and I'm doing hypothesis testing. One hypothesis was, are there labor controls done by Texans and Southerners versus Northerners, for example? So I separated them—Northerner, Southerner, Texan, Northerner, Southerner—to see if that made any difference. Didn't make any difference. Northerners were just as likely to use labor controls as the Southerners.

I did another one: proximity to the border. I just said a hundred miles from the border. What would my argument be if I found an association? I don't know. I don't know which way it's going to go but I want to see if there's a relationship or association. So I do that. I separate the interviews, far from the river, close to the border, didn't make any difference. This is what I'm doing: hypothesis testing. This is sociology, in a sense, but now using historical material.

So finally, there are two different labor relations here or arrangements: one is sharecropping and one is migratory labor. Let's see if that makes any sense. And you start to see a pattern emerge here. Oh yeah! Okay, now it makes sense. Debt peonage, yeah, it makes sense for sharecroppers. Doesn't make sense for migratory labor. Growers only want them there for a couple of weeks and *vámonos*, let's go. So you don't do debt peonage for migratory labor. Sharecroppers, you want them around, you want to keep them—use it for sharecroppers. Migratory labor—vagrancy laws. There are vagrancy laws invoked at certain times, under certain economic conditions. They're arrested, fined, sentenced to go work for two weeks at some farm. Ah, I start to see a pattern.

That's how I approached the interviews, and I did that for different things also, like protection, not just exploitation, but protection. There was the logic of repression; there's a logic of protection too, and then so I try to fool around with that. Then you get into culture. You get into different slices using the Paul Taylor interviews.

01-01:55:05

Holmes:

Oh that's interesting. So, you submit your dissertation in 1982, and this becomes the basis for *Anglos and Mexicans*.

01-01:55:17

Montejano:

*Anglos and Mexicans*, yeah.

01-01:55:18

Holmes:

Yeah, *Anglos and Mexicans of Texas in 1836 to 1986*. And here again, you're doing a similar kind of race and class analysis in what seems to be one of the

first takes at analyzing the formation of these race relations in Texas. Discuss how you began to build from that dissertation and the idea of going back further and doing what seems to be 150 years of race relations in Texas.

01-01:55:55

Montejano:

Well, for the dissertation, I had in mind the idea of doing a hundred years, 1836 to 1936 or something like that, because that's where the Taylor interviews sort of end. But man, I needed a job. What happens is that, I switch dissertation topics, and I didn't finish in time. And so, I did not get regularized, and so my contract with Berkeley is terminated. I'm working at UC Santa Cruz now as an adjunct lecturer.

I'd been working on all these chapters, all this time. And I ask myself, "Do I have five consecutive chapters?" And I looked around and I said, "Holy cow, I have five consecutive chapters!" That went from 1900 to 1930. I said, "That's it, that's my dissertation, and I'll call it 'The Making of Segregation.'" And so, that's what I turned in. And like I told you, the first draft was rejected, because it was a little too radical, then, I decided to double the size and sent that in. I had done the research for the other 19<sup>th</sup> century chapters already, but like I said, I just wanted to get a dissertation done.

So I continued working after the dissertation was accepted. I was not renewed at UC Santa Cruz. I was there for two years. They did not renew my lectureship at Santa Cruz, even though I was done.

Now, they had an opening in the department, so I have the temerity to apply. [laughter] I have the temerity to apply for their position, after the chair has said I'm not being renewed for my lectureship. So, to make a long story short, the faculty student committee picks me, as the number one candidate. They're wanting to offer me the job. The chair and the other senior faculty get pissed. They're really upset because first of all, I had the audacity to do this, and so, there was always that clause in the thing saying that "pending funding," so of course, the funding was not forthcoming.

01-01:59:55

Holmes:

Yeah, it kept pending.

01-01:59:58

Montejano:

Yeah, it kept pending. They renewed the offer for a lectureship though, but I was so pissed. I basically threw them the finger, said, "Forget you." I took the job with Willie Velasquez in San Antonio. And so I did a two-year thing there with Willie, doing political work, campaign work, and I kept working on the dissertation. Well, now it's not a dissertation; it's a book project. And so, working with Willie ends up being very important, because that's when I decided I'd just do the 150 years, rather than a hundred years, do the fifty years, because they had all this material there. It was just incredible material. So that's where I was able then to bring up the whole thing to 150 years. I did the last two chapters while I was working in San Antonio.

So, anyway, then there's an opening at University of New Mexico. I decided to go back to academia. I finished my manuscript. It's being processed. I'm in New Mexico now, in sociology, and the book comes out, and I decided to go up for tenure. Isn't that what you're supposed to do? The problem was, I think, for the department, was that I hadn't been there long enough. I hadn't put in my time yet, for them. I'd only been there three years, four years. They saw me as still a newly recent recruit. But I had already been out; I didn't see myself like that. And the chair said, "You should go up. You've got the book." I actually had the book in hand. And so, I go up, and then I'm turned down. My tenure was rejected.

01-02:02:26

Holmes:

Oh wow.

01-02:02:26

Montejano:

Yeah! I was rejected. By the way, I think I started saying that everything has been determined by student protest: first teaching at Yale; being at Berkeley; then at Santa Cruz, the same thing happened, that's why I got the lectureship, and then even when they didn't offer me the job, there was another. You know how the students are, man. I had some kind of candlelight procession, all this. And anyway, so New Mexico, they turned me down without prejudice. In other words, I could come up again, but they just said that they saw this as a one-time dissertation revision that had taken ten years, so they were concerned about when I was going to write some more. Ah man, so I was again—this sociology is not understanding what history is about.

And then the Frederick Jackson Turner prize comes in like a couple of weeks after I was turned down, then other awards. Oh man, they were so embarrassed. The department was so embarrassed, they asked me to petition them for a reconsideration. I said, "No, man, it's the same book, come on." Actually, the president of the university had to overturn the decision. The University of New Mexico offered me tenure. They overturned themselves. But by this time, I'm getting calls from Michigan, and Texas. I'm being interviewed by Ann Arbor and Austin, and I'm being made offers that New Mexico can't even come close to. The one in Ann Arbor was in sociology. They do have a historical sociology field.

01-02:04:43

Holmes:

Oh, interesting. And the offer in Texas was actually in history.

01-02:04:47

Montejano:

And that was in history. I took the one in history, in Texas, yeah.

01-02:04:53

Holmes:

Well, that might be a good place to stop, David, and we can pick this up in our next session tomorrow.

01-02:04:58

Montejano:

Sure!

01-02:04:59

Holmes: All right, hey, thanks so much.

01-02:05:00

Montejano: Okay!



## Interview 2: June 5, 2018

02-00:00:04

Holmes:

All right, this is Todd Holmes, with the Oral History Center at UC Berkeley. Today's date is June 5, 2018, and I have the pleasure to sit down for our second session with David Montejano, for the Chicana/o Studies Oral History Project. We are here in his lovely home in the city of Berkeley, California. David, thanks so much for sitting down with me one more time.

02-00:00:27

Montejano:

All right.

02-00:00:28

Holmes:

In our last session, we covered a lot of aspects of your early life, as well as your early academic career, and that brought us up to the late 1980s when you were at UT Austin. I wanted to backtrack a bit to further discuss your experiences at some of these institutions, after grad school, looking at that experience in the environment during the development of the field of Chicano studies. So I'd like to start back at Berkeley, right after, I think, you began there in 1975, and you joined the sociology department. You mentioned yesterday there was some student activism which opened up that position.

02-00:01:15

Montejano:

Right, that's correct.

02-00:01:16

Holmes:

Can you talk about that a little bit?

02-00:01:18

Montejano:

Well, there was a group of about twelve Chicano and Chicana graduate students. They had been recruited by Robert Blauner, was a main mover at that time in the department. David Matza was there, Troy Duster. In any case, they apparently had isolated themselves. They weren't really fully integrated in the program, the sociology department. So they had an opening, and I applied, and to my surprise, I was hired. [laughter]

So, no, I would do it again, because my committee said, "Don't go; you're not done. You're not going to finish." And sure enough, I didn't, but I'd still do it again. For me it was a very exciting second graduate education, finally getting involved in class analysis, trying to incorporate race into class analysis, things like that, reading about the transition from feudalism to capitalism, and so forth, trying to understand basically change, social change.

So my seminar that I offered drew these students in, and it was just one of the more exciting seminars I've had. It was very stimulating. I think I learned as much as they did, and as I said before, it was so exciting that we decided to keep meeting, and we formed this group called the Chicano Political Economy Collective, and we met regularly. There were about twelve, fifteen of us.

Tomás Almaguer was part of it, Mario Barrera, Felipe Gonzalez, oh man, and a number of folks that go on to become well-known professors.

Anyway, this is where we started developing the papers that we had drafted in the seminar, working on them and so forth, until finally, at this chance meeting with Wallerstein, at Santa Cruz, ends up resulting in an invitation from him to publish the papers in a special issue of *Review*. What's really interesting, by the way, is that none of us are really like so-called historians. We're all sociologists, political scientists. There was one anthropologist. But here we are trying to recover history, and that's what we were trying to do, and analyze it, too, again, trying to understand what, just exactly what happened here. It's not just recovery of the past, but trying to then understand why the past unfolded the way it did.

02-00:04:30

Holmes:

What was the environment for Chicano studies at Berkeley like at this time? I know the sociology department itself, if I'm correct, was going through a period of reconstruction. There were some fissures in the 1960s, from the golden era of Seymour Martin Lipset and Herbert Blumer, or what some considered the golden age of sociology at Berkeley. Then by 1975, it's starting to diversify. You had three African Americans, three white women, and one Chicano scholar. [laughter] What was the environment like? Was it supportive, by looking into these new areas of the Mexican American experience?

02-00:05:23

Montejano:

Well yes, definitely supportive. Remember, Robert Blauner is one of the major forces in the department at the time, and his book, *Racial Oppression in America*, just sort of come out, where he lays out the case for looking at race relations from an internal colonial perspective. So he was very influential, and of course supportive. The ChPEC, the Chicano Political Economy Collective, we met at the Institute for the Study of Social Change that was, at that time, being directed by Troy Duster.

So, again, we had support there. And all our working papers, when we actually started coming out with a working paper series, which I still have—I probably maybe can find one for you if you want to see it—they were just bound. They were reproduced, bound, with staples and so forth. But anyway, that was run through the Institute for the Study of Social Change. So there was support for this, but again, we were very cognizant that we were doing something new. We were very aware of that.

02-00:06:38

Holmes:

And, the reception of graduate students, the student involvement and reception within this, within this new kind of exploration within the field, was that pretty vibrant there at Berkeley?

02-00:06:54

Montejano:

Well, there was Chicano studies at the time, the Chicano studies program that was being developed. There was a lot of movement then, and on campus for ethnic studies. Then, I left in '79, so, then things unfolded in a very different way, but in any case, no, there was already interest, support. And then remember, at the time, we're also forming associations now. The National Association for Chicano Studies was created about this time, and that was, again, primarily formed by graduate students, advanced graduate students, or recent junior faculty, basically. We were all either junior faculty or advanced graduate students.

02-00:07:56

Holmes:

So you leave in 1979, and what's really interesting here is that, in a sense, your academic migration to these other institutes or institutions, really offers a great vantage point for comparing Chicano studies and the development of the field at different universities. I know we talked about UC Santa Cruz yesterday, and I want to get to that in a minute, but you also did a lectureship, if I'm correct, at San Jose State, in the Mexican American studies department, and then, at San Francisco State.

02-00:08:36

Montejano:

Right.

02-00:08:37

Holmes:

Can you talk a little bit about some of the courses and interactions that you had at those institutes?

02-00:08:42

Montejano:

Okay, so in '79, I leave Berkeley. I don't have a job, and I have not finished the dissertation. So, I'm in a pretty tough position here. But I made a decision that I was going to develop this history, and so I'm basically securing part-time gigs here and there, wherever I can, and living off of what I had saved for my retirement at Berkeley, and then unemployment. I actually fashioned my own fellowship year to just write. And then, San Francisco State with women's studies, that was just a one-time adjunct thing where they wanted me to develop a bibliography, in women and ethnic studies, and that's what I did for them. So it was a bibliographic kind of exercise. They didn't have any money to keep me going.

And then, San Jose State, that was a new Mexican American Graduate Studies program, MAGS, and that was a nighttime class. I would go down to San Jose, once or twice a week, teach at night. The students were all workers. They all had day jobs. They were there at night, trying to get a master's in Mexican American studies. And the class I taught there was, I believe it was in policy, it was a policy studies class. I was talking about policies affecting Mexican American community, and so forth, education, so forth, down the line. But again, that was just a one-time deal just to get me by. Yeah, I can't say I was integrated into either of those programs.

02-00:10:45

Holmes:

Rudy Acuña has always argued that the teaching colleges, such as the Cal States, were really the site for Chicano studies, in his opinion, where you're able to touch those in the community, those who were first-generation students. What was your experience and observations, although it was just for that year as an adjunct, in regards to the student environment at those?

02-00:11:17

Montejano:

Well, at San Jose State, where I actually had a class, again, these are older students, non-traditional, I guess you would say, and they had day jobs. So they're very different than from your undergraduates at UC Berkeley and UC Santa Cruz, very different. Again, these are older students, of course, committed. They were interested. Oftentimes though, they don't have some of the background or training that the younger students do. I can't really say much more than that.

02-00:12:01

Holmes:

Well let's talk a little bit about Santa Cruz. So you were there as a visiting professor in community studies.

02-00:12:10

Montejano:

No, I was an adjunct lecturer in community studies.

02-00:12:17

Holmes:

Interesting. Discuss that field a little bit, because I've never come across the field of community studies. This was the first time I came across it. But community studies, as a practice and lens of analysis, seems to play an important role in the field of Chicano studies. So discuss the type of courses, and environment there at UC Santa Cruz, dealing with community studies?

02-00:12:41

Montejano:

Community studies. Well, it was in social sciences, basically, sociology and political science and some anthropology. But it was an activist board; it was very active. One of the professors was the mayor of Santa Cruz. [laughs] The socialist mayor of Santa Cruz, I should say. And so the board was sort of a lefty board, a department, very, very, progressive. God, Bill Friedland, he was a full professor. He was one of the founders of community studies, and pretty well versed in class analysis, I would say.

But in any case, again, I'm invited there by the students. The faculty who invited me were responding to the students, the Chicano students who wanted some classes in Chicano studies, in community studies. So I had a lot of fun, two years. It was great. It would have been great to have stayed there, but that's not the way it worked out. There was some tension in the board, and again, remember, I'm an adjunct lecturer. I'm not really a full-fledged faculty member. But, again, this was a very political department, and certainly class analysis was *de rigueur*. That was the foundation, and I suspected that some of the faculty were a little leery of ethnic nationalism, which, of course, the Chicano students were, at that time, espousing. So I think there was that

tension about this nationalism versus class analysis kind of stuff. That never was explicitly expressed to me.

02-00:15:40

Holmes: What was the student environment like there at UC Santa Cruz?

02-00:15:43

Montejano: Well first of all, the setting is phenomenal. And I lucked out, by the way: Ralph Guzmán was there, Ralph Guzmán, who was a political scientist, one of the pioneers, really, in Chicano political science, trained at UCLA, and he was a master of one of the colleges there. In any case, the master has control over a number of housing spaces there, and he offered one to me. Of course you pay rent and so forth. So I lived on campus, very privileged. It was incredible. When you're living in the redwoods, my God, on campus, there outside your back patio—it was very idyllic. I finished the dissertation there.

02-00:16:53

Holmes: So it was a nice place; it was a good environment to write.

02-00:16:56

Montejano: Yeah it was, definitely, very, very good. Yeah, very good.

02-00:17:00

Holmes: And there was strong support, what you're describing, it seems, from the students itself of wanting more coverage in the classroom of Chicano studies, and those kind of discussions in the class.

02-00:17:14

Montejano: Oh most definitely. Yeah, there was interest in that, for sure, and there was no Chicano studies, I mean no program on campus, so it was mainly coming through community studies.

02-00:17:27

Holmes: Interesting.

02-00:17:27

Montejano: Yeah, and you had others—you had Pedro Castillo in history. John Borrego was in community studies; he was another important figure. But there was no such entity like Chicano-Latino studies like they have now.

02-00:17:50

Holmes: Well, from there you moved back to San Antonio, moved back home, and worked for two years with Willie Velasquez.

02-00:18:06

Montejano: Yeah, Willie Velasquez, yeah. Willie had graduated from the same high school I went to. He was involved in the Chicano movement, had been an aide to Henry B. González. Henry B. González was going to groom him to be the heir to his position. That never happened because of a break between them,

because Willie got involved with the farm workers, for example, and Henry B. thought that was a little bit too radical for him, things like that.

And so anyway, Willie then ends up creating his own organization called the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project, or SVREP [pronounced as "swerp"]. And they had an announcement for a research analyst at the time. They wanted a PhD. And this is during my struggles with community studies, over whether I'm going to stay or not. I think I mentioned already what the problems I was having with the department, the board. They did eventually offer me the lectureship again, but by that time, I was very upset and burned out. I had already gone through this stuff at Berkeley, the stuff with my committee at Yale, and now that I'm done, I can't get the position, even though the committee selected me, things like that, so I needed a break. I felt like there was nothing else I could do other than be a college professor.

So, going back to San Antonio and working with Willie was a really good break, in that sense. I became involved directly with political campaigns, doing research and getting a demographic profile of communities, things like that, targeting, where do we go register, where are we going to get the most bang for our buck. That sort of thing. So, that reenergized me, made me realize I had quite a few skills that I could put to use.

So I actually ran a couple of political campaigns. Yeah, I did three. And I have a three-zero record. [laughs] I ran one for city council, and now of course, I was very selective. There was a Chicano councilman who was red-baiting us—it was totally opportunistic—was red-baiting SVREP, was red-baiting the whole Chicano movement kind of stuff. So I got involved in that campaign. I supported the person running against him and we won. And then the state senator—Ciro Rodriguez.

But in any case, yeah, so I got involved with running political campaigns. I had a Compaq. I don't even remember when those computers that came out, at that time, they were like small sewing machines that you carry with you, and I think the most that the disks could hold were 64k or something like that. But anyway, I was going around with this suitcase, or my Compaq computer, setting it up, helping these candidates target voters and so forth, and at that time, it was totally innovative.

The campaigns that were run before, you just do mass mailings to everybody. And so, what I was introducing was a targeted mailing—not mass mailing, but targeted mailing. Your phone bank told you who's supporting you. Your phone bank told you who's undecided. Your phone bank told you who's for the other person. Well, forget the people who are for the other person. Don't send them anything! [laughs] The undecideds, work on them for a strategy. You know who's for you; they're the ones that you want to recruit for your volunteers, things like that. Anyway, it was very successful, and I thought

about pursuing that, but this position at University of New Mexico opened up in sociology, and I wanted to get back to academia.

02-00:23:30

Holmes:

Well I know yesterday, we talked a little bit about your tenure struggle there at the University of New Mexico, and then how the university, as well as the department, eventually made, a mea culpa, and overturned their first decision after your first book came out. But I wanted to ask, you were there for three years at the University of New Mexico, did you have interaction with the Chicano studies department there?

02-00:24:06

Montejano:

No, I was there for four, but I spent a year on leave. And again, I think that was all part and parcel of the reaction of my colleagues at the time. They just felt I hadn't spent enough time there, before coming up for tenure. I don't know. I think there was a little bit of jealousy, too, getting a leave so soon, and so forth. Anyway, yes, of course, I did interact with the Chicano studies, the Southwest—what it's called, the Southwest Hispanic Research Center?

02-00:24:50

Holmes:

Yeah, the Center for the Southwest, or maybe that was the full name.

02-00:24:53

Montejano:

Well, it was called the Southwest Research Center for a long time. They may have changed the name. I know that it kept coming up. But yeah, no, definitely. And Tobias Duron, in particular, was a very important colleague. He was the director for a while. And probably one of the most memorable classes I taught in my career was taught there at New Mexico. It was a seminar with former Governor Toney Anaya. That was a seminar that I ran, just focused on his administration; his term was over. He was a very controversial governor.

Anyway, Tobias, my colleague, funded that. Basically, that's how Governor Anaya was compensated, but it was all a seminar focused on evaluating his term, and so—it was a Tuesday, Thursday class—on Tuesday, we'd read up on whatever the issue was. It could be sanctuary, because he declared New Mexico a sanctuary state, at the time. Remember, this is Reagan period, yeah, Reagan period. And so he's duking it out with Reagan, right? Anyway, it was very controversial.

So we'd read about the sanctuary issue. They had newspaper clippings. We had students take on, select research topics, read about it, then Toney comes in on Thursday, and all this is videotaped, by the way: the Thursday sessions with Toney, the students are asking him questions about it, he's explaining, and so forth. And we did that for an entire semester. Oh, it was incredible. It was incredible. We did sanctuary; we did criminal justice—and there was a prison riot while he was in office—affirmative action, all the way down.

02-00:27:10

Holmes: Oh wow, that sounds like a great class.

02-00:27:12

Montejano: It was a great class, yeah, and the students wrote papers, based on their research. The students then, they got so much into it that we videotaped the whole class, where everybody's talking about what they got out of the class, and so forth. So, yeah, we had an introspective [laughs] taping.

02-00:27:35

Holmes: Well how great that he would participate, too.

02-00:27:38

Montejano: Yeah, so that was a great class. That happened there at UNM.

02-00:27:47

Holmes: How would you describe the student environment there at UNM? You've been at Santa Cruz; you've been at Berkeley. What were the differences, similarities, particularly in the reception for Chicano studies?

02-00:28:04

Montejano: Well, there was a hunger. Oh no, there was a hunger. Now the students weren't as well prepared as they were, say at Berkeley or at Santa Cruz, but there was definitely interest, no question about that. Yeah, it was very exciting. I was teaching a class in social movements, for example. Well, and this is totally coincidental: I had no part in this, but there's a tuition issue going on at campus. They're raising tuition, so the students take over the president's office. Well, God, the ringleaders were in my class! They were in my class! And so, and the president at the time, the way he decided to handle this was just to let them stay. He vacated the office, and set up shop elsewhere.

Well this went on for like three weeks! [laughs] So how was I supposed to grade the students who had participated in this action, and missed three weeks of class, versus, and so forth? But anyway, the students, yeah, when you're asking me about activism, there were activists, as much as those at Santa Cruz and Berkeley, there's no question about that.

02-00:29:46

Holmes: How did you grade them? If you're in a social movements class, and you're leading the social movement, it may not be completely in the academic rigor but— [laughter]

02-00:30:00

Montejano: Well, okay, I'll confess to what I did, because I did feel like I was in a quandary. But you remember what happened: I had been turned down for tenure by my department. I was very upset with my department. They were just, *nomas un daban la vuelta* [they just turned around]. They would see me in the hallway and they would avoid me, they didn't want to talk to me, all this kind of stuff. There had been a lot of other issues in the department.



Well, New Mexico is a great state. I loved the place, but the legislature basically starved the university, and then it was a poor state, so there were a lot of fights, struggles over things like phone usage, copier use, things like that—I do not exaggerate here—over supplies, office supplies, phone use, that kind of stuff. So there was that kind of tension, and then like I told you, some faculty who had been there for a while felt that I was—they never said this to my face, but I think they just felt I was an upstart. So, I think that's what happened, why I was turned down for tenure.

So, all right, now I have to grade my students. So my last semester, I'm leaving. I've already decided I'm going to Austin. I gave my whole class—as a departing gift—of 150, I gave them all A's. [laughs] I gave them all A's, that's what I did.

02-00:32:06

Holmes: Nice.

02-00:32:08

Montejano: I got some blowback for that too, you better believe it. There were people that were very upset about that.

02-00:32:18

Holmes: I wish I would have taken that class! [laughter]

02-00:32:22

Montejano: I gave all A's. Well sure, there was some folks there that got A's that probably shouldn't have gotten A's. But I wasn't going to judge them. Somebody's missing class because they're in the president's office occupying, but somebody else is missing class because something else.

So anyway, later my sister, who applied to UNM graduate school—this is just to tell you what happens later, because I left, gave them all A's, said this is my going away gift. A couple of years later, my sister applies to the writing program there at UNM, and the guy in charge, I don't know if he was a dean or whatever, says, "Are you related to David Montejano?" And my sister says, "Yeah, what?" And so then the dean calls someone who's working for him, a former student, calls the former student in. "Tell this person what Professor Montejano did." So the student relates the story, says, "I worked hard all semester to get an A, and he gave A's to everybody!" [laughter] She was very upset, still, years later!

02-00:34:01

Holmes: Oh wow.

02-00:34:02

Montejano: Anger, [laughter] giving A's to everybody. But anyway, that was a funny story my sister told me later, and said, "Boy, you should have prepared me." And oh, but my sister, she says, "David's not radical, he didn't do anything." [laughter]

02-00:34:28

Holmes: She didn't start relating childhood stories, did she?

02-00:34:31

Montejano: She could have. [laughter] Anyway yeah, but that happened. That was New Mexico. And actually I wrote about it, I did write two op-ed pieces that, one of these days, maybe I'll rescue from my files. But it was about this whole thing about, I was trying to understand why New Mexico, the department, the atmosphere was there so different than from say, Berkeley and Santa Cruz, and part of it was, I called it the "second-chance university." In Mexico, it was my second chance. A lot of the folks that were there had been denied tenure elsewhere.

02-00:35:21

Holmes: Oh, interesting.

02-00:35:23

Montejano: Yeah! And some of those folks didn't want to be there. They were there because this was their second chance, but they were all working there with the idea that maybe they're going to eventually leave, right? Well, you can imagine now how different that is for a Hispano, from New Mexico, or the Southwest, who wants to be there, who say, "Man, this is great. I know I'm underpaid, but, I have community here. I want to be here." Well, there's that tension between the folks who were there and still pissed off because they were denied tenure elsewhere, and they want to leave—they really don't want to be there—and then the Hispanos who feel like maybe they have a special claim to the place.

02-00:36:10

Holmes: A lot of tension.

02-00:36:11

Montejano: Oh, yeah, and that still exists, and that's still the case there.

02-00:36:17

Holmes: Interesting. I want to get into your time back at UT Austin, but before we get there, I want to discuss the field of Chicano studies a little bit. It is beginning to develop during this time in a very significant way, and you were very much a part of that first generation. What strikes you about the early work of Chicano studies, looking back at the scholarship of that first generation, which again you're part of, both in the social sciences, but also in history? Are there certain works that really strike you, or certain themes that resonated at that time?

02-00:37:02

Montejano: Yeah, I'm trying to think. What I recall is that we were trying to deal with some of the early interpretations that came out. There was a lot of literature about the cultural conflict that had happened, in other words, interpreting the Mexican American War as a cultural conflict. These were the initial interpretations that are going out. Social banditry was out there, [Eric]

Hobsbawm's social banditry. Well all of a sudden, all these resisters from our past were now social bandits. Well wait a minute; not all of them were social bandits. In other words, we were doing things like mis-categorizing, we were trying to figure out how to interpret things.

So, what I recall is, trying to refine what we've done, at the same time we're recovering our history, but also challenging or criticizing some naïve interpretations. Cultural conflict, in particular, is what I remember reacting against. I decided pretty early on though that my main critique was not going to be aimed at Chicanos or Chicanas. I had a whole other audience to deal with. My foil was against Anglo historiography. That was who I was working against or in context with, not so much other Chicanos. I was well aware of Walter Prescott Webb, and his work, and what he had done, and others: J. Frank Dobie, and so forth. They had written this triumphal history of the Southwest, basically the winning of the West kind of stuff.

So that's what I saw me working against. [laughs] We had to critique the principal folks in the field, not other folks who were sort of footnotes. So yeah, Walter Prescott Webb, that's who; if you ask me who I'm thinking of while I'm writing this, it's Walter Prescott Webb and others like him.

02-00:40:11

Holmes:

It's interesting, thinking of Western historians, which wrote most of those early triumphant narratives, but also there was the start of a change would you also say? There were some of those, Gerald Nash and others, who were starting to say, "It's a new Western history that we have to include the Mexican American experience," and then even thinking of the *Pacific Historical* quarterly?

02-00:41:02

Montejano:

Yeah.

02-00:41:04

Holmes:

You know that special issue, I think in 1973, which was dedicated to Chicano history. I know some could argue that evolution was really slow moving, but at least it was starting to percolate as well. What were your observations on that?

02-00:41:21

Montejano:

So, I got to meet most of my colleagues through NACCS, through the National Association of Chicano Studies. Of course, I already knew several of them, because I'd been at Berkeley and Santa Cruz and so forth, but NACCS played an important role, bringing us together, and we would have these periodic updates of what each other is doing and stuff like that.

Again, in terms of my own work, I always saw myself operating against the master narrative which was there. I wasn't going to criticize Albert Camarillo, because I thought he could have pushed his analysis a little bit more, but why

I would I do that? I got [laughs] big fish to fry here. So, that was sort of my thing. I did keep in touch with what's going on, and so forth, but I had my own work that I wanted to develop, yeah.

02-00:42:43

Holmes: Did you ever attend the Western history conferences back in those early days?

02-00:42:47

Montejano: Oh yeah! Yeah, Patty Limerick and I became good friends, and her work comes out about this time too. So, we were hanging around for a while there, and she tried to recruit me to Boulder.

02-00:43:08

Holmes: Oh really?

02-00:43:09

Montejano: Yeah, she wanted me there, and she wanted to know if I was interested, but no, I was pretty well set in Austin.

02-00:43:19

Holmes: Well, speaking of challenging master narratives, your first book, *Anglos and Mexicans*, certainly challenges that master narrative as you were saying. And I know we spoke a little bit on it yesterday, but I wanted to dig in a little bit in regards to the aims and contributions that you saw guiding this project. Because I know it changed a little bit from what it early started with the dissertation, and then you fell into more of that historical sociology of wanting to revise the history of race relations and class relations within Texas.

02-00:44:03

Montejano: Yeah. Well, I was trying to understand the world I grew up in, that's basically it, and when I ran across Paul Taylor interviews, that just lit a fire under me. I said, "Holy cow, this is incredible material that hasn't been used." This was going to answer some questions that had grown up with me, about the making of segregation. So that's really what drove me to do it. But yeah, obviously the fact that when Mexicans or Mexican Americans were mentioned in Texas historiography, it was always a cameo type appearance, and then it was always cast in terms of either immigrant, criminal, revolutionary, bandit—some very usually negative status.

So, I said, "Well, [laughs] it was wide open." It was just wide-open man to do something, and that's what got me going. I avoided the Alamo, because there's such a big literature on the Alamo. That, to me, was a whole separate project, and I really wasn't interested in it. I want to know what happened after the Alamo, and then all the way to the present, and it unfolded that way. When I was at Santa Cruz finishing it, I was thinking of a hundred years, but then when I went to work with Willie Velasquez in San Antonio, and I saw the treasure trove that was there, untapped also, and I realized the sesquicentennial was coming up, I thought, 'Shoot man, let's go for it; let's push it, finish.' And so I added two more chapters, sort of using some of the

Southwest voter registration material, and MALDEF, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund—they were next door. So, yeah, that was really important.

So I finished the hundred and fifty years, and well, what can I tell you? I answered the questions that I had. There were several problems or questions that you have to resolve. One of them is the fact that Mexican-Anglo relations in Texas are very complex, and they vary from place to place, and in some places, you have stark segregation, and in other places you had Mexican Americans who were mayors of the cities! So how do you handle this? How do you come to grips with this? So, in a part, I started to see how I could—obviously, the class composition of these local areas was very important, and so forth. But I was very conscious of the training that I had received.

I had been interested in Barrington Moore for the longest time. Barrington Moore, I don't know if you are familiar with his work, but he does these national comparisons. He's looking at trajectories, how France developed, and Great Britain developed, and China developed, and India developed, and so forth. And then Stan Greenberg was using a similar approach, but bringing race into it. So Stan's also very thick, comparative work looks at South Africa, and the American South, Israel, and Northern Ireland. He took on four case studies like that.

Well, I was only doing Texas, although I was mindful of other case studies. But, a number of the arguments that both Moore and Greenberg developed were arguments that were important for me to consider. And as a matter of fact, the title is *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*. If you look at Barrington Moore's book, the *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*—

02-00:49:19

Holmes:

The connection.

02-00:49:19

Montejano:

That's pretty much an explicit recognition there, yeah. So Barrington Moore-type analysis, but then as we mentioned, Immanuel Wallerstein as well, world systems. Basically, this is, I guess you would say, a political economy interpretation of Texas history, but paying attention to ethnic relations.

02-00:49:45

Holmes:

I wanted to talk a little bit about that because what I thought was interesting is, as we spoke about yesterday, you were heavily influenced, or at least attracted to world systems, that type of class analysis, but also, placing race and race formation within that type of economic framework, to understand different ways of looking at it. Was this prevalent within some of the literature within Chicano studies? Did you find a lot of this use, of looking at class and economy, within those discussions, or was it more of a cultural focus?

02-00:50:29

Montejano:

This is what we were doing in ChPEC, the political economy collective. This is what we're trying to work with. Tomás was working with California; we had Felipe working in New Mexico; I'm doing Texas. Mario Barrera's doing the entire Southwest. We were all working toward how do we bring in class, how do we do race and class? That's what we were trying to figure out.

So, yeah, *Anglos and Mexicans* is my way of doing it, and again, this comes from the seminar. For some folks, it's arcane kind of discussion, this whole thing about the transition of feudalism to capitalism, because there are different takes on that. You can really get into, is it the merchants? Was it this? Was it that? And so it can get to be very academic kind of stuff. But, take that discussion, and now bring it into say, a Western context—now I'm talking about ranchers, farmers, merchants, farm workers—and put them to play. Put them to play, and see.

And so that's what I started doing, and so I could see that Texas history is a succession of class societies, uneven succession, because some ranch counties remained ranch counties, and the relations there in the ranch counties were still very much characterized by what some would call patron-peon relations, very paternalistic, lifelong kind of relations, versus, say the farm counties were migratory laborers essential to the economy, and the farmers don't know the workers. It was a very anonymous kind of relationship, and the farmers, they have no basis to suspect or to trust a worker, so they disfranchised them; there they're totally under control, counties next to each other. And then the urban counties were very different, where merchants and businessmen have their own interests. So that's what I laid out, so it was definitely, yes, a class-based analysis to explain the complex variation in Anglo-Mexican relations.

02-00:53:29

Holmes:

Well I know in the fourth part of that book, which you titled "Integration," I think hits on that same latter point of how business and the middle class was looking for labor stability, and following up on, I think that you even took that further in a 1985 article in *Aztlán*, "The Demise of 'Jim Crow' for Texas Mexicans," to understand that through class, and these different kind of economic structures.

02-00:54:01

Montejano:

Right. Right, exactly. Yeah. The businessmen were much more amenable to having relaxed race relations, versus the growers who, their whole livelihood or survival sometimes depends on squeezing as much as they can out of these workers.

02-00:54:26

Holmes:

Now the reception of this book, when it came out, and we touched a little bit on this yesterday, it was well received. It won the Frederick Jackson Turner Award. It also won the PCB-AHA Book Award, as well as a book award from

the Texas Historical Commission, which was your first, I think, of two or three times that you've won that award.

02-00:54:53

Montejano: Yeah, I won that twice, yeah.

02-00:54:57

Holmes: Everybody loves to be recognized, particularly on a labor of love, which this book was. But maybe talk just a little bit about, how'd this feel for you, validation that you've went through all these trials to finally get this out, and then, it was a grand slam?

02-00:55:20

Montejano: It was, but I didn't expect it. I was just happy to get the book out in a way that I liked, and I was very pleased with UT Press, because if you saw the way they prepared it, the full-length pictures, everything—you know how I have at the beginning of each part, I have an Anglo voice and then a response, Anglo, Mexican, and so forth, all the way through. All of that, the actual design and packaging, I was happy with that. I was happy with that already, so then the prizes come, and yeah, it's validation, in particular in the context of what had just happened to me: not getting tenure. It was validation, and it was great. But I didn't expect it. I didn't expect the awards. And in any case, once they came, my main thing was, what am I going to do next? [laughter] How can I top this? But anyway, it was very gratifying.

02-00:56:45

Holmes: Well, and that opened up the door for you to come back to UT Austin.

02-00:56:48

Montejano: And it opened up the doors, yeah, and that was nice, going back home.

02-00:56:57

Holmes: Well, let's talk a little bit about that. Now you came back home to UT Austin, but you also came back home in the history department. Discuss the experience of this, because before that, you'd mostly been in a social science setting. Did you feel more at home in the history department, particularly that you'd been writing historical sociology for a number of years?

02-00:57:22

Montejano: Oh yes, I did. Oh, it was great. It was fantastic. Well, in part because the history department let me do what I wanted to do. Okay, see, unlike other departments, like in sociology, you had to be careful of the class you're teaching that doesn't sort of overlap too much with somebody else's class. Well that was not the case here, because I was going to teach theory and methods to history graduate students, so I did not conflict with anybody. In other words, yeah, we're doing Barrington Moore. We're doing Stanley Greenberg. I'm bringing in historically oriented social science into the history graduate seminars. So I was bringing in theory, things like that. So yeah, I was very happy.

02-00:58:17

Holmes: Well in a sense you were also putting more of an interdisciplinary methodology within history, which in some ways took a while for that to become standard place in the field.

02-00:58:28

Montejano: Yeah, I felt very comfortable. They received me, yeah.

02-00:58:39

Holmes: What was your impression and experience there at UT Austin, not just as a faculty member, but also a Chicano scholar? And in thinking of your undergraduate years, how much did that environment change or also stay the same, in your opinion?

02-00:58:56

Montejano: Well, that's a good question. That's a big one, too. Well, changes had happened. Now, there was a Mexican American studies program, for example, that I ended up directing for four years. That had not been there when I was there. Obviously there were many more Mexican Americans on campus. There was faculty, and so forth. So yeah, things had really changed.

On the other hand, some things hadn't changed. [laughs] There were still racial incidents on campus, that reminded one that we still had a ways to go. There was one in particular—and oh you have to understand, too, that I'm teaching Texas history. I was the one teaching Texas history, yeah.

02-01:00:04

Holmes: That's a big change.

02-01:00:04

Montejano: Yeah, it's a major change, and these are big classes of 150, 200 sometimes, and these are high schoolers. They're freshman, usually, or sophomores, and they're coming in with their ideas. They had Texas history in high school, and "By golly, Santa Anna invaded the United States! [laughs] Santa Anna invaded the United States!"

So that's the kind of stuff I had to like, "All right, we'll have to revisit this whole thing here." And I said, "The other thing too is, by the way, probably about approximately half of the population of Texas are women, so we're going to be talking about women. And then about a third of the population are either black or brown, so we're going to also be talking about black and brown people in this class. So, if you don't like the way I'm going here, this is a good time to consider maybe shopping around, going somewhere else, but this is the way we're going to do this." That was my [laughs] introductory lecture, man, just letting them know, "Don't complain about what we're reading."

02-01:01:27

Holmes: Did you ever get any pushback?



02-01:01:30

Montejano:

I did, yeah. Well, there was one incident when I had a guest speaker, and she was taking my place, because I had to go somewhere to a conference, and I don't know what she did. She was a community activist, and my TA at the time, a graduate student, sort of lost control of the class too. But she was an environmentalist. She was in environmental justice, and she came in and started talking about white males as opposed to black males, you know. Well why are you going to antagonize the class, man? [laughter] God, I mean most of them are white. Why do you start talking about white males? That's what she did.

So sure enough, the cowboys in the back started reacting, started making noise. I don't know what happened. I have notes under my door about the students apologizing. I didn't even know what had happened, and it got around. I got very upset, because the very next class, I just said, "Look, disrespect is not allowed," blah, blah, blah, but that was the only time, and it wasn't a response to anything that I said, but those are the kind of things that one had to be careful about.

There was an incident on campus, I recall, that reminded me of the old days, when I was an undergraduate, and I would always use these incidents in class as teaching moments, right? But every year there's Round-Up Day. Round-Up Day, they celebrate. They used to round up cattle. Well, they still have Round-Up Day, and Round-Up Day in campus is basically a parade organization by the frats and the sororities, and usually cars are driving through campus, so forth. They'll have, obviously, a party before and after.

Anyway, so there's the Round-Up Day. The party after is what got the fraternity in trouble, because the car that they use is parked in front of the fraternity—it's next to campus—and they're proceeding to sledgehammer the car. I don't know what rich undergraduates do for fun; they're going to destroy the car that they use. But, somebody had spray painted on the side of the car, "Niggers die." Big letters, obvious from the street. The picture that came out in the paper the next day was a row of these young white guys standing in a semicircle around the car, with "Niggers die" very clear, visible.

Anyway, oh, so it was great. I mean, that was bad, but the response was incredible. There was like a spontaneous protest. I don't know how many; a thousand students showed up, because they were pissed at what they saw, but the most real, exciting thing was the athletes who had took the lead on this. The football team took the lead. I was like, "Holy cow, what's going on here?" The black and white football players got up, and started talking, and saying, "We're a team," and blah, blah, blah, and all this kind of stuff, they're not going to tolerate this kind of shit, and they led the march! The football team led the march, arms locked, past the frat house.

02-01:06:12

Holmes: Wow.

02-01:06:12

Montejano: Yeah! It was really amazing. Well, the lesson here, to me, from someone who had been an undergraduate there, when UT was the last football team to allow black players on their team, the last Southern school to allow black players on the team, but here, we had, as a result of an integrated sports, now we had these folks talking about unity and so forth. It was just fantastic to see these black and white football players take the lead, and provide some kind of response to what had happened.

02-01:06:59

Holmes: It's a great example of social change.

02-01:07:01

Montejano: It sure is.

02-01:07:02

Holmes: Even in Texas.

02-01:07:03

Montejano: It sure is. It was really inspiring. So yeah, then I talked about it in class, about what this meant, and why, well obviously, why integration is important.

02-01:07:19

Holmes: Well speaking of community, discuss a little bit of the Chicano studies community there at UT. Ramón Saldivar, when I was sitting down with him, was mentioning that you guys would have weekly, what he liked to call, I think, weekly Chicano coffee meetings with—

02-01:07:39

Montejano: Oh, with Américo.

02-01:07:40

Holmes: Yes, with Américo Paredes. And I think Ricardo Romo—he was there when you were there?

02-01:07:45

Montejano: Yes, Ricardo was there. Ricardo was associate provost, so he was in the tower; he had an important position. By the way, he was a historian, and he's the one that recruited me to UT. So, while I'm there, he becomes the associate provost, and I become the director of Mexican American studies, the Center for Mexican American Studies, which was primarily, it was a teaching program, although it did have a research component, and it had four half-time FTEs, in other words, four half-timers who were also affiliated with other departments, and then we had twenty-five affiliated faculty. So that gives you a pretty good idea of the core that we had.

02-01:08:47

Holmes: That's a big community.

02-01:08:48

Montejano: Yeah, it's a big community. Anyway, while Ricardo's the provost, he gives me four FTEs, four recruitment FTEs. So I was really popular on campus. We could not place them; we had to find departments to work with. So I had anthropology calling me, English calling me: "Let's see if we could work together," things like that. So yeah, I actually hired four faculty during my term.

02-01:09:19

Holmes: Wow.

02-01:09:20

Montejano: Yeah.

02-01:09:22

Holmes: Well what's funny is, depending on the university, sometimes there's tension, say, between history and Chicano studies, or some of the ethnic studies departments. But here what you're describing is that there was a lot more avenues of collaboration going on at UT.

02-01:09:43

Montejano: Oh, most definitely. Yeah, I also had a courtesy appointment with sociology. So I was totally in history, and what the Center did is buy out my time, so I was directing the Center even though my tenure's in history. It meant more work for me, that's what it really meant, but otherwise, yeah, it's much more fluid there than say here, Berkeley, much more fluid.

02-01:10:15

Holmes: I wanted to ask too—during 1960s and '70s, there was a relationship that developed in Chicano studies between UCLA and UT Austin—what's been called, the California-Texas Axis, and this grew, I think, during your time there into the intra-university collaborations. There was a larger network of institutions starting to work together collaboratively, under the umbrella of Chicano studies. Did you have any interaction with those kind of collaborations?

02-01:11:05

Montejano: Well, the Inter-University Program for Latino Research (IUPLR) develops during this time, and that's a consortium of several research centers across the country that are doing Latino studies. So there is that, and there were several faculty there at Austin who were involved in that: Gilberto Cárdenas, in particular; later, José Limón. But no, I wasn't as active in other kinds of infrastructural activities like that, other than what happened there on campus. I was pretty busy. [laughter] We did, during my term, quite a few things that were—well, besides hiring four faculty, the Ten Percent Plan, that's still the pinnacle of my political activity. [laughs]

02-01:12:12

Holmes: Well that was next on my list to ask you about. It's a really important program, and I know you were very much involved with that. In many respects, it's still

a model nationally, today. Maybe discuss a little bit of the genesis of that program and your experience in putting that together.

02-01:12:35

Montejano:

Timing is everything, where you are, and so forth. I had just been appointed director of the Center for Mexican American Studies, and this is in 19—  
God—

02-01:12:53

Holmes:

1996, I believe?

02-01:12:54

Montejano:

Yeah, '96. Yeah, right, '96—I was director from '96 to 2000—when the *Hopwood* decision came down. The *Hopwood* decision was a Fifth Circuit Court decision that banned affirmative action. And it could've been tailored narrowly, to just apply to the law school, but the attorney general in Texas decided to apply it immediately to all campuses, all programs, just like that, and within a week, affirmative action was dead. After it had taken so many years to even get universities to accept it, begrudgingly, but now it was gone.

So, the students were, you can imagine, and faculty too, were very upset. They were talking about taking over buildings. It was stuff that wouldn't have changed anything, other than maybe vent some anger. So, Gonzalo Barrientos calls. Gonzalo was a state senator, and here's where the long-term relationships count a lot, because I know Gonzalo from being an undergraduate at UT many years before, when he was a young activist himself. So now he's a state senator. He says, "David, what can we do? Is there anything we can do?"

So, we organized a meeting. We actually had two meetings to brainstorm. "Let's brainstorm; let's bring some people together, brainstorm; see how we can react." The second meeting was a big one and that was held at the LBJ School where we had like 200 people there, but by this time, we had a panel—Jorge Chapa, myself, Ricardo, Al Kauffman from MALDEF—and we all had been asked to come up with plans to present.

So that's what happened, and my plan was the Top Ten Percent Plan, and initially, I was just focused on UT Austin, but as result of, everybody said, "Why just Austin?" and I opened it up to the whole state, sure. "Why Ten Percent? Why shouldn't it be Top 25 Percent?" Things like that. But anyway, that's what happened at the conference. We were very fortunate. It was a very exciting time. I had a graduate student researcher who was my point person at the capitol. He would just go down there and keep me abreast of what's going on,. We were meeting at the capitol. I organized a little team of researchers. Yeah, it was a very exciting time.

02-01:16:15

Holmes:

Well, give us the gist of what your plan ultimately accomplished.

02-01:16:19

Montejano:

Oh, what's the plan? Yeah, the plan was very simple. It was, top ten percent of each graduating high school gets automatic admissions to the university of their choice in the state. They still have to take the SAT or whatever, but it's not going to count. What's going to count is their ranking in their graduating class. And the idea here is: I ran the numbers. I was just trying to preserve a basis for diversity, and again I'm thinking of Austin, a basis for diversity. And so sure enough, knowing Texas, how segregated it is, and geographically distinct areas, I'd ran some hypotheticals. Well this is where your, I guess, sociology training comes in.

02-01:17:17

Holmes:

As well as your time working in San Antonio.

02-01:17:20

Montejano:

Yeah, at Southwest Voter. So you assume, okay, let's just say it's 50 percent segregated, Texas, 50 percent segregated. Well then I knew I could run the numbers and I knew how many Latinos would be in the top ten percent and how many African Americans would be in the top ten percent, just based on the assumption of a 50 percent segregation.

So I could do that; I could play around with numbers, and that's why I said, "Okay, well this is the way to go. It's very simple." We're not now saying, "It's not affirmative action," but you're treating the high school as the unit. The high school's the unit, right? And some towns, they're highly segregated; you have your white high school and your non-white high school. Well, doesn't make any difference, it's going to be top ten percent from either one. Other towns, you have one high school and they're both there. The numbers don't change; it's still top ten percent.

The community decides how to approach this. We don't decide. We're just saying, "top ten percent." There were some defenders of the SAT in the legislature, saying, "How can we get rid of SATs?" and everything, and then some legislator would get up and say, "Well I never did well on the SATs anyway." [laughter]

But anyway, yes, it had an impact, almost immediately. It did much better than affirmative action ever did in its best years, and immediately. And that's proven to be the case. I guess maybe there was ten percent Mexican Americans at the time. Now it's about 18, 19 percent, something like that.

One of the most important things was changing the attitude of student. Well, we had lost the rhetorical battle on affirmative action, because affirmative action was seen as giving you sort of like a special lift, an advantage because you're black or brown, so that even our students didn't like the idea of that label. But now, they're here because they're in the top ten percent, period, not because they're black or brown, but because they're in the top of their class. So, that was very important.

02-01:20:41

Holmes: Well, and still continuing today.

02-01:20:43

Montejano: It's continuing today, after repeated attempts by the University of Texas to undo it, every session. They didn't like it. They didn't like the plan at all, because they want to have control over their admissions policy. So finally compromise has been struck after all this time.

And by the way, what was working against the university's attempt to undo the Ten Percent Plan was the evidence of how well the Ten Percent Plan was working. I don't mean just in terms of diversity; I mean in terms of how well the ten percenters did in school. And sure enough, what we had argued was—because they kept talking about the inequality at the high school level—we had argued is, you're getting somebody who's, they're in the top ten percent because of their discipline, the way they handle time, the responsibility, blah, blah, blah. "They'll catch up," basically, is what we said. You put them in a different environment, they have the kind of drive, they'll catch up, and sure enough, that's what's happened.

And this is all collected by the admissions office there, so this is great. We're using their data, and the ten percenters were out performing non-ten percenters who had SAT scores of 200, 300 points higher. So we were able to point out that the SAT really was not doing what it was supposed to do, that motivation was almost as important, or more important, than having a high SAT score. So anyway, it's great. It's worked out very well.

So what happened though, was that yes, in time, UT Austin was all going to be occupied by top ten percenters, because everybody wanted to go there. So the compromise that was struck is that 75 percent of the entering class will be determined by this Top Ten Percent Rule, and the other 25 percent is holistic—the admissions officers decide what to do, and they always talk about the talented musician who was in the top ten percent, but won all these state awards, and they should be given a chance, and that kind of stuff.

So anyway, as a result of the compromise of limiting the entering class to 75 percent of the automatic admits, it's effectively now a Top Seven Percent Plan, for Austin. But anyway, yeah, it's still on the books, and it's interesting that all the efforts to change it were challenged by Republican legislators from the rural areas, because what we found, and this was a subsequent research—because when I thought of the Ten Percent Plan, I was thinking of just diversity, in terms of racial diversity, ethnic racial diversity. But when we passed the thing and I do the research, I found out it's not just race, it's class, too.

And so all these rural white high schools that had never sent anybody to UT Austin, some of them within fifty miles of Austin—valedictorian, salutatorian,

never went there, never—that's what the Republican legislators then capped on as they were reading lists of students from their high schools who were now going to Austin. It's fantastic, yeah.

02-01:25:13

Holmes:

Well, while you were there at UT Austin, you also began mentoring, what would be the second and then later third generation of Chicano scholars, working with these graduate students. Was this really one of the first experiences of having a core of graduate students under your mentorship, there at UT Austin?

02-01:25:41

Montejano:

Well, I did have that experience with ChPEC earlier, although unfortunately, what happens obviously with ChPEC is that once I leave, it falls apart. We couldn't sustain it. And then in Austin, I have another group of graduate students, but basically, I didn't have a plan for them. I wasn't trying to develop a school of thought or anything. I was very much, of course, interested in rigor, and doing good work and so forth, but I ended up sponsoring a number of diverse topics.

I'm trying to think. Was there political economy? Eric Meeks, who wrote about Arizona—there's something there. No, but I have Luis Alvarez, for example, who does cultural history; Todd Moye, who worked on the South; and so forth. So I had a number of different types of students. I was not trying to develop a school, of sorts.

02-01:27:17

Holmes:

But did that help you get in contact with new directions of scholarship within the field as well.

02-01:27:25

Montejano:

Sure! Oh yeah, I learned a lot from Luis Alvarez, in terms of his cultural approach to history.

02-01:27:37

Holmes:

Well during this time, if we look into the 1990s, the field is beginning to mature, and begin to change. We see the expansion of community studies into areas outside of just California, Texas. Now we're going to the Midwest, new dimensions of social and cultural analysis, as well as political, labor, women and gender. The rise of Chicana history really begins to take hold at this time. What were some of your observations about these new directions in the field?

02-01:28:22

Montejano:

I'm trying to think in terms of how was I reacting to some of this stuff. A lot of this would happen at the NACCS Conference, and so, there were some interesting happenings there, especially where at one conference, that was in Albuquerque, where the LGBT community took over. [laughs] And there was at one point where the women say, "This is a women-only session." They didn't want any men in there. There were those kind of dynamics going on,

along with the rise of Chicana history and so forth. "We're going to have our own session and no men allowed."

So, those are the kind of things that I'm remembering, but in terms of my own scholarship, I should mention the fact that I did come out with an edited volume while I was director of CMAS, of Mexican American studies, that was basically based on the ChPEC papers, the—what is it—*Chicano Politics and Society in the Late twentieth Century*. All of those except for maybe exception of two came out as working papers by the Chicano Political Economy Collective.

02-01:30:04

Holmes:

Oh wow.

02-01:30:05

Montejano:

Yeah. So in a sense, that was one reflection of that earlier period. I think one of the things that I'm still not sure about: having been involved with CMAS at UT, which at that time was an interdisciplinary program, not a department, and then having been here at Berkeley in ethnic studies, in a department, I'm able to evaluate the differences, and I'm not sure whether the trend towards creating departments was such a good idea. I know I'm an outlier on this, I think, but it seems like the tendency here was to form departments because somehow we could get more resources, and develop our own interests, have control of our interests, which I understand. But at the same time, it also isolated us from other departments, other groups, and in particular, colleagues who sometimes need more training, or as much training as the students.

Anyway, I just see that. I think that's an unfortunate consequence of—it's almost like a re-segregation of sorts, that I think unfortunately, that doesn't educate our colleagues who are not in ethnic studies. I like to see more integration. I guess I'm an integrationist, when it comes down to it, not a separatist, but an integrationist.

02-01:32:17

Holmes:

Well, let's discuss your return back to UC Berkeley. You leave UT Austin, in 2002 to join the ethnic studies department at UC Berkeley. Discuss your experience coming back to Berkeley, because in a lot of ways, this is coming almost full circle in your career.

02-01:32:42

Montejano:

It is coming full circle. Oh yeah, I was very, very self-conscious about that. I thought I was going to stay at Austin. I was very comfortable there. Like I said, the history department was very welcoming. I knew everybody. I knew the president on a first-name basis. I have a beautiful house there.

So I was set, and then Berkeley comes knocking, and it wasn't so much the monetary incentives, although those were important, of course, but, it had to do with the sense of vindication in a certain way, of finally completing what I



didn't complete the first time around. And I thought, how poetic [laughs] to go back to Berkeley, and finish that original dissertation that I was never able to finish, on the Brown Berets, on the Chicano movement. How poetic.

And so yeah, that had a lot to do with coming back. Even though it was ethnic studies, not in sociology or history, I thought, I want to do this. If I don't take this job, I'm going to end up regretting it, second guessing myself. So yeah, that's what was going on in my mind. Now the ethnic studies department itself, though, was in a big mess. It was the results of unresolved politics, because what happened is what? You had, back in the first time when I was here, you had these programs—Chicano studies programs, Asian American, African American, Native American—and there was a push to create a third-world college. That was the idea.

Well it didn't happen. African American studies was made into a department, because they had the political clout. The other programs did not, but they were put in together, cobbled together, into an ethnic studies department. And so you got these three programs that used to have some autonomy now cobbled together in the department, and they're still acting semi-autonomously within the department. Well you can imagine the mess that is. If the ethnic studies got one FTE, well who was going to get it: Asian American, Chicano, or Native American?

Yeah, it was very conflictual. It's a lot better now, but that's what I saw happening, and it also then informs my thinking about departmental status. Is this really the way to go? When we were a program, we had to have these affiliations, faculty in other departments, which was good, I thought.

02-01:36:24

Holmes:

Well in some respects it seems like by not having an own department but by having affiliated faculty in other departments, that actually spurs further interdisciplinary involvement and collaborations which was really the foundation of Chicano studies, in a lot of respects.

02-01:36:43

Montejano:

Right. And now here you had in ethnic studies an attempt to provide that interdisciplinary breadth, which was impossible, unless you have a big department. You can't do sociology and history, and then literature; you don't have enough faculty, and really, I could see the pros and cons. I could see why they went the departmental route, why folks want departments, but at the same time, I see the cost involved. And I think that's where we're at, really. We're still trying to integrate.

I have to bring up my own experience at Berkeley. So here I'm coming from history at UT. I was there thirteen years, and by this time, I am considering myself a historian, but yet, I couldn't get any position here in the history

department, no affiliation. Initially, I sought that, and they said they had no process for doing that.

So finally, with Dean Carla Hesse, I thought—now by this time I'm done. I said, "I want to push the button one more time," because I was getting upset because all the Latino history grad students were coming to me, and I don't mind at all; that was great. I had more history graduate students that I supervised here than I did Ethnic Study graduate students while I was here. And I was very familiar with their topics, that's why they were coming to me and everything. I'm on their committee, but I'm always the outside person, even though the chair of the committee would always look to me for affirmation, like, "Okay, did they master the subject area? Are they okay?" I'd nod, "Yeah." So I'm doing work for the history department but yet I'm still considered an outside member. I said, "What? This has got to stop."

So anyway, I'm happy to say that I created a process. [laughs] The Americanists in the history department had a meeting, and they reviewed me, they reviewed my work. It was almost like a job interview kind of thing, but I didn't have to give a lecture. But they actually took my work, wrote a report, had a vote, which was unanimous. Then the whole department had to have a vote. Okay, so there were two votes, all right? Two votes to give me some kind of affiliated status with history.

And finally I did get it. The chair calls me and congratulates me. He says, "It was unanimous, everything,"—and then gives me the double-handed compliment insult kind of thing. Well not an insult to me, but I could hear. It's back like Yale, calling me Super Mex or whatever. It was sort of like, "You set the bar so high that we felt comfortable in giving you affiliated status." Huh? You know what they're saying, right? My colleagues in ethnic studies better not think of doing this. That's what I heard them saying. It's a compliment, but they're also telling me, "We're not opening up the place, man." [laughter]

02-01:40:58

Holmes: "Don't share your key to the house."

02-01:40:59

Montejano: Yeah, yeah. [laughter] That's what I was told at Yale too, man. I remember the old professor telling me, "Montejano, just because you're here, don't think that we've become a post office." Huh? [laughs]

02-01:41:27

Holmes: Wow!

02-01:41:31

Montejano: Because the post offices were the first federal institutions to integrate right after World War II, and my dad worked in the post office. My uncle worked in the post office. And so here he's telling me, "Don't think that we've become

a post office just because you're here." And so now I'm hearing this here: "Don't think that, you raised the bar so high, blah, blah, blah, we feel comfortable." [laughter]

02-01:42:07

Holmes:

Well, I wanted to perhaps discuss some other aspects of your time at Berkeley. You were the chair of the Center for Latino Policy Research, twice, as well as the Center for Research on Social Change. These were research centers that again, interacted with different initiatives, as well as graduate students, is that correct?

02-01:43:00

Montejano:

Yeah, the Center for Latino Policy Research, we're on the third floor of the Shorb House when I arrived, and that was great. I had a great time. As the center director, you get to choose your emphasis, what you're going to focus on and so forth. Since I was coming from UT Austin, admissions into higher ed was my focus, having just come with the Ten Percent Plan. California was experimenting with a Four Percent Plan, and I became part of the admissions committee here at Berkeley. So I was doing that, and it just made a lot of sense to focus on higher ed admissions, and so we did some work on that and we did some policy papers.

Now you have to understand that the center, itself, it's a small center. It just has enough money for compensating the director, and at the time, we had a full-time staff member. But now, we got a half-time staff member. Other than that, basically, it's a student-run thing. You hired graduate student researchers, and then you had a lot of work studies undergraduates, and that's been basically the center. And it remains that today.

Now the big difference, though, was that we took over the whole three-story house. Once the Energy Institute left the second floor, we began a campaign to finally take over the house, and were successful. And so, that's when I decided to retire, because I feel this is a concrete accomplishment, and I can step back now. But we had been in that house. The third floor, you had to take the servant steps to get there. We thought it was time that we have a place that we can have as an intellectual hub for Latino discourse. So, we finally have that. It's an unfolding project, yeah.

02-01:45:41

Holmes:

You also chaired the Center for Research on Social Change.

02-01:45:47

Montejano:

Yeah, I chaired that but again, there was no money for that. That center receives \$4,000, that's it. You don't get anything. You have the title and you have \$4,000, that you can use that to bring in guests, and so forth. So, that's even smaller than the CLPR. I'm sure that'll collapse shortly.

02-01:46:22

Holmes:

Well, let's turn to your scholarship. As you were saying, when you returned to Berkeley, it was not just coming full circle, but it was also kind of fitting to come back to the place and finish that part of the dissertation that you had to leave behind.

02-01:46:39

Montejano:

Right. Yeah, I got a nudge on that, because okay, so when I got here, I was immediately asked to direct the center, which I really enjoyed doing, but I got word after my first evaluation. You come up every three years for evaluation. The budget committee was pretty clear, saying, "Yeah, you're doing a great job." They gave me my raise, but they also said, "What about your publications, what about your writing, and so forth?" And so, in order to do that, I had to give up the center. I had to just buckle down.

And so, I got back into my Chicano movement material, which I had kept. It was almost like, again, being told that the Paul Taylor papers are here. I get a call from UT Austin, from one of my friends who works at the library, an archivist. Of course, I knew people there, and they knew that I was interested in the Chicano movement, and I get a call. By this time, Henry B. González had passed away, and his family had donated the papers to the Center for American History there at UT Austin.

Anyway, my friend who's working there calls me to say, "David, out of the thirty boxes here that Henry B. González has donated, the family has donated, there's one box that's labeled 'Chicano movement.' You might be interested in it." I said, "Yes, I think so."

So I go, and that's what finally got me going on the project, on getting back to the Chicano movement book, because I got a flight to Austin, I look at what's there, and I said, "Holy cow." There was a treasure trove, a gold mine: Police reports, police photos, police photos of people that I had interviewed twenty years before! Police photos of the places that I had been to for meetings! Confidential memoranda written by priests who had attended the meetings that I had been at, sent to Henry B. González! And I'm looking at this stuff and I'm saying, "God, Father Yanta, how could you? [laughter] You're coming to our meetings and then writing these reports to Henry B., and labeling 'confidential?'" Holy cow.

Anyway, it was like, all right, now it's the time. I got to finish this. I got to finish this, and actually, the Henry B. González materials are very important because now they gave me something I could play off against too. This gets back to the comparative thing again. Before, I had interviews with the activists, with the people involved in the movement and so forth. I had all that stuff, but here, Henry B. had the opposition. He, himself was an oppositional voice. So his speeches were in there, and his thoughts about what was going on were in there. And his petitions to the FBI to find out, get more

information on José Angel Gutiérrez, and all this, was all there, man. I said, "Okay, I got to get on this."

So, that's what motivated me to get back to it, besides the fact that it had been sort of like an albatross. I felt like if I didn't write it, well it wasn't going to get written. Nobody else had this material. It was either up to me, or it wasn't going to get done, and I did feel obligated to those folks that I had interviewed and hung out with, especially the Berets. So I started working on the stuff, and then, as you know, the project split into two. It just split into two. I tried to keep it as one big, thick volume, but the reader reports—well, I agree with them actually—they said there were two voices here. I had the ethnography, where I'm hanging out with the guys, and then I had the historical overview where I'm talking about the Chicano movement, which was a very different kind of voice. And in a sense, trying to put them together was constraining me, because once I was able to separate them, in the ethnography, I could just do my own thing, which I ended up doing.

In the ethnography, I make very explicit reference to my early days at UC Berkeley, as you know. And that ethnography ends up being almost like a methodology piece, where I talk about why I didn't write the dissertation the way I wanted to the first time; my confrontation with Leo Löwenthal, at the time, and then how eventually, I reconciled with him even though he's long passed. [laughs] The fact that I was looking for language that I could use to communicate across ethnic lines and Löwenthal didn't understand that—I mean, he comes here from the Frankfurt School.

Okay, this is part of the whole learning. You assume someone from the Frankfurt School are radical, they're Marxist; they should be an ally, right? And then that's not what I felt. It's not at all what I saw. But had I known that Löwenthal, well, I knew he was into literature, but I didn't know he was into *Quixote*, and had I known maybe if I could use some of that language, he would understand what I was doing. You know what I mean? But I didn't have that language yet. I discovered Löwenthal's work much later, when I'm still trying to finish the Brown Beret ethnography.

But anyway, so yeah, the project split into two and as you know, when I took the ethnography as its own project, then I felt I could sort of experiment a little bit more, and I had Maceo Montoya do the line drawings. Line drawings in an ethnography? Because I couldn't use photographs, so I did line drawings, and stuff like that, and then sort of experimented more, and had him do the Löwenthal thing coming out of the book. I was really pushing it then. [laughs]

02-01:55:02  
Holmes:

Well, and the two books, and using that language, so in 2010, *Quixote's Soldiers: A Local History of the Chicano Movement*, based out of San Antonio, and then, two years later in 2012, *Sancho's Journal: Exploring the Political Edge with the Brown Berets*, which, is that the ethnography you're

referring to of your seven months—was it seven months that you spent with the Brown Berets?

02-01:55:28

Montejano: Yeah, seven, eight months, yeah.

02-01:55:29

Holmes: As their minister of information.

02-01:55:33

Montejano: That was the title they gave me [laughter] Minister of Information, yeah. That was quite an experience.

02-01:55:47

Holmes: And this was all field work and research you were doing that was part of that original dissertation project that you were trying to do at Yale.

02-01:55:56

Montejano: That was back in '74, '75, or '73, when I was thinking I was going to do the ethnography, and then never was able to, which as I explained why I waited so long. I sort of had to revise some of those field rules, those methodology rules on the fly. I'm not supposed to become Minister of Information. I don't want to become Minister of Information. But, they want me to. I can see what they're doing: they, in a sense, want to make me a loyal member of their group, and if I'm a Minister of Information, obviously, that ties me to the group. But then they also want to make sure that I sort of reciprocate in some way, and that I'm providing some kind of service. And in this case, it meant reading letters and writing letters, or statements, a press release, or whatever. That's what I was doing.

02-01:57:11

Holmes: In *Quixote's Soldiers*, one of the things you do a great job of illustrating, is how San Antonio is not just a case study, that again, comparatively, it could be placed anywhere in the United States. But at the same time it's also unique in its own success story, of overturning essentially what was a white power structure that launched political efforts that empowered the Mexican American community, which is how we get Mayor Henry Cisneros, and others.

Discuss the reception of that book, because I know there's been a lot written on the Chicano movement. What was your aim and contribution in this project? Of course, your ethnography, which I want to get to here in a minute, is very unique and is experience a lot of other historians and scholars writing on the movement didn't have. But, for the Chicano movement itself, what was the aim? What was different that you wanted to illustrate within that kind of broad literature on the movement?

02-01:58:32

Montejano:

I guess all along, I'm sort of doing my own thing. It's not like I'm thinking in terms of what's missing in the literature, or anything like that. I'm thinking in terms of, here's my material, I'm going to do as good a job as I can, and then let it fall where it may; let's see how people react to it. For example, I hadn't seen too much on the Chicano movement that talked about middle class reaction to the Chicano movement, or opposition to the Chicano movement. But that comes up. It was there, and this is why the Henry B. papers were so important, because I would not have had that perspective without the Henry B. papers. Had I just relied on what I collected in '73 and '74, it had been a one-sided view of the movement, and obviously, I'm happy that I did wait, because like I said, I couldn't write it at the time, for a number of reasons. The movement didn't look like it was doing too well.

But, obviously having this longer time perspective helps me then. Then I could talk about Henry Cisneros, his campaign and election, and attributing it in part to the Chicano movement. I wouldn't have been able to do that then. But it wasn't like I was thinking that, "Oh, nobody's talked about the middle class and how they feel about the Chicano movement." I was just trying to portray what I saw coming out of the material. And it made it a much stronger book, much stronger interpretation to acknowledge the fact that the Chicano and Mexican American community is not unified. It's complex, it has divisions, and so forth, and in fact, what was powerful about the Chicano movement was the fact that it was able to overcome all these various divisions within the community: geographic and class and so forth. Amazing.

Yeah, for a while, you were able to bring in LULAC—it's very conservative—along with the folks organizing the Free Angela Davis campaign. For a moment, we were able to have everybody together, and that, by the way, was when Chicano studies as a field is being mentioned.

02-02:01:42

Holmes:

Yeah, that type of coalition building. I remember reading it the first time, particularly as a graduate student, and then writing on the UFW myself—it's the same kind of coalition building you would see Cesar Chavez and the farm worker movement put together, which is rare, very rare. Well speaking of sitting back and reflecting on and having that type of perspective, your ethnography on the Brown Berets, discuss the experience of revisiting your notes from that time, and trying to put that back into perspective some thirty years later.

02-02:02:24

Montejano:

Well, it wasn't just revisiting the material. I had to revisit the guys, themselves. [laughs] That was the one comment that I got consistently from both the readers, and of course the press, was, "Where are they now? What has happened?" In other words, I couldn't just leave it with 1975. I had to find out what happened to them. So I actually went out and did revisit some of the guys enough so I could find out what happened to the general group. And sure

enough, in following up, twenty something years later, a lot of what I thought was happening did in fact happen.

The group, in '75, was dissolving. They, the Berets, these are street guys, most of them dropouts, a lot of them with temporary jobs. They're all roofers. Most of them participate in the underground economy selling marijuana, usually, but other things, too, not just marijuana. And then they had become political and start going to rallies, and that's what fascinated me. I was like, "What the heck is going on here? What is their interest? What is it that makes them political, and so forth?" And it really was ethnic nationalism. That's really what. So, the learning process that they acquired through these rallies, through the participating at conferences and so forth, that's how the learning was happening.

Anyway, so they fashioned themselves as bodyguards, and they saw themselves as providing security at all these events, but once the rallies, once the protests and so forth start dwindling, they're being called less and less. They're just sort of hanging out in the backyard of somebody's house, drinking, smoking, whatever, after a while, they're not called on anymore. They were dissolving. And in dissolving, they were going back to their old habits, their old habits of shooting up or whatever.

And so, that's what I saw happening, when I left the group. I did not see a bright future there. In the follow-up, sure enough, everything I saw back then sort of came to pass. Some of the guys formed a drug gang, got involved in heroin, selling heroin and so forth. One of them died in a shootout; another one was imprisoned as the result of a shootout. So you got that happening. I could foresee that. On the other hand, two of the guys became ministers, street corner ministers, victory outreach kind of stuff. They started preaching. They became very religious. And then there was still another third trajectory: the politician. There were a few who actually got more into politics, and actually became candidates themselves. So that was interesting.

One of the things I point out in the ethnography was the diversity among all the chapters, and the San Antonio chapter I was with was sort of like the rawest of the group, but there were other chapters. The ones in Austin were very sophisticated, and in part because some of the members were university students or had been university students. They had a headquarters, a house, an actual center, and they also published a newspaper, which was again, an indication of the kind of sophistication that some of the chapters could achieve. So, very diverse group.

Anyway, the politicians come from the Austin chapter. Some of the Beret chapters have evolved into what I call "second-generation movement organizations," and by that I mean, they sort of have jettisoned the ethnic nationalism rhetoric, but they're still committed towards community empowerment and so forth. So former Brown Berets created an environmental



justice organization, and stuff like. So, the Berets went in many different directions, and it depends on what chapter we're talking about.

02-02:08:23

Holmes: Well you're also coming close to the finish line of a current book that you've been working on for a while. Do you mind talking about that a little bit?

02-02:08:33

Montejano: No, I don't mind talking about that at all.

02-02:08:38

Holmes: Now in my research it's always interesting to get a view of a project's trajectory, such as the articles and research that eventually give rise to the book. But even then, that doesn't give a clear picture of how long the ideas have been percolating. Your current book, looking at Mexican merchants and teamsters on the Texas Cotton Road, my research point to you starting to explore this idea in the early 2000s, and even before that. Discuss this new project and how it came about.

02-02:09:29

Montejano: Well, I was spending a lot of time on the East Coast, and I had time on my hands, and I spent the month in Cambridge, and I said, "Well, I got a lot of time on my hands. What I'm going to do?" So I started hanging out reading the Stillman papers at the Houghton Library at Harvard, and it was sort of like for fun now. I was already familiar with the Stillman papers because I had run across his collection with *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*. But now I was reading stuff that had to do with the Civil War, and it was very interesting.

He had incoming letters. He didn't write any letters at all. I mean, he did write letters—I knew he wrote responses, but his responses were not in the collection. It was just the incoming correspondence, and I discovered, right away, why that's the case: it's because he's warned very early on by his New York office that, "Be careful what you write. Hide what you write, Sonny," they tell him. [laughs] And he did! He did. And the only reason that I know he would respond was because there would be a subsequent letter, incoming letter, telling him that "yeah, we received the arms." [laughter]

So anyway, what became of interest to me was here's a guy who's supplying arms and is a quartermaster for the Confederates, and yet, he still has an office in New York, and a regular correspondence with the New York office, and I'm saying, "What the hell's going on here?" The North and South declare civil war here? And sure enough, both sides have declared this to be treason. You're not supposed to be engaged in commerce with the other side. So that's what got me interested, how do markets trump warfare? How is this guy able to carry on an active trade with New York, at the time when the Civil War's not decided at all? Man, we're not talking about 1864 here. We're talking very early here.

So it's very clear from the correspondence from his New York office that they're also very conscious of the fact that they're on thin ice, and they're trying to disguise what they're doing. So that just intrigued the hell out of me. I said, "Oh okay, how is this happening?" And Stillman, he was a founder of Brownsville, and important figure in Texas history, so, that's what got me started.

Then it evolves, of course, like all projects evolve. I thought, well, if this trade was as vigorous as they say it was, as all the military observers say it was, because there was a lot of military intelligence, I should be able to find evidence of this in the Northeast. It's coming out of Texas; I should find it in New York or somewhere. So I started looking among the mill records. I got a grant in 2002, and that search is what finally got me hooked. I say, "I got a book here," because I started looking for Mexican cotton. That's what they called it, because it's coming out of Matamoros. It's Texas cotton. It's Confederate cotton, but they're calling it Mexican cotton. And I said, "Can I find Mexican cotton in the mill records in the Northeast?"

And again, there're a couple of places that have extensive records: Rhode Island Historical Society is one place; the Baker Library at Harvard, again, has the most extensive records, mill records. Holy cow, I found Mexican cotton. I found it. Well, it is sort of like a needle-in-a-haystack kind of thing, but anyway, I found Mexican cotton, in 1863. And I'm thinking, 'Wow, this is really interesting.' I got the guy in Brownsville sending out cotton, and I got the mill, the mill's over here receiving the cotton, and I said, "What can I do here?" And I said, "Wow, why don't I just follow the cotton and write a narrative based on the journey of the cotton, on the actual circuit that the cotton follows?" So that's the structure of my ongoing project.

So actually following this commodity chain research would be what a sociologist would say, [laughter] "It's commodity chain research," but I'm affixing a social narrative, a narrative on to that circuit. Okay so the first chapter is on the plantation, during the Civil War: talk about planters, slave relations, cotton production during the Civil War, stuff like that. And then what you read, for example, would be the actual carting the cotton to the Rio Grande, and so forth, and you can see where, and eventually I get to the mill that's producing the uniforms for the Union Army, based on Southern cotton.

02-02:15:44

Holmes:

That's interesting. That's really interesting.

02-02:15:47

Montejano:

Yeah, so I figure another year. I already have a rough draft. I'm done with the research, and another year of polish should do it.

02-02:16:02

Holmes:

Well towards the end of our session, I wanted to kind of get your reflections and observations on the evolution and future of the field of Chicano studies.

The field has really matured since your early days at UT Austin. It's grown leaps and bounds. In your view, what have been some of the major developments in the field over the years that really stick out to you?

02-02:16:32

Montejano:

Well, I think we're now becoming an integral part of American history. We weren't anywhere, but now I think we can't be dismissed. I think we're a presence. I think the work that has to be done is more integration within American historiography, and it gets back to some of my earlier comments. I think Chicano studies has done a good job of educating other Chicanos. Now we've recovered our history, and we're continuing to develop and so forth, but now we've got to take that message elsewhere beyond just Chicano studies. We've got to become integrated within the general historiography.

Part of that too, means, to me, going beyond. One of the master narratives that I think that we've established is, and I've sort of joked about it before: there was Anglo exploitation, and Mexican American resistance. That's been sort of like the master narrative that we've developed: exploitation, and resistance. Exploitation, resistance. Okay, great! It's fantastic! [laughs] And let those stories continue, but, I'd like us to break away from that narrative and do something else. There's much more that can be developed. And maybe in a sense, that's what I'm doing with my current work, with the Civil War project, in a sense. Mexican Americans are still very much involved in that, but they're not the only actors plugged in with—I mean, commodity chain research, God, this is part of world systems again, isn't it?

02-02:18:45

Holmes:

Well, yeah, it is. I even made a note, "political economy again." But it also shows, like when we think of these larger frameworks like world systems, how much the field could really, as you were saying, integrate into other disciplines, and bring it into the fold.

02-02:19:09

Montejano:

Right.

02-02:19:12

Holmes:

And I know we discussed your view on this—which goes to your point of integration of the establishment of ethnic studies departments, and Chicano studies departments. How would you like to see those departments, even though now they're their own department, so they're their own autonomous entities—what kind of work do you think in those environments they could do to help integrate further into the university?

02-02:19:42

Montejano:

Well, that's a good question. Universities vary, according to the way departments interact with one another. Like the University of Texas, I was in the history department and I had an affiliation with Mexican American studies and with sociology, with no problems at all. I was welcome. Again, it just

meant more work for me. Whereas here at Berkeley, we got very rigid departmental boundaries. If you're in ethnic studies, you're in ethnic studies. You're not in history. So what's going to happen now here at Berkeley? Let's say there are no, [laughs] as far as I know, other than myself, maybe there's one other Latino in the history department here. But what if there's a pressure to hire someone that does Mexican American or Latino history in history?

There should be somebody there, but then ethnic Studies would say, "Well why are you giving it to history when they should be here in this department?" You see the problem here? And especially in a situation of scarce resources, who gets the FTE: history department, or ethnic studies? So I think that's an issue that has to be dealt with. I like the American studies program here at Berkeley because it sort of reminds me of what Mexican American studies was at UT Austin, which is, it's a campus-wide program. They basically buy time out from other departments to bring professors in to teach American studies. They have a vibrant program, 200-something majors. And, they only have a half-time FTE. They have one half-time faculty member. Everybody else is affiliated, and their time is bought out through the program.

To me, I think that's what I would like to go towards. We're sort of faced with the situation now, too, now that we have the Shorb House [Latinx Research Center], and that there's actually a question of—okay so, there are a number of Chicano / Latino faculty outside of ethnic studies here at Berkeley—how can they be involved in teaching a program, without having to go through the difficult process of trying to get status in ethnic studies, or alienating their own department? You know what I mean?

Those are the kind of questions that we're talking about, and if we were a program, there would be no problem. But right now, that's what has to be worked out. There are more Latino faculty outside of ethnic studies than within ethnic studies. I don't think that we should depend on ethnic studies department to be the only unit hiring Latino or African American faculty, or faculty of color. It shouldn't be the case. But I think that's what's happened, when you form departments called Mexican American studies departments, or Ethnic studies, and now all the other departments feel like, okay, they're the ones that are going to be doing recruiting in this field. This relieves us of that kind of burden.

02-02:23:38

Holmes:

Well and in some senses what you're describing too is, here we have interdisciplinary studies departments, interdisciplinary departments that, because of their lack of integration, are waning in the interdisciplinary field that is ascribed to them.

02-02:23:56

Montejano:

Right. There's some unintended consequences here, yeah.

02-02:24:09

Holmes:

As one who has been associated with the field from very early on, essentially almost the beginning, in some respects, the diversification of Chicano studies—we see this even in the name from Chicano to Chicana/Chicano, to Chican@, to Chicanx. And the new topics are really not just of gender, of addressing the issues of gender, but now also sexuality and identity. Discuss your observations on the kind of influence and reception that this has had. Is this part of just the evolution of the field as well, to be more inclusive and open? But has there also been generational kind of conflicts over this as well?

02-02:25:09

Montejano:

Well, I think there is some generational differences for sure, no question about it. And yeah, the name, the fooling around with the name and all the changes that are going on are sort of indicative of all that. I never liked the *-o/a* stuff at all: Latino *-o/a*, or Chicano/*a*. I never really got into that. Then the ampersand [*@*] was a little bit of an improvement sort of. Well now the *x* is sort of like, what?

I blame my literature colleagues for all this. [laughter] Social science, or history, we'd never be messing around with this, but the folks in literature, and cultural studies, they're all into identity and stuff, and that's where a lot of this is coming from. That's dealing with identity, and it's a very interesting development actually, because a lot of the theoretical innovation recently has come from cultural studies and literature, rather than say history or sociology. And we're being forced to respond in a certain way. Well fortunately, I'm retired. [laughs] I don't have to deal with this, what I think about Chicanx or Chicano or Latinx. I'm not going to get into those debates. I'm just like, I'm sorry, maybe I'm old fashioned in that sense.

02-02:26:55

Holmes:

Well I also wanted to ask you, which kind of dovetails with this, is activism in the field. And we see this in your background, and many others, that activism was an important ingredient and factor within the rise of Chicano studies, in the field, and it didn't have to play a part, but maybe sometimes it happened in tandem, but there was an interrelationship there, definitely.

02-02:27:22

Montejano:

Yeah, most, yeah.

02-02:27:25

Holmes:

How has activism continued to influence the field, if we look at it today?

02-02:27:30

Montejano:

I think, right now, they're sort of part and parcel of each other. It's almost like you can't separate activism away from Chicano studies. It might happen with the younger generation, I don't know. We've been having discussions lately about this. What difference does it make, for example, how does it influence your writing about the Chicano movement if you were a participant versus someone who came later and sort of studies it, but was not a participant? Is

there a difference? Yeah, I think there is a difference. I think those that were involved are conscious of the relationships, the importance of the relationships of the people that we're writing about, and okay, I'm thinking now, just to be more specific, let's say Cesar Chavez.

Lately, there's been some literature coming out finally criticizing Cesar, particularly in his later years, for the deviation of the movement of the UFW and some sort of pinning the blame for the downfall of the movement, or the UFW, on Chavez's later years. Well, yes and no. I think if I'm writing and I had developed a relationship with Chavez and the UFW, what is it that I want to emphasize here? Do you just follow the truth and go wherever the truth goes? Is this it, and you just spill it out, and or do you filter this somehow? Is there a selection process? Are you aware of the implications of what you're writing or the impact it could have, and so forth? These are all things that I dealt with in dealing with the Brown Berets, and in part, why I couldn't write about them in the first time I had an opportunity to do so, why I hesitated.

And so I think yeah, if you were involved with the movement, you know the people, you want to write about it in a truthful way, but how much emphasis do you want to put on the warts? Or how important were those warts, or how do you deal with that, with the not-so-good side of a movement, or the not-so-attractive side of some movement leader? You know they did some good things, but you also know they're human, so how do you deal with that? What do you want to emphasize? So, anyway, this is a long-winded response to your question about where is all this going. It's going to be interesting, I think.

02-02:30:57

Holmes:

I know Rudy Acuña himself took issue with particularly some of the recent literature on Chavez, to follow up on your example, of what he called "hero bashing," do we think twice about this? But it also raises the question of, as scholars, are we still chasing that ideal of objectivity as well? And each scholar has to perhaps find their own medium in that. No, it's interesting.

02-02:31:31

Montejano:

No, it's very interesting, and then times change, right? And we're at a very different period now than we were back in the sixties and seventies. I'm trying to think of how many male Chicano leaders could escape the wrath of the Me Too movement, for example. Wow. [laughs] But I think men learn. We didn't talk too much about that, and a big part of the Chicano movement, was the women finally saying, "You know what? We want to be treated as an equal," and the men being forced to learn that. Again, the whole prosaic view of the women in the kitchen, and the guys in the living room making the plans—that broke down man, that broke down.

02-02:32:38

Holmes:

Well I think that is a good point. You highlight that really well in the book, and if we think about it, we saw that in a lot of sixties activism like SDS, and other groups.

02-02:33:20

Montejano:

Yeah, so I think that was a big part of the movement, was the Chicanas basically telling the man, "You know what? We're equal and we're not going to take your shit anymore." [laughter]

02-02:33:43

Holmes:

I also wanted to ask: If we think about Chicano studies and look at the development of the field over the past few decades, it's establishing a place in the academy. From NACCS, the National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies, to the number of panels at national conferences that are addressing the field, to Chicano scholars rising to become presidents of those national organizations, such as Al Camarillo, Vicki Ruiz, and Ricardo Romo becoming a university president.

Discuss, if we're looking back, how would you see the impact of Chicano studies on American history, as well as in other disciplines such as sociology? Has it really begun to make that dent, to make an impact, and become included?

02-02:35:02

Montejano:

Well, okay, so, if you had asked me a couple of years ago, I might have given you a different answer, but you're asking me now in the age of Trump, and so, to me, Trump is a good indication of how much work we have to do. In other words, that's why I say that maybe we have made a dent among our own community—we've educated ourselves, we've recovered history, and I think we're doing a good job of teaching ourselves. But has it reached beyond that? Do people in the Midwest and the South realize that we've been here for a while, and we're part of the American citizenry, fabric? No, I don't think so. And so, I think we still got a ways to go there.

Okay, so that's one part of the answer. On the other hand, yeah, if you go back to where we were thirty, forty years ago, you can see signs of progress. You can see that we've had university presidents; we've had presidents of professional organizations, academic organizations. Sure, we're still only 10, 11 percent of the undergraduate population at some of these institutions, but you know what? I think that incremental progress is going to pay off. I think it's showing its dividends, certainly in a place like California, and I think it'll be reflective in other places as well. I've been surprised at a number of politicians here in California who all come up to me and say, "I took Chicano studies when I was an undergraduate." And I think that's going to continue. So yeah, there's still work to be done, a lot of work to be done.

02-02:37:38

Holmes:

Well, when we try to start discussing the future of the field, now you've mentioned some of this, but where would you like to see the discipline of Chicano studies go?

02-02:37:57

Montejano:

Well, I'd like the discipline to be integrated into the general disciplines. That's what I'd like to see happen. I think it's, again, I'm getting back to the idea of having a program that emphasizes Chicano studies, but that does not segregate itself from the other already-established units, and the main reason for that is, it's not just the students that need to learn Chicano studies. It's our colleagues that need to learn Chicano studies. And if they feel that they don't have to deal with it because we have a department over there that calls itself Chicano studies, I think that we're relieving them of that burden of that. I think we're making it too easy. Again, I'm for incorporating, integrating Chicano studies throughout all the campus units. That's what I would prefer to see, but obviously, there still has to be a commitment to developing Chicano studies, so.

02-02:39:12

Holmes:

And on that latter note, what new areas would you like to be explored? I know we were just talking about this too, how one of your ideals is just like this forthcoming book, that we could take what we do in Chicano studies, and just like you were saying, integrate it in the departments? But even within the field, in the literature, is there a way that we can tell stories that also are integrated that way?

02-02:39:44

Montejano:

Oh yeah, there're a number of them—again, we need to start thinking comparatively. Not to say that that master narrative of exploitation and resistance is not an important one—we need that—but that's not the only one. That's not the only thing that was happening. And an example would be: So, in *Anglos and Mexicans* I talk about the exodus of Texas Mexicans during the '30s and '40s to the Midwest, to find work and so forth, and evading the highway patrol, and all that kind of stuff.

Well, that's the same time when African Americans were going north, same period! Same period, going to the same cities like Detroit, and Chicago, and so forth. Wow, wouldn't that be an interesting comparative study? We have migrations north of two populations, to see how they were received, and we talk about differential racialization or assimilation or whatever. But that's what I mean about, there's still a lot of work that can be done if we think comparatively. And I think that'll lead us into new insights, too.

02-02:41:22

Holmes:

Well, thinking on that, at Stanford the center that both Ramón Saldívar and Al Camarillo helped put together, Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity, do you think that would be new avenues for other institutions to perhaps think about, or pursue?

02-02:41:43

Montejano:

Yeah, I think so. I'd like to learn more about what they're doing, but yes, definitely. Yeah, most definitely.



02-02:41:53

Holmes:

Well, in the closing, I like to ask about those who you'd wish to recognize. We all stand on the shoulders of others, and so kind of in memoriam, are there scholars of the field who have passed, or others you would like to mention and recognize?

02-02:42:29

Montejano:

That I haven't mentioned already?

02-02:42:31

Holmes:

You could mention them again. [laughter]

02-02:42:34

Montejano:

I mentioned Barrington Moore. Eric Wolf is very important to me, Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*. He's another globalist, and actually, I like him more than Immanuel Wallerstein, because he's an anthropologist and he pays more attention to culture.

02-02:43:03

Holmes:

All right, thanks so much David.

02-02:43:04

Montejano:

OK man. Thank you.

[End of Interview]