

THE COUNTERNARRATIVES OF DOÑA LUCHA:
POPULAR POLITICS, DEMOCRACY, AND CITIZENSHIP
ON THE PERIPHERIES OF GUADALAJARA, MEXICO, 1965-1994

by

Brad H. Wright

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Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Christoph Rosenmüller, Chair

Dr. Martha Norkunas

Dr. Louis Kyriakoudes

Dr. Tanalís Padilla

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to better understand the heterogeneous lives and political cultures of the poor majorities during a period in Mexican history (1970s-1990s) of capitalist transition to neoliberalism and political democratization. The emerging historiography on 1970s and 1980s Mexico has yet to explore how rural migrants to urban centers survived, resisted domination and control, and advanced their own interests. Given the difficulties some Left movements experienced in building the mass working-class bases they envisioned in the post-1968 period, what was the nature and impact of popular politics in urban Mexico? This dissertation reconstructs a powerful social movement and explores its intersections with everyday life in the city.

The case of Guadalajara underlines the vital role religious thought and practice played in power relations in Mexico's regions. In Mexico's second biggest city, Christian base communities (CEBs) and Freirian popular education projects converged in the urban popular movement to fuel contentious politics and democratic imaginaries among residents of the urban peripheries. Liberationist Christianity shaped the development of a grassroots, oppositional presence in the local public sphere. The CEB-led movement elaborated a political repertoire during the 1970s that broader movements capitalized on in the 1980s and 1990s. In a period characterized by the severing of social fabrics, and a place known for its conservatism, groups anchored in popular religion and led by working-class women provide models for collectively acting against the odds to negotiate with and occasionally defeat oppressive powers. Women's leadership is only hinted at in conventional archival sources and suppressed in public representations across the city. Oral histories reveal the outsized roles of neighborhood women and Catholic nuns in

galvanizing important urban sociocultural and political transformation. Building upon collaborations with community organizations on public history projects, I offer an interpretive history of independent popular organizing in one urban context in Mexico. This inverted local history from Guadalajara contributes to literature on democracy, citizenship, and the public sphere in twentieth-century Latin America.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACM	Acción Católica Mexicana (Mexican Catholic Action)
ACNR	Asociación Cívica Nacional Revolucionaria (Revolutionary National Civic Association)
CCP	Coordinadora de Colonias Populares (Colonias Populares Coordinating Committee)
CEAAL	Consejo de Educación Popular de América Latina y el Caribe (Popular Education Council of Latin America and the Caribbean)
CEBs	Comunidades Eclesiales de Base (Christian Base Communities)
CELAM	Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (Latin American Episcopal Council)
CEM	Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano (Mexican Episcopal Conference)
CENCOS	Centro Nacional de Comunicación Social, A.C. (National Center of Social Communication)
CEO	Centros Educativos Oblatos (Oblatos Education Centers)
CONAFE	Consejo Nacional de Fomento Educativo (National Council for Education Development)
CONAMUP	Coordinadora Nacional del Movimiento Urbano Popular (National Coordinating Council of the Urban Popular Movement)
CONASUPO	Compañía Nacional de Subsistencias Populares (National Company of Popular Subsistence)
CORETT	Comisión para la Regularización de la Tenencia de la Tierra (Commission for the Regularization of Land Tenure)
CPS	Comité Popular del Sur (Popular Committee of the South)
EDOC	Educación y Desarrollo (Education and Development)
FDLP	Frente Democrática de Lucha Popular (Democratic Front for Popular Struggle)
FONHAPO	Fondo Nacional de Habitaciones Populares (National Fund for Popular Housing)

FNDESCAC	Frente Nacional en Defensa del Salario, Contra la Austeridad y la Carestía (National Front in Defense of Wages, Against Austerity and Shortages)
FPI	Frente Popular Independiente (Independent Popular Front)
IMDEC	Instituto Mexicano para el Desarrollo Comunitario (Mexican Institute for Community Development)
ITESO	Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente (Western Institute of Technology and Higher Education)
JOC	Juventud Obrera Católica (Catholic Worker Youth)
MCJ	Movimiento Ciudadano Jalisciense (Jalisciense Citizens Movement)
MPI	Movimiento Popular Independiente (Independent Popular Movement)
MUP	Movimiento Urbano Popular (Urban Popular Movement)
OIR-LM	Organización de Izquierda Revolucionaria- Línea de Masas (Organization of the Revolutionary Left- Line of the Masses)
OMIP	Organización de Mujeres Independientes Proletarias (Organization of Independent Proletarian Women)
PAN	Partido Acción Nacional (National Action Party)
PRD	Partido de la Revolución Democrática (Party of the Democratic Revolution)
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party)
PST	Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Party for Workers)
RSCJ	Religiosas del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús (Nuns of the Sacred Heart of Jesus)
SEDOC	Servicios Educativos de Occidente (Educational Services of the West)
SIAPA	Sistema Intermunicipal de los Servicios de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado (Inter-Municipal System of Water and Sewer Services)
UAG	Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara (Autonomous University of Guadalajara)

GLOSSARY

albañil- construction workers specializing in bricklaying and stonemasonry

animador(a)/(es)/(as)- coordinator, organizer in network of Christian base communities

barranca – canyon, gorge

cacique- a local strongman who wields outsized power at the regional, local, and/or neighborhood levels

cajas populares – savings and loan cooperatives at the neighborhood level, non-institutional, drawing members from blocks, streets, or colonia-wide

campo – countryside, rural areas

cariño – affection, care, tenderness

catequista – leader or teacher of catechism classes among Catholics

clausura – Catholic nuns' practice of sequestration in convents

colonia – neighborhoods in cities

colonia popular- low-income neighborhood

colono(a)/(os)/(as)- resident(s) of a colonia

convivir, convivencia- being together, group gathering

ejidatarios- communal landholders

festejo- celebration

historieta- comic book style narration/story that unfolds over numerous episodes

luchas reivindicativas – collective campaigns/struggles for basic rights, typically centered on material conditions

maquiladora- factory or large workshop

misa de barrio – Catholic mass held outside of the parish temple in neighborhood streets

patrón – boss, owner, employer

promotor(a)/(es)/(as) – leader of CEB group; grassroots organizer

pueblo – town

rancho – single- or multi-family farms or homesteads in the countryside

ranchería – rural community consisting of a small collection of homes and subsistence farms

sencillo/(a) – simple, humble, easy-going

terreno – plot of land

tianguis – open-air markets

vecindades – tenements

INTRODUCTION

Often understood as an especially conservative, Catholic stronghold “where nothing happens” (*donde no pasa nada*), the city of Guadalajara, Mexico became a key venue for the development of Left ideologies and popular movements in Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s.¹ In Guadalajara, Christian base communities (*comunidades eclesiales de base*, CEBs) and Freirian popular education projects converged in the “urban popular movement” (*movimiento urbano popular*, MUP) to fuel contentious politics and democratic imaginaries among residents of the urban peripheries. This study offers an alternative perspective on Mexico’s post-1968 social and political history by foregrounding the heterogeneous political cultures of the lower-class majorities in the country’s second biggest city.

The case of Guadalajara underlines the vital role religious thought and practice played in political processes in regional settings in Mexico. In lower-class *barrios* like Santa Cecilia, Santa Rosa, and Santa Margarita on the city’s outer edges, liberationist Christianity, popular education, and the everyday inputs from urban spaces and landscapes shaped political consciousnesses and fed the construction of a grassroots, oppositional presence in the local public sphere during the post-1968 period. In this example of independent organizing and sustained collective action outside the corporatist

¹ See Fernando Herrera Calderón, “Working-Class Heroes: Barrio Consciousness, Student Power, and the Mexican Dirty War,” in *México Beyond 1968: Revolutionaries, Radicals, and Repression During the Global Sixties and Subversive Seventies*, eds. Jaime M. Pensado and Enrique C. Ochoa, 155-174 (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2018); “From Books to Bullets: Youth Radicals and Urban Guerrillas in Guadalajara,” in *Challenging Authoritarianism in Mexico: Revolutionary Struggles and the Dirty War, 1964-1982*, eds. Fernando Herrera Calderón and Adela Cedillo, 105-128 (London: Routledge, 2012); and María Guadalupe Moreno González, “La izquierda y los movimientos sociales: el caso del Partido Comunista en Jalisco y la guerra sucia en Guadalajara de los años setenta,” *Revista de Historia de América* (2010): 9-23.

structures of the Mexican state, political parties, and unions, Christian base communities shaped the urban popular movement that gathered steam into the 1970s. CEBs remained integral to independent popular organizing in the city through the early 1990s.²

Guadalajara was indeed a bastion of conservative Catholicism and the political right in Mexico. But its progressive and radical traditions have largely been ignored by historians not based in the city itself.³

In many *colonias populares* during the last three decades of the twentieth century, Christian base communities and Freirian popular education projects functioned as citizenship and democracy training grounds. CEBs in Guadalajara built on well-established Catholic organizing traditions and the popular education movement to elaborate a political repertoire during the 1970s that broader popular movements then capitalized on in the 1980s and 1990s. Small groups and their larger networks constituted collectivities for poor and working-class citizens and their middle-class intellectual and activist allies to engage in mutual support and contest power in a rapidly changing city. Anchored in *colonias populares* along the difficult terrains of the city's expanding edges, the social movements that emerged fought for equal rights to the city, democratic

² The literature demonstrating CEBs' central role in the urban popular movement in Guadalajara includes Juan Manuel Ramírez Sáiz. *Los movimientos sociales y la política: El Comité Popular del Sur en Guadalajara* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1995); "La internacionalización y las identidades del movimiento urbano popular en el área metropolitana de Guadalajara," *Espiral: Estudios sobre Estado y Sociedad* 2, no. 5 (enero-abril 1996): 177-196; Jorge Regalado Santillán, "El movimiento popular independiente en Guadalajara," in *Perspectivas de los movimientos sociales en la región Centro-Occidente*, ed. Jaime Tamayo 121-158 (Mexico City: Editorial Linea, 1986); and Elba Noemí Gómez Gómez, *Habitar el lugar imaginado: Formas de construir la ciudad desde un proyecto educativo político* (Tlaquepaque: ITESO, 2011).

³ For an overview of Left movements in Guadalajara since the sixties, see Jorge Alonso, Rubén Martín, and Rafael Sandoval, "Movimientos sociales en Jalisco en los últimos cuatro décadas," in *Jalisco hoy: Miradas antropológicas*, eds. Renée de la Torre and Santiago Bustos, 185-212 (Guadalajara: CIESAS, 2012).

participation, just distribution of resources, and community autonomy. The sustained consciousness-raising and political education efforts of the 1970s and 1980s created durable infrastructure for grassroots organizing and counterhegemonic movement building into the 1990s and twenty-first century in Guadalajara and across Left solidarity networks in Latin America.

Women's leadership is only hinted at in archival sources, but oral histories reveal the crucial roles Catholic nuns and neighborhood women played in galvanizing important urban social movements during the 1970s and 1980s. Historians should understand 1970s and 1980s urban Mexico as a breakout time and place for working-class and poor women, even as it represents the continuation of a long history of Mexican women defying the dominant culture's public-private divide and seizing the political and historical initiative.⁴ Here I focus on instances and processes in which women subverted entrenched power arrangements that sought to ensure their depoliticization and invisibility in the public sphere.

While remaining mostly excluded from formal leadership positions in organizations and institutions, Mexican women provided ideas, energy, commitment, and the bulk of the work in lobbying government agencies and officials for essential urban services, organizing their communities, and building autonomous institutions such as schools, cooperatives, and clinics. Working-class and poor women in cities held more leadership posts in movement organizations than they had in earlier decades of

⁴ Outstanding examples of relevant studies by historians and social scientists, see Alejandra Massolo, *Por amor y coraje: Mujeres en movimientos urbanos de la ciudad de México* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1992); María Teresa Fernández Aceves, *Mujeres en el cambio social en el siglo XX mexicano* (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2014); and Robert Alegre, *Railroad Radicals in Cold War Mexico: Gender, Class, and Memory* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2014).

postrevolutionary politics and social movements. In the case of Santa Cecilia in Guadalajara, women held the overwhelming majority of leadership slots from beginning to end of the movement over two decades. Perhaps more importantly, women made most of the decisions and developed the strategies and tactics for grassroots organizing, mass communication, and contentious politics in their spheres of influence.

My research for this project sought to answer a series of questions. What was the nature and impact of popular political participation in the context of late Cold War Mexico (mid-1960s to the mid-1990s)? How does the shift to greater public initiative and mobilization among poor and working-class women alter understandings of social relations and political culture in post-1968 urban Mexico? How might this inverted local history from Guadalajara contribute to conceptualizations of democracy, citizenship, and the public sphere in twentieth-century Latin America? How was power contested and negotiated on the peripheries of Latin American cities in this period of “democratic transition” and neoliberalism’s emergence? In a twenty-first-century political and ideological climate in which diverse analysts consistently mislabel particular Latin American political systems as democracies or dictatorships, addressing historical questions of democratic processes and citizenship practices during the transition from developmentalism to neoliberalism sets current public discourse and debates on firmer analytical ground.

The history of social movements in the state of Jalisco spans a wide ideological and political spectrum. It includes armed right-wing Cristeros based in the countryside during the 1920s and 1930s, ultra-rightist Sinarquistas with broad support in the late 1930s and 1940s, and the fascist secret-society “Tecos” of the Autonomous University of

Guadalajara (UAG) and student paramilitary groups engaged in “anti-Marxist” offensives throughout the last half of the twentieth century.⁵ The city’s political heterogeneity features the middle-of-the-road or contradictory positions of establishment politicians, union bosses, and archbishops. It also includes a strong current of liberationist Christianity, Jesuit and progressive nuns’ activism and movement-building efforts, and poor people’s neighborhood-based insurgent politics often grounded in struggles for economic demands. In the 1970s, the left end of the political spectrum spanned from dissident electric workers’ and teachers’ unions to Guadalajara becoming the epicenter of a short-lived but well-organized and committed movement of Maoist and Leninist urban guerrillas in Mexico.⁶

Two motors driving the visions and practices of leftist social movements after 1968 in Mexico were the deepening anger and disillusionment with the political system in the wake of the student movement and Tlatelolco massacre and consciousness-raising

⁵ On Cristeros and the Cristiada, see Jean A. Meyer, *The Cristero Rebellion: The Mexican People Between Church and State* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1976); and Agustín Vaca, *Los silencios de la historia: Las cristeras* (Zapopan: El Colegio de Jalisco, 1998). On the sinarquista movement, see Jean A. Meyer, *El sinarquismo, el cardenismo y la iglesia: 1937-1947* (Mexico City: Tusquets Editores, 2003); and Rogelio Javier Escamilla Torres, *La formación de una nación y el sinarquismo de Michoacán, 1920-1941* (Morelia: Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, 2011). On the Tecos and fascist movements active during the period covered here, see Laura Romero, “El movimiento fascista en Guadalajara,” in *Perspectivas de los movimientos sociales en la región Centro-Occidente*, ed. Jaime Tamayo (Mexico City: Editorial Línea, 1986), 31-102; Mónica Naymich López Macedonio, “Historia de una colaboración anticomunista transnacional: Los Tecos de la Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara y el gobierno de Chiang Kai-Shek a principios de los años setenta,” *Contemporánea: Historia y problemas del siglo XX* 1 (2010): 133-58; and María Guadalupe Moreno González, “El movimiento anticomunista en Jalisco en los años setenta,” *Espiral: Estudios sobre Estado y Sociedad* 68 (enero-abril 2017): 113-153.

⁶ On the urban guerrilla movement based in Guadalajara, see Herrera Calderón, “From Books to Bullets”; Jorge Regalado Santillán, “Guadalajara Guerrillera,” in *Paradojas del sistema político mexicano*, ed. Jorge Regalado Santillán, 33-69 (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 2010); and Ramón Gil Olivo, “Orígenes de la guerrilla en Guadalajara en la década de los setenta,” in *Movimientos armados en México, siglo XX*, eds. Verónica Oikión Solano and Marta Eugenia García Ugarte, 549-566 (Zamora: El Colegio de Michoacán, 2006).

activity grounded in liberation theology and Freirian popular education after the Conference of Latin American bishops (CELAM) in Medellín, Columbia. Political space widened for the Left in Mexico during the 1970s because of the PRI-state's "democratic opening" discourse and performance of a revived revolutionary nationalism during Luis Echeverría's term as president (1970-76). The solidarity of an ultimately marginalized but committed sector of Catholic nuns and priests with the poor, and the activities of urban guerrilla movements as radical flank, opened spaces on the Left for grassroots organizing.

My research focuses on segments of the working classes and urban poor in Guadalajara who pushed back against clientelist and neoliberal conceptions of the political and built instead on counterhegemonic models and practices. Aided by the technical assistance, institutional connections, and spiritual guidance of liberationist nuns and priests after the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and the 1968 Medellín conference, they created and expanded democratic spaces outside of formal politics. Participants in base communities and citizen groups in peripheral neighborhoods staged public protests and crowded into government offices, wrote letters and signed petitions, engaged the mainstream press while also creating alternative community-based media, and produced street theater with ethical and political messages. This local urban history from Guadalajara shows the messy creation of democratic practices and a participatory ethos in popular political culture, the conflictual citizenship practiced in social

movements, and working people's commitment to lives of learning and civic engagement.⁷

I explore the intersections of social movements and everyday life through oral histories, movement ephemera, and archival documentation not previously used by historians. In Guadalajara, Freirian popular education (“pedagogy of the oppressed”) influenced political consciousness and action in movements anchored in CEBs.⁸ In diverse works of street theater and community newspapers like *El Alipuz* and *Prole del 4*, CEB participants provided “alternative information” through narratives, illustrations, and performances. During this era of transition to neoliberal governance in Mexico and its correspondent processes of social fragmentation, these and other forms of “popular communication” encouraged solidarity and shaped class formation. In colonias populares around the city's peripheries, street theater and community-based newspapers cultivated a hermeneutic of suspicion and class consciousness among residents, framed by a simple rich-poor dichotomy.

This study traces the historical development of political subjectivities, individual and collective, and the myriad factors contributing to the formation of political cultures. For instance, social movements' usage of popular theater (*teatro popular*) and street newspapers in the 1970s and 1980s shaped a political culture of critical thinking, mass and broadly shared participation, and political independence in colonias populares where

⁷ I build on Alexander Aviña's point about the creative intersection of popular movements and Left ideologies catalyzing social change during this period in Mexican history. See his *Specters of Revolution: Peasant Guerrillas in the Cold War Mexican Countryside* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁸ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, translated by Myra Bergman Ramos. (New York: Continuum Press, 1970).

the urban popular movement emerged. Noemí Gómez argues that colonia “[Lomas de] Polanco was also a seedbed for new organizations, for new forms of citizenship.”⁹ What was the nature of those new forms of citizenship and the organizations created in paradigmatic movement colonias like Lomas de Polanco? How did new organizations and citizenship forms reflect the popular movement they arose from? And how do we evaluate grassroots movements that end in organizations?

This dissertation tells a series of five interwoven stories from a three-decade period (1965-1994). Chapters Three, Four, and Five are the heart of the study of popular politics and social movements at the confluence of Christian base communities and the urban popular movement in Guadalajara. I begin at the city level in Chapter One, move to a regional scale with Guadalajara as the receiving center for rural migrants in Chapter Two, then to the colonia level for Chapters Three and Four. Chapter Five moves around the vast urban peripheries, back to a citywide scale, and on to national and continental views in tracking popular educators and liberationist priests across networks and influences during the decades since the waning of the mass-based popular movements.

I focus on largely hidden histories of historical actors not widely considered consequential forces in post-1968 politics and social movements in the emerging literature. Historians have written little about the experiences of most Mexicans living more precariously in the country’s ballooning cities— how they advanced their own interests and resisted domination and control. By focusing on the late twentieth century in Latin America, a period characterized by the severing of solidarities and social fabrics,

⁹ Elba Noemí Gómez Gómez, Olivia Penilla, Arlette Vaca y Betsabé Pérez, “Lomas de Polanco. Del desencanto al encantamiento del espacio,” en *Agentes y lazos sociales: La experiencia de volverse comunidad*, ed. Elba Noemí Gómez Gómez (Guadalajara: ITESO, 2015), 51.

this study attempts to reconstruct and interpret powerful social movements from below as models for collectively acting against the odds to contest, negotiate with, escape, or defeat hegemonic powers.

Historiographical Threads

The historiography on 1970s and 1980s Mexico is taking shape with a mosaic of studies that focus on regions, themes, or social movements or groups, with most integrating social, political, cultural, and economic processes and analyses.¹⁰ Historians have sought to understand Mexico's major social and political transformations post-1968 through the prisms of student activism, middle-class protagonism, armed revolutionary struggles in the countryside and cities, indigenous groups' political participation, and labor movements.¹¹ Pensado and Ochoa's recent pacesetting edited volume, *México Beyond 1968*, centers radicalism and state repression in histories of subaltern groups

¹⁰ Though there is overlap in some works, for convenience sake we might classify as regional studies Aviña, *Specters of Revolution*; Sandra C. Mendiola García, *Street Democracy: Vendors, Violence, and Public Space in Late Twentieth-Century Mexico* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2017); Gabriela Soto Laveaga, *Jungle Laboratories: Mexican Peasants, National Projects, and the Making of the Pill*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009); as thematic, Herrera Calderón and Cedillo, *Challenging Authoritarianism in Mexico*; Amelia M. Kiddle and María L.O. Muñoz, eds., *Populism in Twentieth Century Mexico: The Presidencies of Lázaro Cárdenas and Luis Echeverría* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2010); Eric Zolov, *Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999); Celeste González de Bustamante, *"Muy buenas noches": Mexico, Television, and the Cold War* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2013); and Vanessa Freije, *Citizens of Scandal: Journalism, Secrecy, and the Politics of Reckoning in Mexico* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020); and as focusing on particular groups or movements Louise Walker, *Waking from the Dream: Mexico's Middle Classes after 1968* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015); María L.O. Muñoz, *Stand Up and Fight: Participatory Indigenismo, Populism, and Mobilization in Mexico, 1970-1984* (Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 2016); and Joseph U. Lenti, *Redeeming the Revolution: The State and Organized Labor in Post-Tlatelolco Mexico* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2017).

¹¹ Aviña, *Specters of Revolution*; Cedillo and Herrera Calderón, eds., *Challenging Authoritarianism in Mexico*; Walker, *Waking from the Dream*; Jaime Pensado, *Rebel Mexico: Student Unrest and Authoritarian Political Culture during the Long Sixties* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013); Muñoz, *Stand Up and Fight*; and Lenti, *Redeeming the Revolution*.

around the country into the “subversive seventies.”¹² The literature thus far tells us less about the millions of working-class and poor Mexicans living precariously on the outskirts of the country’s ballooning cities.¹³ Sandra Mendiola García addresses that gap in a recent study of informal vendors’ independent union organizing in Puebla during the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁴

Guadalajara is the urban hub of the central western (*centro-occidente*) region and its post-1940 history remains understudied.¹⁵ The historiographical inattention is disproportionate given the city’s longstanding status as regional cultural, political, and

¹² Jaime M. Pensado and Enrique C. Ochoa, eds., *México Beyond 1968: Revolutionaries, Radicals, and Repression during the Global Sixties and the Subversive Seventies* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2018).

¹³ Sociologists, anthropologists, and political scientists have, however, produced a vast literature on the urban popular classes since the 1960s. A sample on issues and problems in urban Mexico during the period covered here (1960s-1990s) includes Jorge Alonso, “Notas acerca de la situación de los pobladores depauperados y su relación con el movimiento urbano popular,” *Nueva Antropología* 6, no. 24 (1984): 36-50; Patricia Arias, ed. *Guadalajara, la gran ciudad de la pequeña industria* (Zamora: El Colegio de Michoacán, 1985); Wayne A. Cornelius, *Politics and the Migrant Poor in Mexico City* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975); Nikki Craske, “Women and Regime Politics in Guadalajara’s Low-Income Neighbourhoods,” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 13, no. 1 (Jan. 1994): 61-78; Guillermo de la Peña, “La cultura política entre los sectores populares de Guadalajara,” *Nueva Antropología* 11 (oct. 1990): 83-107; Guillermo de la Peña and Renée de la Torre, “Religión y política en los barrios populares de Guadalajara,” *Estudios Sociológicos* 8, no. 24 (1990): 571-602; Guillermo de la Peña, Juan Manuel Durán, Agustín Escobar, et al., eds., *Crisis, conflicto y sobrevivencia en México* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1990); Susan Eckstein, *The Poverty of Revolution: The State and the Urban Poor in Mexico* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977); Agustín Escobar Latapí, *Con el sudor de tu frente: Mercado de trabajo y clase obrera en Guadalajara* (Guadalajara: El Colegio de Jalisco, 1986); Rocío Enríquez-Rosas, *El crisol de la pobreza: Mujeres, subjetividades, emociones y redes sociales* (Tlaquepaque: ITESO, 2009); Mercedes González de la Rocha, *The Resources of Poverty: Women and Survival in a Mexican City* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1994); Alejandra Massolo, ed., *Mujeres y ciudades: Participación social, vivienda y vida cotidiana* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1994); Jorge Regalado Santillán, *Lucha por la vivienda en Guadalajara: Historia, política y organización social, 1980-1992* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1995); and Carlos G. Vélez-Ibáñez, *Rituals of Marginality: Politics, Process, and Culture Change in Urban Central Mexico, 1969-1974* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991).

¹⁴ Mendiola García, *Street Democracy*.

¹⁵ For an essential recent work on the opening decades of the twentieth century, see Robert Curley, *Citizens and Believers: Religion and Politics in Revolutionary Jalisco, 1900-1930* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2018).

economic center and its relative independence from Mexico City. Fernando Herrera Calderón examines the university as fundamental site of contention in his work on the Revolutionary Student Front (FER) in Guadalajara covering the late 1960s and early 1970s. University students and working-class youth contributed to the insurgent politics of the period, transitioning from student activists to armed revolutionaries in the case of the FER, Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre, and other groups. Students and youth constructed counter-identities defined first and foremost in opposition to hegemonic social culture and the ruling class.¹⁶ Christian base communities and the urban popular movement in Guadalajara shared common ground with radical student movements in their discontent with undemocratic institutional and public life, their construction of counter-identities, and in contesting the political in specific urban spaces.

Addressing religion's place in the era's social and political developments in Mexico, Jaime Pensado tracks processes of radicalization among Catholic students who became leaders of student and urban guerrilla movements during the early 1970s.¹⁷ Members of the Professional Student Movement (MEP) increasingly rejected the Catholic Action hierarchy's vertical orientation and decided to "go out in the streets and

¹⁶ Fernando Herrera Calderón, "From Books to Bullets: Youth Radicalism and Urban Guerrillas in Guadalajara," in *Challenging Authoritarianism in Mexico*, 105-128. Guadalajara-based scholars have also produced important works in recent years on the urban guerrilla movement tied to working-class youth who originally organized gangs based on territory in barrios east of the Calzada Independencia. See, for example, Rodolfo Gamiño and Jesús Zamora, *Los Vikingos: Una historia de lucha política y social* (Guadalajara: Taller Editorial La Casa del Mago, 2018); and Rodolfo Gamiño, *El Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario: antecedentes, nacimiento y represión* (Guadalajara: Taller Editorial La Casa del Mago, 2016). Additionally, see the recent documentary *Oblatos. El vuelo que surcó la noche*, directed by Acelo Ruiz Villanueva (Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica, 2019).

¹⁷ Jaime Pensado, "El Movimiento Estudiantil Profesional (MEP): una mirada a la radicalización de la juventud católica mexicana durante la Guerra Fría," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 31, no. 1 (2015): 156-92.

convivir with the marginalized groups of Mexico.”¹⁸ Mary Kay Vaughan describes a “rebel generation” that was affective, creative, and “libidinous.”¹⁹ Such generational Romanticism shines through in the utopias Alex Aviña argues served as motors driving people and collectives to bring about change. The power of alternative social visions has frequently been embodied in the “specters” of Mexican history, like Emiliano Zapata or Lucio Cabañas.²⁰

Recent studies that focus on worker organizing and working-class life in urban areas center on unions and relations with the state. Joseph Lenti sees the Revolution redeemed during Luis Echeverría’s term as president (1970-1976). He acknowledges the redemption did not result in better conditions overall for Mexican workers, but emphasizes words and spectacle mattered. Lenti correctly points out that “democratic” openings under Echeverría had mobilizing effects and helped raise class antagonism generally.²¹ Mendiola García argues democracy meant the right to make a living in public space for Puebla’s informal vendors. Street vendors in another traditionally conservative Mexican city built an independent union movement that used public space in ways that forced the state to respond.²²

Robert Alegre joins other historians of Mexico in downplaying outcomes in studies of social movements, instead “interpreting grassroots mobilizations as contingent

¹⁸ Ibid, 169-70.

¹⁹ Mary Kay Vaughan, *Portrait of a Young Painter: Pepe Zúñiga and Mexico City’s Rebel Generation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).

²⁰ Aviña, *Specters of Revolution*.

²¹ Lenti, *Redeeming the Revolution*.

²² Mendiola Garcia, 8-9.

contests.”²³ In his examination of the pivotal 1958-1959 railroad strikes and movement, Alegre centers women and captures cultural dimensions because his extensive oral history work reveals those components of the story. He highlights the development of *rielerero* (railroad worker) culture and counters historians’ “depiction of women as a conservative force in Mexican political history.”²⁴ He rightly argues for the need for more oral history methodology in scholarship on the Mexican working class.²⁵

In the existing historiography on post-1940 Mexico, scholars that extensively use oral history have been better able to approximate the experiences of the popular classes.²⁶ Other important works on the post-1968 period rely entirely on archives with newspaper and state sources. Particularly puzzling are studies of contexts on Mexico City’s peripheries that consult few sources produced by the popular classes. Vanessa Freije’s article on sterilization rumors in Nezahualcoyotl in 1974 concerns knowledge production among poor populations, with speculations on what they read, believed, and disseminated. But the epistemological assumption seems to be that media and state sources are more reliable than memory.²⁷

²³ Alegre, 3.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 5-6.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 16.

²⁶ Particularly effective are Padilla, *Rural Resistance in the Land of Zapata*; Aviña, *Specters of Revolution*; Mendiola García, *Street Democracy*; Alegre, *Railroad Radicals*; and Gladys McCormick, *The Logic of Compromise in Mexico: How the Countryside Was Key to the Emergence of Authoritarianism* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

²⁷ Vanessa Freije, “Speaking of Sterilization: Rumors, the Urban Poor, and the Public Sphere in Greater Mexico City,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 99, no. 2 (May 2019): 303-336. Other influential monographs on the period that forego oral histories include Walker, *Waking from the Dream*; Muñoz, *Stand Up and Fight*; and Lenti, *Redeeming the Revolution*. This is not to say that those studies are somehow weaker by not conducting interviews, but simply to point out the crucial perspectives omitted from some studies seeking to reconstruct subaltern perspectives from the past.

Democracy, citizenship, the public sphere, the political, and the popular are “keywords” employed throughout the dissertation, concepts I understand as historically constructed and situated, with contested and shifting meanings.²⁸ Frameworks of citizenship and democracy prove critical for understanding social movements in Latin America since the 1960s. Groups and individuals invoked citizenship and democracy in order to articulate rights and claim benefits, and to provide the discourse and tools for more robust and meaningful political participation.²⁹ Social movements in late twentieth century Latin America—particularly urban popular movements—appropriated citizenship discourse and redefined it. They viewed the enactment of citizenship as “operationalizing their enlarged view of democracy.”³⁰

In both scholarship and social movements in recent decades, continual redefinition of citizenship has broadened notions of the political. The popular classes in precarious settlements in Latin American cities began by asserting “a right to have rights.”³¹ In the last two decades of the twentieth century, neoliberalism combined free-market fundamentalism and austerity policies with a thin electoral democracy, while appropriating and re-signifying citizenship discourse in the process. Neoliberal regimes

²⁸ John Clarke, Kathleen Coll, Evelina Dagnino, and Catherine Neveu, “Introduction,” in *Disputing Citizenship*, eds. Clarke, Coll, Dagnino, and Neveu, 1-8 (Bristol, UK: Bristol University Press, 2014); and Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1976).

²⁹ Sian Lazar perceptively ties critical pedagogy initiatives to collective action in urban Bolivia, where he tracks “critical citizenship.” See Sian Lazar, “Schooling and Critical Citizenship: Pedagogies of Political Agency in El Alto, Bolivia,” *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (2010): 181-205.

³⁰ Evelina Dagnino, “Culture, Citizenship, and Democracy: Changing Discourse and Practices of the Latin American Left,” in Sonia E. Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino, and Arturo Escobar, eds., *Cultures of Politics, Politics of Cultures: Re-visioning Latin American Social Movements* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998).

³¹ *Ibid.*

recognized the symbolic power of citizenship and promoted a model centered on individualism and consumption. This orientation of Latin American states functioned as a counteroffensive against ascendant social movements and struggles for democracy, with the objective of depoliticizing a highly-mobilized civil society.³² Evelina Dagnino credits urban popular movements for being the crucial force in struggles for democratization and citizenship in Latin America, confirming what other scholars have shown about the employment of citizenship as “political strategy.”³³

In processes of “peripheral urbanization” in Latin American cities, historical actors often adopted rights talk.³⁴ In colonias like Santa Cecilia and Santa Rosa on Guadalajara’s peripheries, residents claimed rights to water and other urban services.³⁵ At the same time, they did not use the terminology of “citizen” or “citizenship” much. CEBs, the urban popular movement, and the broader Left were not thinking in terms of citizenship in the 1970s and 1980s in Guadalajara.³⁶ Movement participants made comparisons to affluent neighborhoods and elite groups, noting parts of the city had excess amounts of what they lacked on the peripheries. As I discuss further below, CEB

³² Evelina Dagnino, “Citizenship in Latin America: An Introduction,” *Latin American Perspectives* 30, no. 2 (March 2003), 11.

³³ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁴ Teresa Caldeira finds the adoption of rights talk prevalent in other contexts of “peripheral urbanization” in Latin American cities. See Teresa P.R. Caldeira, “Peripheral Urbanization: Autoconstruction, Transversal Logics, and Politics in Cities of the Global South,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 35, no. 1 (2017): 3-20.

³⁵ Author interview with Cecilia González, September 27, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico; and Lupe Gómez interview excerpt on Orozco, “Los fraccionadores,” *Lo que pasa en mi barrio*, Track 5.

³⁶ Author interview with Martha Arias, February 1, 2019, Tlaquepaque, Mexico.

and popular movement participants claimed rights as human beings and children of god, rather than pointing to national citizenship.³⁷

Some scholars question citizenship's relevance and whether we need further studies centering the concept.³⁸ For my purposes here, discourses of citizenship and democracy became ubiquitous under neoliberal rule, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s. Social movements in Latin America struggled with states over the meanings and implications of citizenship and employed the concept for strategic political ends. Ruling political parties continue utilizing the discourse in their interfacing with civil society, with citizenship now appearing drained of meaning. In the state of Jalisco currently, the center-right, middle-class and elite backed party Movimiento Ciudadano (Citizen Movement) is a recent creation with a tenuous hold on power.

Important recent works by historians of Latin America focus on democracy and its meanings and practices. Alejandro Velasco traces the roots of popular politics, democratic processes, and Chavismo since the mid-twentieth century in Caracas, Venezuela.³⁹ His book is about “how democracy happened” “on the streets” “everyday”

³⁷ Curley, *Citizens and Believers*. Curley demonstrates how faith was a key element of citizenship in revolutionary Jalisco during the early 1900s. Significantly, Trevor Stack finds many people in small-town Jalisco understood themselves as citizens of towns and cities, while perhaps secondarily as citizens of the nation. Discussing “citizenship beyond the state,” he emphasizes that people feel an abiding sense of belonging and responsibility to community and place. See Trevor Stack, *Knowing History in Mexico: An Ethnography of Citizenship* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2012).

³⁸ John Clarke, Kathleen Coll, Evelina Dagnino, and Catherine Neveu, “Introduction,” in *Disputing Citizenship*, eds. Clarke, Coll, Dagnino, and Neveu, 1-8 (Bristol, UK: Bristol University Press, 2014).

³⁹ Alejandro Velasco, *Barrio Rising: Urban Popular Politics and the Making of Modern Venezuela* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015). On page 245, Note 11, from the Introduction, “By focusing not on revolutionaries, whether recent or long-standing, but on a neighborhood where a variety of political identities congregated, *Barrio Rising* further widens the spectrum of popular histories, experiences, and political imaginaries in post-1958 Venezuela, arriving at a more expansive sense of the meanings and future of popular democracy.”

in urban Venezuela.⁴⁰ Mendiola García's book on Puebla, Mexico also deals with democracy enacted in city streets, as she tracks the independent union organizing of informal vendors during the 1970s and 1980s.⁴¹ With the "democratic opening" declared by Mexican presidents Luis Echeverría (1970-1976) and José López Portillo (1976-1982) and the period of so-called democratic transition in Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s, I locate democratization outside of electoral politics in independent organizing based on the urban peripheries. In Guadalajara, popular religious groups served as democracy training grounds. Christian base communities moved beyond devotionism and the parish temple to praxis and the streets.

Collectivities and social movements played important roles in the expansion and restructuring of public spheres in post-1968 Mexico. To examine the communicative networks and politics of the urban poor in late twentieth-century Guadalajara, I center spaces on the city's peripheries with improvised settlements and auto-constructed homes, often located on the most inhospitable terrains. Streets, empty lots, church patios, and community centers became venues for collective exchange and debate in public in colonias populares. CEB-based popular movements in colonias such as Lomas de Polanco, Santa Cecilia, Vicente Guerrero, and Santa Margarita constructed alternative political cultures, peripheral public spheres, and alternative identities, while also getting what residents needed from the system. Though the struggles of the city's poor majorities became more about survival by the 1990s, CEBs and the urban popular movement

⁴⁰ Ibid, 1.

⁴¹ Mendiola García, *Street Democracy*.

developed novel and effective strategies and tactics for entering the public sphere and contesting power.

As cultural studies scholars point out, dependency theory, pedagogy of the oppressed, and liberation theology contributed extensively to Latin American critical thought in the second half of the twentieth century.⁴² Earlier studies of CEBs in Guadalajara underline their effectiveness in addressing local political issues through a “small ‘p’ politics of social justice” relating directly to “the everyday requirements of the poor.”⁴³ Cases in Guadalajara reinforce arguments about Latin America more broadly, that “the experience of community organization within popular religion” created a “popular subject” and empowered participants.⁴⁴ “Heterogeneity in the lay processes” characterized the Catholic Church in Mexico since Vatican II, and CEBs represented a smaller sector than other groups within the Church. But the more independent base communities were “qualitatively of greater significance.”⁴⁵

Mexican scholars identify precursors of late-twentieth-century urban popular movements in the tenants’ strike movement of the 1920s, which was particularly intense

⁴² See for instance Abril Trigo, “General Introduction,” in *The Latin American Cultural Studies Reader*, eds. Ana Del Sarto, Alicia Ríos, and Abril Trigo (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 7.

⁴³ Elsa Guzmán and Christopher Martin, “Back to Basics Mexican Style: Radical Catholicism and Survival on the Margins,” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 16, no. 3 (1997), 353-54.

⁴⁴ Valentina Napolitano, “Between ‘Traditional’ and ‘New’ Catholic Church Religious Discourses in Urban, Western Mexico,” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 17, no. 3 (Sept. 1998), 323; Daniel H. Levine, “Religion, the Poor, and Politics in Latin America Today,” in *Religion and Political Conflict in Latin America*, ed. Daniel H. Levine (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 3-23.

⁴⁵ María Alicia Puente Lutteroth, “De la Acción Católica a las Comunidades Eclesiales de Base: Algunas experiencias laicales en los últimos cincuenta años en México,” in *Innovaciones y tensiones en los procesos socio-elesiales: de la Acción Católica a las comunidades eclesiales de base*, ed. María Alicia Puente Lutteroth (Cuernavaca: Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos, 2002).

in the cities of Veracruz and Guadalajara.⁴⁶ The 1920s tenants' movement is an important signpost in a legacy of urban struggle that holds the state responsible for fairly administering urban spaces, services, and infrastructure. Juan Manuel Ramírez points to structural factors in the emergence of the urban popular movement—the contradictions of capitalist development in Mexican cities and the political implications of the process of urbanization.⁴⁷ The popular classes in Guadalajara accumulated an extensive list of grievances during the 1970s and 1980s. Jorge Regalado suggests the urban popular movement had mixed results in addressing those systemic issues, but that it did effectively develop tools for entering the public sphere.⁴⁸

As Ramírez Sáiz points out, urban popular movements “push[ed] an alternative political culture.” My research tracks the construction of that alternative political culture over time. Discourses of democratization and citizenship became more explicitly central to the movement's program in the mid-1980s. Organizations put structures in place to promote democracy internally, while working-class women assumed leadership roles at the forefront of public activities and interactions with government entities.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Jorge Durand, “Huelga nacional de inquilinos: los antecedentes del movimiento urbano popular en México,” *Estudios Sociológicos* 7, no. 19 (1989): 61-78.

⁴⁷ Juan Manuel Ramírez Sáiz, “Informal Politics in the Mexican Democratic Transition: The Case of the People's Urban Movement,” in *Out of the Shadows*, ed. Fernández-Kelly and Shefner (2006), 219-40.

⁴⁸ Jorge Regalado Santillán, “El movimiento popular independiente en Guadalajara,” in *Perspectivas de los movimientos sociales en la región Centro-Occidente*, ed. Jaime Tamayo (Mexico City: Editorial Línea, 1986), 121-58.

⁴⁹ Case studies on organizations or neighborhoods, and thematic studies have been especially productive in this field. See David Velasco Yáñez, “El caso de la Unión de Colonos Independientes,” in *La democracia de los de abajo en Jalisco*, ed. Jorge Alonso and Juan Manuel Ramírez Sáiz (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1996), 143-88; Outi Hakkarainen, “Intercolonias: Una contribución hacia la vida democrática,” in *La democracia de los de abajo en Jalisco*, ed. Alonso and Ramírez Sáiz (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1996), 189-221; Jeff D. Peterson, “La lucha por el ciudadano: movimientos sociales, Pronasol y la teoría de nuevos movimientos sociales en Guadalajara,” *Espiral* 5 (May-Aug. 1999):

What began in base communities as highly localized expressions of poor people's needs for basic services and resources for survival evolved into nimble popular political fronts as MUP groups partnered with other Left organizations during the 1980s. After the onset of a much deeper economic crisis in 1982 and the austerity measures implemented under international pressure in the aftermath, MUP groups actively opposed the neoliberal economic model. The movement in Guadalajara participated in nationwide general strikes (*paros cívicos*) during 1983 and 1984. Across Mexico in the mid-1980s, MUPs played important roles in mass protests against austerity measures and food shortages, and in support of wage stabilization in relation to inflation. The mass mobilizations and political activation of the mid-1980s then got channeled toward the presidential campaign of center-left Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas in 1988. Movement participants and scholars read the MUP's shift into electoral politics as a "devastating strategic error."⁵⁰

Methodology and Sources

While tracing the contours of structural conditions and processes across the city's late twentieth-century history, I examine everyday life and practice through ethnographic fieldwork and interviews with more than thirty local people who lived this history and participated in the movements. I focus on a number of colonias populares in Guadalajara,

109-31; Nikki Craske, "Women and Regime Politics in Guadalajara's Low-Income Neighbourhoods," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 13, no. 1 (Jan. 1994): 61-78; Patricia L. Price, "The Three Malinches: Betrayal and the Death of an Urban Popular Movement," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 3 (Aug. 2001): 237-61; Jon Shefner, *The Illusion of Civil Society: Democratization and Community Mobilization in Low-Income Mexico* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2008); and Elba Noemí Gómez Gómez, *Habitar el lugar imaginado: Formas de construir la ciudad desde un proyecto educativo político* (Guadalajara: ITESO, 2011).

⁵⁰ Ramírez Sáiz, "Informal Politics in the Mexican Democratic Transition," 233.

after conducting in-depth research on four. I gave the most thorough treatment to Santa Cecilia and colonias associated with El Perdón parish in the 1970s and 1980s. I profiled Santa Margarita and Lomas de Polanco with extensive documentation but conducted fewer interviews in those two.

Space and landscape are parts of a larger visual culture that proved especially relevant for non- and semi-literate people. The symbols and iconography of multinational capitalism and traditionalist Catholicism dominate the urban landscape in this region. In Latin American cities, competing narratives of the past are tied up with public representation and material culture. Narrative and public performance are as central to social movements as they are to state-making efforts and civic and religious ritual.

Social movements serve as a prism on subaltern political action and consciousness throughout this study, decentering political parties and most conventional actors from traditional political histories. I join other historians of Mexico in moving away from “outcomism” in social movement scholarship.⁵¹ Instead, I focus tightly on the local development of particular movements and their animating ideas and practices in order to show the contested nature of power in Mexican cities in the post-1968 period. I offer an interpretive narrative of the complex process of a negotiated hegemony that highlights subaltern agency and points in generative directions for further research.

Since beginning dissertation research in 2014, I conceptualized this study as a movement history.⁵² After an initial survey of Left social movements in the post-1968

⁵¹ Alegre, 3-4; and Olcott, 25.

⁵² In the sense that James Green uses “movement history” in the prologue to his *Taking History to Heart: The Power of the Past in Building Social Movements* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 1-22.

period (including student, urban guerrilla, and independent labor), I decided to focus on the urban popular movement that surged in Mexican cities from the mid-1970s to late 1980s.⁵³ I conducted dozens of in-depth interviews with movement participants and collaborated with community organizations and longtime residents to create public history projects that responded to local people's desires to tell the story of their colonia's construction through years of struggle. The accumulated evidence lends itself to an interpretive history of the life of an independent popular movement in one regional, urban context in Mexico.

Sociologists, anthropologists, and political scientists have done a range of studies since the 1970s that point out the centrality of popular Catholicism and Christian base communities to the urban popular movement in Guadalajara.⁵⁴ This historical study builds on that literature while exploring cultural elements, tracking longer-term trends, and taking a narrative approach. I add an analysis of the implications of spatial relations in the city—segregation by socioeconomic status framed by west/east (affluent/working-class) and center/periphery distinctions, and the perpetual wiping of the past and memory from urban landscapes and common, public spaces. I rely heavily on sources produced by the popular classes and movement organizations, and give less consideration and weight

⁵³ Important studies include Pedro Moctezuma, "El movimiento urbano popular mexicano," *Nueva Antropología* 6, no. 24 (1984): 61-87; Massolo, *Por amor y coraje*; Juan Manuel Ramírez Sáiz, *El movimiento urbano popular en México* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1986); Paul Haber, *Power from Experience: Urban Popular Movements in Late Twentieth-Century Mexico* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006); and Lynn Stephen, *Women and Social Movements in Latin America: Power from Below* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 111-157.

⁵⁴ As mentioned above, key works include Ramírez Sáiz. *Los movimientos sociales y la política: El Comité Popular del Sur en Guadalajara*; "La internacionalización y las identidades del movimiento urbano popular en el área metropolitana de Guadalajara"; Regalado Santillán, "El movimiento popular independiente en Guadalajara," and Gómez Gómez, *Habitar el lugar imaginado*.

to—in part because they proved less helpful and relevant to my questions—the classical institutional sources from the state and the church, though I consult those too. One of my underlying goals is moving toward a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the heterogeneous lives and political cultures of individual and collective actors among the poor majorities during this period in Mexican history of both capitalist transition to neoliberalism and apparent democratization (1970s-1990s).

Reconstructing a faithful portrait centering these actors and movements requires the production and use of sources beyond institutional archival documentation. In most of the archives, women are systematically rendered as bit players who remain mostly anonymous. Consequently, women's political participation and leadership has been downplayed and misunderstood. This study sketches women's multifaceted roles in the convergence of Catholic organizing, informal social networks, and popular politics.⁵⁵ Oral histories, personal archival collections, and the Sagrado Corazón nuns' (RSCJ) archive yielded counternarratives with women leading the movement. Though women's widespread participation in base communities and the urban popular movement was alluded to in institutional documentary sources, details from interviews and more unconventional sources redirected and provided humanity and texture to the story. Since the public sphere is a key concept, I decided to utilize historical newspapers as the key source reflecting dominant discourses. I share some political sympathies with the

⁵⁵ A few important works by social scientists strike the right chord, among them Massolo, *Por amor y coraje*; Alejandra Massolo, ed. *Mujeres y ciudades: participación social, vivienda y vida cotidiana* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1994); Stephen, *Women in Social Movements in Latin America*, 111-157; Miguel Díaz-Barriga, "Beyond the Domestic and the Public: *Colonas* Participation in Urban Movements in Mexico City," in *Cultures of Politics, Politics of Cultures: Re-Visioning Latin American Social Movements*, ed. Sonia E. Álvarez, Evelina Dagnino, and Arturo Escobar (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 252-277; and Gómez Gómez, *Habitar el lugar imaginado*.

movements and actors I focus on, and I do not interview “the other side.” Of course, elites and more powerful actors and institutions dominated public discourse on these issues all along. That record exists and contestation over public memory and representation is ongoing.

Interviews with women from Santa Cecilia who were active in base community groups and nuns who worked there in the 1970s and 1980s show Mexican women entered the public sphere and became “political” in dramatic fashion, eventually shaming neighborhood men to participate in meetings and organizing they had viewed dismissively as women’s religious activities. Questions about people’s experiences of migrating to the city and longer processes of adjustment from rural to urban living addressed through oral history. reception and uses of certain popular communication tools (including the street newspaper *El Alipuz* 1973-1978, and the collection of corridos and interview excerpts on Efrén Orozco’s 1982 audiocassette *Lo que pasa en mi barrio*).

Extended time spent in the field enabled me to understand material, experiential, and phenomenological aspects better. Time devoted to slower developing processes of relationship building facilitated the oral history components of my research and uncovered sources of personal and organizational papers, photos, and ephemera not archived by institutions of church or state. I put recently conducted oral histories in conversation with diverse documentary sources that represent attempts to narrate histories of the city, in order to explore epistemological questions from an analysis of the construction of historical narratives, academic and popular. Just as there has been constant dispute over city spaces, we also find processes of contestation over historical knowledge.

Weighing the evidence to support what little we know about the past is an epistemological problem conditioned by a dialectic between academic and popular knowledges. Orlando Fals Borda described knowledge production in participatory research processes as “the confrontation of popular knowledge with the academic knowledge of the supporting institution in order to arrive at a new knowledge, a new cultural synthesis.”⁵⁶ Philosopher Tim Kenyon reads the epistemology of Alessandro Portelli and many oral historians to say, “testimony has more than one truth-conducive proper function.” Oral historians use inaccuracies and falsehoods in oral narratives to their “epistemic advantage.”⁵⁷ We must be mindful of the performative nature of oral narratives and our narrators’ intentions, and we should know enough from documentary sources to see the inaccuracies and exaggerations in oral narratives. Documentary sources likewise feature narratives constructed by particular actors embedded in specific milieus with their own perspectives and interests. On the epistemological weight of memory, philosopher Tom Senior argues, “Practically everything we know (or are justified in believing) in a given moment resides in the memory.”⁵⁸ Mary Kay Vaughan understands memory as the principal source for historical biography, and reminds us that memory is based on experience.⁵⁹ This epistemological thread running from knowledge to

⁵⁶ Carlos Núñez, et al., eds., *Desde adentro: La educación popular vista por sus practicantes*. (Santiago, Chile: CEAAL, 1990), “Prologo.”

⁵⁷ Tim Kenyon, “Oral History and the Epistemology of Testimony,” *Social Epistemology* 30, no. 1 (2016), 60-61.

⁵⁸ Thomas D. Senior, “Epistemological Problems of Memory,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (2014), <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/memory-episprob/>>.

⁵⁹ Mary Kay Vaughan, *Portrait of a Young Painter: Pepe Zúñiga and Mexico City’s Rebel Generation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 5.

experience via memory aligns closely with the emphasis on the epistemological primacy of experience we find in liberation theology and philosophies of Freirian popular educators in the Americas during the 1970s and 1980s.

Residents of Santa Cecilia and other low-income neighborhoods active in the urban popular movement in the 1970s and 1980s, especially women, offer counternarratives to the standard post-1968 Mexico social and political histories. Though they indeed faced structural disadvantages and machismo in interpersonal relationships, women in the poorest sectors of the city organized to establish a sense of community and obtain the resources and services needed to live healthy and dignified lives. Narrators in the oral history collection came to those barrios from diverse backgrounds and experienced the period differently, and this dissertation and its connected public history projects seek to present and preserve many interpretations.

Chapter Layout

Chapter One examines historical processes of urbanization, development, and class formation in Mexico during a period of capitalist transition from the import-substitution model to neoliberalism from the 1970s through the 1990s. In Guadalajara, we can read class from core to periphery and west to east. Working-class and poor residents of the east side and periphery lived in separate social and cultural worlds from middle- and upper-class residents of the west side and city center. But the center depended on the periphery for comfortable lives that allowed them to ignore the other Guadalajaras and the region's dramatic inequality. The first two chapters trace the changing shape of the city and different social groups' experiences of it from the 1960s through the 1980s.

Uses of urban spaces produced and reinforced social hierarchies, order, and elite hegemony, and delimited the possible worlds for most of the city's residents. Those same spaces facilitated resistance to hegemonic arrangements and became the substance of and venues for conflict in social movements and everyday life. Spatial appropriation, organization, and transformation, as engaged and experienced from the perspectives of different actors over time, reveal a great deal about understudied processes of class formation. Spatial segregation restricted access to the benefits of development accruing in what local politicians and urban planners called the "ideal city," while facilitating community organizing and processes of identity formation on the periphery.

In addition to social movements, everyday experience of the materiality of urban spaces and environments is a critical part of the story. Whether people got around by foot, car, or bus in Guadalajara, the ideal city's vistas oriented them toward the iconography of capitalism, Catholicism, and nationalism. The "lost" city's vistas included the smokestacks of the southern industrial zone, the natural beauty of Oblatos Canyon just beyond the eastern outskirts, diverse incomplete homes and provisional shelters dotting the landscape, and crosses and churches as the most impressive parts of the built environment. How do these urban landscapes frame social relations and people's outlook on the world?⁶⁰

I knew from local archival sources and initial conversations that migration from the countryside to the city was an important part of the experiences of most residents of

⁶⁰ As Martha Norkunas, Dolores Hayden, and others have asked: what can we say about the social history of the neighborhood and the city from reading urban landscapes as cultural texts? See Norkunas. *The Politics of Public Memory*; and Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).

colonias populares. With a life history approach to interviews, it became central to most oral narratives. I decided migration warranted a chapter of its own in order to foreground people's experiences of moving to the city and longer processes of adjustment from rural to urban living. Chapter Two explores migration to the city from rural areas. Residents of the urban peripheries found common ground in experiences of migration. The Mexican state based its approach to development after World War II on transforming society from rural to urban. In practice this meant shifting capital and state resources to the country's urban hubs in concentrated fashion. Opportunities in the countryside continued to dry up into the 1960s and 1970s. By 1972, nearly half of Guadalajara's residents were born outside of the metropolitan zone.⁶¹ In attempting to trace the development of popular political cultures in this historical context, transitions from the countryside to the city play a role in shaping people's consciousness and practice.

Christian base communities proved well-suited for the urban spaces of Guadalajara and other Latin American cities. Early CEB groups organized within the parish structure by neighborhood block, meaning the spatial organization of the residential development—modified or improvised entirely in auto-constructed settlements on the city's periphery—provided the basis for small-group organization in CEBs and the urban popular movement throughout the 1970s.

Chapter Three on the CEB movement in colonia Santa Cecilia during the 1970s is the dissertation's longest. Inquiring into how Latin American liberation theology and related intellectual currents and political practices played out in specific contexts since

⁶¹ Beatriz Núñez Miranda, "Conformación socio-espacial de Guadalajara entre 1910 y 1990," in *El crecimiento urbano de Guadalajara*, ed. Águeda Jiménez Pelayo, Jaime Olveda, and Beatriz Núñez Miranda (Zapopan, Mexico: El Colegio de Jalisco, 1995).

1968, in the case of Santa Cecilia, women's leadership in the social, political, and cultural movements that developed is striking. Women across Santa Cecilia, with the backing of Catholic nuns from the order of Sagrado Corazón, created an oppositional force that threatened hegemonic institutions to the extent that local ultra-rightist groups—the Tecos and others—deployed thuggish tactics to discredit and intimidate them.

Women and their families moved to settlements on Guadalajara's outskirts from rural areas and other lower-class sectors of the city in order to own a piece of land and build their own homes. Nuns and social workers moved into the neighborhood with missions of addressing the poverty, alienation, and the systemic injustice evident in the "misery belts" of Latin American cities. Coming from diverse backgrounds and initially feeling isolated, women gathered in "reflection groups" and built an organizing infrastructure for CEBs by 1972 in Santa Cecilia. With their husbands and other men and youth, they constructed homes and a neighborhood, while also caring for children. In conjunction with Jesuit priests, community organizations, and the local Catholic parish, women launched durable educational projects serving both children and adults, and they organized for basic urban services like sewer systems and public telephones. Catholics in Guadalajara continued and deepened traditions of organizing for neighborhood improvement and better quality of life in the city, and CEBs raised the bar for political participation.

Chapter Four tracks popular education projects and base communities in other *colonias populares* from 1969 to 1992. Using municipal government documents, parish files from the archdiocese archive, contemporary newspapers, and interviews with residents and participants, I survey the neighborhoods of Santa Rosa and Vicente

Guerrero in El Perdón parish on the eastern peripheries. Then I discuss colonia Santa Margarita, straddling the Peripheral Ring bypass on the northwestern side of the metropolitan zone. I integrate comparative analysis of base community and popular education project development in distinct colonias and parishes.

A new spirit animated the Catholic Church's outreach to the poor in the 1960s and 1970s. At the same time, many practices and assumptions were well-worn and historically conditioned. Catholic mobilizing capacity is demonstrable throughout the twentieth century in Guadalajara in the evolution of longstanding traditions of politicized Catholicism and mutual-assistance organizing.⁶² Catholic mobilization efforts were anchored in middle- and working-class neighborhoods across the city during the first half of the century, developing important social bases in those sectors to feed campaigns of non-cooperation and protest during movements that contested the anticlerical programs of local governments and the Mexican state.⁶³ The Catholic Worker Youth (JOC) is the most immediate organizational precursor to the liberationist current and base communities in the context of Guadalajara. Original JOC chapters in Guadalajara took root in the early 1960s, first in the colonias populares of El Perdón parish on the northeastern edges of the city. These early JOC groups passed along—as inheritance from Catholic Action circles—the “see-think-act” methodological template so fundamental to CEBs and early liberation theologians.⁶⁴ In Guadalajara, the JOC was at

⁶² Guillermo De la Peña and Renée De la Torre, “Microhistoria de un barrio tapatío: Santa Teresita (1930-1980),” in *Vivir en Guadalajara: La ciudad y sus funciones*, ed. Carmen Castañeda (Guadalajara: Ayuntamiento de Guadalajara, 1992), 124-30.

⁶³ Robert Curley, “Anticlericalism and Public Space in Revolutionary Jalisco,” *The Americas* 65, no. 4 (April 2009), 520ff.

the center of a parallel and overlapping radicalization process as they carried out organizing and research projects, within a pastoral ministry team agenda, in the city's poorest sectors during the 1960s.

On the southern periphery of Guadalajara in the 1970s and increasingly into the 1980s, protracted campaigns of collective action at the grassroots level brought peripheral citizens rare but crucial victories in struggles over rights to city space. CEBs provided the structural template and much of the intellectual grounding for the urban popular movement in Guadalajara from the 1970s through the early 1990s. But with the pressure progressive clergy experienced from the conservative hierarchy of the Mexican Catholic Church and local anticommunist and neo-fascist groups, liberationist pastoral activity decreased significantly in the city by the early 1990s. The explicitly religious underpinnings of the urban popular movement faded by the mid-1980s, and CEBs and popular movement groups developed along increasingly separate tracks, though continuing to share an affinity around many issues.

Through the mechanism of the popular organization making concrete demands for services, base communities and the urban popular movement entered into the political sphere and engaged the state, political parties, and other political actors as an increasingly powerful force.⁶⁵ Popular urban organizations pressed an agenda focused on demands on the government for urban transport, water, electricity, drainage, medical services, and

⁶⁴ José Aparecido Gomes Moreira, "Para una historia de la Juventud Obrera Católica (1959-1985)," *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 49, no. 3 (July-Sept. 1987): 205-20.

⁶⁵ Joe Foweraker, "Popular Movements and Political Change in Mexico," in *Popular Movements and Political Change in Mexico*, ed. Joe Foweraker and Ann L. Craig (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990).

schools. Tethered to the movement's enduring campaign for dignified housing, the purchase and sale of land and lots became an essential issue for the urban popular movement in Guadalajara. Residents of peripheral neighborhoods remember politicians and government officials for their empty promises and outright lies ("*puras promesas*" and "*puras mentiritas*," according to residents), though these citizens sometimes won major concessions or the full satisfaction of their demands from municipal and state governments.

Chapter Five focuses on the 1980s and the urban popular movement (MUP) in Guadalajara. What began as highly localized expressions of people's needs for basic services and the resources for survival evolved into nimble popular political fronts as MUP groups partnered with other Left organizations on a number of campaigns and mobilizations during the 1980s. Particularly after the onset of the economic crisis in 1982, and the austerity measures implemented by the Miguel De la Madrid government (1982-1988) under international pressure in the aftermath, MUP groups took positions of active opposition to the neoliberal economic model.

Chapter Five also examines the transnational aspects of liberationist Christianity and Freirian popular education tied to this local history in Guadalajara. It zeroes in on the writings and activities significant figures in order to glimpse broader Latin American influences, relationships, and networks. Carlos Núñez Hurtado co-founded the nonprofit Mexican Institute for Community Development (IMDEC) in Guadalajara in 1963. He became one of Mexico's leading theorists of popular education and cultivated close ties to Paulo Freire through the popular movement solidarity and resource network CEAAL (Popular Education Council of Latin America and the Caribbean, or Consejo de

Educación Popular de América Latina y el Caribe), an organization first chaired by Freire, then later by Núñez and Colombian social scientist Orlando Fals Borda. I draw upon Núñez's many publications and speeches, including the influential *Educar para transformar*,⁶⁶ and incorporate insights from interviews with colleagues.

Mexican Jesuit priest Arnaldo Zenteno moved to Santa Cecilia in 1971 as part of the pastoral team, together with Núñez and IMDEC, the sisters of Sagrado Corazón, and the parish priest. Like his fellow team members, Zenteno moved into the neighborhood where he worked, as part of a commitment to share in the material conditions of “the poor.” We have access to many of his theological writings, sociological reports, and edited interview collections with residents from the 1970s. Zenteno published the first comprehensive survey of CEBs in Mexico in 1980.⁶⁷ He has lived in Nicaragua since the mid-1980s, after moving there to work with base communities during the Sandinista's first government. Núñez also moved to Nicaragua, albeit temporarily during Sandinista years, where he worked for the Ministry of Education in popular education initiatives that drew on his experiences in Santa Cecilia and Santa Margarita in Guadalajara. Zenteno is now in his eighties, still working in base communities in Nicaragua.

This section of Chapter Five on transnational praxis flows explores the influence and legacy of the interconnected currents of liberation theology and Freirian popular education, arguing for the durability of the movement infrastructure put in place since the 1960s. Base communities continue to be active in Mexico and across the Americas,

⁶⁶ Carlos Núñez Hurtado, *Educar para transformar, transformar para educar: una perspectiva dialéctica y liberadora de educación y comunicación popular*, Tenth Edition (Guadalajara: IMDEC, 1996).

⁶⁷ Arnaldo Zenteno, S.J., *Un camino de humildad y esperanza: Las CEBs en México* (Mexico City: Centro Antonio de Montesinos, 1983).

though struggling in many places with the steady withdrawal of institutional resources. The chapter weighs the relevance of utopias in Latin America after the 1980s and what some called a “crisis of paradigms.”

This study reconstructs and interprets one historical case in urban Mexico when working people acted collectively to advance their own interests in a period of sustained economic crisis from the 1970s into the 1990s. Social movements and everyday life must be examined at their intersections because the “felt necessity” and mobilization of residents of the urban peripheries was based on improving material conditions, claiming their rights to the city, and creating lasting community institutions.

Social movements across the Americas increasingly appropriated citizenship discourse into the 1990s.⁶⁸ But the independent Left anchored in popular sectors in Guadalajara did not think in terms of citizenship during the two decades prior. Residents of the urban peripheries made rights claims throughout the 1970s and 1980s, but they framed them around their status as human beings and children of god. Guadalajara is an especially Catholic place, but it is not as thoroughly conservative or reactionary as many North American scholars and observers believe. Simply put, not all Catholicism in Jalisco is of the Cristero or Opus Dei varieties. Liberationist Christianity, traditionalist Catholicism, and neofascist groups engaged in constant conflict over liberationists’ influence in educating and independently organizing the urban poor.

⁶⁸ Dagnino, “Culture, Citizenship, and Democracy.”

CHAPTER I: DEVELOPING THE “IDEAL CITY” AND CONQUERING SPACE ON THE URBAN PERIPHERIES

“This is the other face of my city, the one that never warrants publicity. This is, Señor Turista, the reality. Fraud, injustice, inequality.”¹
-Efrén Orozco

In 2011, journalists with the daily newspaper *El Informador* in Guadalajara ventured into “marginal” and “isolated” neighborhoods around the city’s eastern periphery for an investigative piece on colonias populares as “abandoned” places controlled by narco-connected gangs.² They assumed a combination of the city’s “disorderly expansion” and “power vacuum[s]” in poor neighborhoods on the peripheries created recent spikes in violent crime. That is, the “urban conditions” themselves generated increased violence.³ Touring several colonias on the outskirts of Guadalajara, reporters stopped to question residents. One person advised them to avoid certain spaces “where nobody goes near, not even by mistake.” Proceeding down a winding, dusty road leading to Oblatos Canyon, the journalists observed about the spaces of the city— the “anonymous” and “lost” city they encountered,

The dirt road advanced between the communal properties of the periphery, unified by brick color, constructed in the depths of the canyon, generating the sensation that nothing is finished. All the neighbors are scared. They all believe that below where they live is more dangerous because if “something” happens to them, there

¹ Efrén Orozco, “Señor Turista,” *Lo que pasa en mi barrio* (Guadalajara: IMDEC, 1982), Audiocassette, Track 7. All translations into English are mine unless otherwise indicated.

² *Colonias populares* is the term used in Mexico to refer to the densely-populated poorest neighborhoods. Similar settlements in other contexts are labeled *barriadas*, *favelas*, slums, or shantytowns.

³ *El Informador*, “Colonias aisladas sufren vacío de autoridad,” January 24, 2011 (Guadalajara, Mexico), <http://www.informador.com.mx/jalisco/2011/265887/1/colonias-aisladas-sufren-vacio-de-autoridad.htm>, accessed on August 10, 2016. Tom Angotti describes the “urban fallacy” that ties problems to the city itself and not to social relations. See Angotti, “Urban Latin America: Violence, Enclaves, and Struggle for Land,” *Latin American Perspectives* 40, no. 2 (2013), 5.

is no escape: they are trapped between a pestilential stream, the geography of the mountain range, and unguarded streets that “belong” to some gang.⁴

Latin America’s informal cities have long been depicted in dominant public discourse as “fundamentally separate from the urban sphere.” They have been cast as places of rural backwardness, danger, filth, and disease. At the same time, elites “built enduring networks of profit” there, and the formal city proved dependent on its informal other.⁵ Musician and popular educator Efrén Orozco, a resident of Guadalajara’s peripheral *barrio* of Santa Rosa in the 1970s and 1980s, sang of that dependent, exploitative relationship when performing neo-folkloric music with social critique on the working-class eastern side of the city. “*Señor Turista*, come and get to know my city,” Orozco sang. “Come with me and get to know another reality... Look there around the bases of the hills. They are people who left their towns because of hunger... The luxury of the cities is paid for by the poor.”⁶ The low-wage labor of men and women who caught buses daily to toil in plastic and cigarette factories and the unjust distribution of water and other finite resources across the city amounted to the rich taking from the poor (the few from the many), the center taking from and exacerbating the material deprivation of the periphery. Elites and many middle-class residents of Guadalajara defined themselves over-and-against residents of *colonias populares* and the peripheries. They constructed

⁴ *El Informador*, “Colonias aisladas sufren vacío de autoridad.”

⁵ Brodwyn Fischer, “A Century in the Present Tense: Crisis, Politics, and the Intellectual History of Brazil’s Informal Cities,” in *Cities from Scratch: Poverty and Informality in Urban Latin America*, ed. Brodwyn Fischer, Bryan McCann, and Javier Auyero (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 16, 22.

⁶ Orozco, “Señor Turista.”

their identity and social status by consistently representing the lower classes and urban spaces they inhabited as ugly (*feo*) and dangerous (*peligroso*).

In twentieth-century Guadalajara, one could read social class—upper to lower—from downtown to the peripheries and from west to east. The Calzada Independencia four-lane avenue formed an incision on the landscape running north-to-south the length of the city. The Anillo Periférico (Peripheral Ring) highway encircled and marked the metropolitan zone’s limits by the late 1960s. Working-class and poor residents of the east side and peripheries lived in separate sociocultural worlds from middle- and upper-class residents of the west side and city center. On the ground in the late twentieth-century, self-described *gente decente* (decent people) of the city center and westside depended on residents of the peripheries—the latter a majority of the city’s population—for comfortable lives that allowed them to ignore the other Guadalajaras and the region’s dramatic inequality.

People living in colonias like Santa Cecilia on the urban peripheries knew the affluent westside and downtown well. They made long treks by bus and foot across the city to work for miserable pay and endure degrading treatment in the homes and recreational venues of middle-class and affluent residents. Many transited daily from the peripheries to work in the expanding service industry or as informal vendors in zones of heavier traffic along the principal thoroughfares and downtown streets and plazas. Scores of construction workers from colonias populares literally built the modern city of Guadalajara, including its “beautiful” and “secure” areas on the westside. The labor of residents of the peripheries enabled the city to operate day-to-day, and many organized

and acted collectively to thrust those contradictory realities into the public sphere in ways that forced powerful people and institutions to react and created change.

Examining Latin American cities as “contested spaces,” historians and social scientists highlight land acquisition and housing as yielding the most visible conflicts in the second half of the twentieth century. Citizens’ struggles over space expressed their rights to the city.⁷ City centers have historically been important arenas for the organized performance of social struggles and articulations of citizenship, protest movements and mass mobilizations, staging state ritual, and even repression and torture.⁸ But just as importantly, individual, collective, and institutional actors constantly contested spaces on the edges of Latin American cities— in settlements variously labeled informal cities, shantytowns, favelas, and colonias populares. Many new arrivals to colonias on the urban peripheries moved to the city from the countryside, while others fled unaffordable rent in colonias closer to downtown.

The explosive growth and evolving makeup of the city’s population meant contestations for urban space went beyond territory to include cultural dimensions. In representing space, “symbolic oppositions of ‘us’ and ‘them’ are central to the construction of an identity” in Guadalajara and cities across Latin America.⁹ The spatial social and political history of urban Mexico in the late twentieth-century is fueled by us-

⁷ Gareth A. Jones, “The Latin American City as Contested Space: A Manifesto,” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 13, no. 1 (1994): 1-12. For a more extended treatment, see James Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), which emphasizes everyday spaces and interactions.

⁸ Jones, “The Latin American City as Contested Space,” 3; and Javier Auyero, “The Geography of Popular Contention: An Urban Protest in Argentina,” *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 28, no. 55/56 (2003): 37-70.

⁹ Jones, 5-8.

versus-them conflict in low-intensity but protracted class struggles.¹⁰ Further below the surface, through examining practices of ordinary residents, we also find traces an “anti-discipline” in relation to powers attempting to exert social and political control, principally the Catholic Church and the PRI-state.¹¹ In everyday practices within “lived space,” residents of the peripheries appropriated city spaces and made use of dominant discourses to subvert the original visions of the “ideal city” imposed by elites and the state.¹²

This chapter analyzes space, class, and power in order to shed light on the changing shape of Guadalajara and contrast different social groups’ experiences of the city during the 1960s and 1970s. Production and use of urban spaces by diverse actors reinforced social hierarchies, order, and elite hegemony, and delimited the opportunities and possible worlds for most of the city’s residents. Those same city spaces facilitated resistance to hegemonic arrangements and became the substance of and venues for conflict in social movements and everyday life. Residents of the peripheries put city spaces to use in unanticipated ways. Socio-spatial segregation restricted access to the benefits of development in the “ideal city” conceptualized by local politicians and urban planners. But that segregation had the unintended consequence of enabling processes of identity formation through community organizing and everyday *convivencia* (being

¹⁰ “Spatial social and political history” is how Courtney J. Campbell describes similar research in “Space, Place, and Scale: Human Geography and Spatial History in *Past and Present*,” *Past and Present*, no. 0 (May 2016): 1-23.

¹¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), xv.

¹² *Ibid*, 96.

together) on the peripheries. The city's spaces—narrow neighborhood streets, Periférico highway, Calzada Independencia, public plazas and government buildings, buses and their routes—infused people's meaning-making processes and colored the collective identities they forged. Grassroots social movements grounded in popular Catholicism also contributed to the formation of strong neighborhood-based identities in Guadalajara. Movement participants collectively conjured of “imagined places” of community autonomy and pressured governments to deliver basic urban services to improve residents' quality of life.¹³

In this study that attempts to view the city from the peripheries, I use a flexible understanding of public spaces. Public life in a large portion of the city happened in *colonias populares* and zones far from the center. Furthermore, there have always been many *publics* in Guadalajara. Public spaces central to life in the city during the late twentieth-century included streets, sidewalks, empty lots, markets, parks, churches, corner stores, downtown plazas, and bus stops and buses. Boundaries and borders in Jalisco's state capital included the Periférico highway, the Calzada Independencia, Oblatos Canyon, and the hills (*cerros*) marking off the southern limits. To examine political cultures of the urban poor in late twentieth-century Mexico, I center spaces on the peripheries with improvised settlements and self-constructed homes, located on the most difficult terrains. On the peripheries, community centers, church patios, school auditoriums, sidewalks and street corners, and empty lots provided venues for collective exchange and public debate.

¹³ On imagined places and community in *colonias populares* of Guadalajara, specifically Lomas de Oblatos, see Elba Noemí Gómez Gómez, *Habitar el lugar imaginado: formas de construir la ciudad desde un proyecto educativo-político* (Tlaquepaque: ITESO, 2011).



Figure 1.1. Residents of colonia Santa Cecilia on the eastern edge of Guadalajara fill the church patio in anticipation of a popular festival one Sunday, ca. 1970. Photo used by permission from Centros Educativos Oblatos, A.C.

From the vantage points of colonias populares in Guadalajara, and on the ground in the urban popular movement, it was us-versus-them.¹⁴ In the movement lexicon on the peripheries, “them” included *profesionistas* (professionals), residents of the city’s west side, and the rich. The principal antagonisms of west-east and center-periphery often revolved around urban spaces and who deserved the uses of which ones. Mainstream discourse produced notions of *gente decente* defined against *los indecentes* (the indecent) living on the city’s outskirts. Though the fragmentation of territories and identities across the twentieth century precludes neat classifications, I contrast the “ideal city” with “lost”

¹⁴ For more on the urban popular movement in Mexico, see Juan Manuel Ramírez Sáiz, *El movimiento urbano popular en México* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1986); and Paul Haber, *Power from Experience: Urban Popular Movements in Late Twentieth-Century Mexico* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

cities for juxtaposition and a focus on class formation and inequality. On the one hand, the “ideal city” corresponded spatially to the urban core and the confined routes of the comfortable classes and tourists.¹⁵ Then there is the *ciudad perdida*, or “lost” city. It is the “other” Guadalajara, and the “other” Mexico.¹⁶ Residents of the ideal city were not acquainted with suburban barrios, so for those with the power of naming in the public sphere, those places and their inhabitants appeared “lost.”

Scholarship on Latin American cities tends to approach them as places of problems and crises. Indeed, urbanism emerged from the impulse to cast cities as problems requiring management, control, and planning.¹⁷ By the late-1980s, local urban studies experts qualified the city of Guadalajara as an “uncontrollable problem” in its trajectory of development.¹⁸ In the early 1970s, commentators not having regular exposure to daily life in colonias populares sometimes misread the situation for residents and offered up totalizing commentary that missed the strategizing and uses of space by citizens on the peripheries.¹⁹ The label “misery belts” accentuated the poverty and inequality of the city’s outer rings. But alongside the real challenges of material

¹⁵ Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, “1910 Mexico City: Space and Nation in the City of the Centenario,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, no. 1 (Feb. 1996): 75-104.

¹⁶ For one discussion of “the ‘other’ Mexico” in the context of working-class political cultures in Mexico City during the revolution, see John Lear, *Workers, Neighbors, and Citizens: The Revolution in Mexico City* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2001).

¹⁷ Daniel Vázquez, *Guadalajara: Ensayos de interpretación* (Zapopan: El Colegio de Jalisco, 1989), 23-24.

¹⁸ Jorge Regalado Santillán, “El movimiento popular independiente en Guadalajara,” in *Perspectivas de los movimientos sociales en la región Centro-Occidente*, ed. Jaime Tamayo (Mexico City: Editorial Línea, 1986), 121-158.

¹⁹ Biblioteca Pública del Estado de Jalisco (BPEJ), Hemeroteca histórica, *Debate*, “En Guadalajara: cinturón de miseria,” August 1973, p. 20.

conditions on Guadalajara's peripheries in the 1960s and 1970s, many residents highlight the beauty, happiness, and simplicity of the times.²⁰

In conjunction with social movements, experiences of the materiality of urban spaces and landscapes are critical to this history. On the outer edges, the "lost" cities' vistas included the natural beauty and depth of Oblatos Canyon just beyond the eastern outskirts, incomplete homes and provisional shelters dotting the landscape, and crosses and churches as the most impressive parts of the built environment. Whether people circulated by foot, car, or bus in Guadalajara, the ideal city's vistas oriented them toward the iconography of global capitalism, Catholicism, and Mexican nationalism. Guadalajara underwent a constant transformation of landscapes and spaces in the middle decades of last century, with collective and individual identities in flux as well.

That accelerated pace of change continued into the twenty-first century in some peripheral zones.²¹ Since roughly 1950, a steady, swelling stream of people moved to the city from rural areas of Jalisco and neighboring states. Rural migrants altered the urban landscape when they got there, and the city changed them over time. Guadalajara's major transformations across the 1960s and 1970s were population growth, surface-area additions to the city via colonization of the hinterlands, increased socioeconomic segregation, heightened contestation over spaces, and politicization of the peripheries.

²⁰ This has been a consistent theme in the oral history narratives of residents of the peripheral colonia of Santa Cecilia, for example.

²¹ Rocío Enríquez-Rosas, *El crisol de la pobreza: mujeres, subjetividades, emociones y redes sociales* (Tlaquepaque: ITESO, 2009), 10. Reflecting on her 2009 fieldwork in the irregular settlement of Las Flores, anthropologist Enríquez-Rosas remarks, "I recognized that life can change continuously when you live in extreme poverty; as much the landscape of the colonia as the very lives of the people suffer drastic modifications in little time."

“Ideal” City: Making the “Pearl of the West”

Spanish invaders settled in the Valley of Atemajac in 1531 and moved Guadalajara to its current site in 1542. The Europeans located their settlement amid three indigenous communities— Mezquitán to the north, Analco to the east, and Mexicaltzingo to the south. That center-periphery arrangement kicked off a long history of spatial segregation initiatives by elites and the state, a characteristic that gave rise to ubiquitous references to “the other Guadalajara” and “the divided city” in popular and academic discourse in the late-twentieth century.²² The relatively comfortable Spaniards lived in the central zone throughout the colonial period, while poorer and indigenous people lived further away from the core.²³ In 1800, the city still maintained its basic organization of a small upper class in the center zone, with the working classes and poorer residents situated toward the edges.

Urban infrastructure expanded from 1840 to 1900 with the advent of broad avenues, large public markets, drainage and sewers, potable water, improved public lighting, and hospitals. New urban services were chiefly designed and located to benefit the affluent.²⁴ Planners and developers in the first decade of twentieth century sought to project Guadalajara as a “modern” city, in accordance with national and international conventions of urbanization. Notions of the “enlargement of the city” as indicative of

²² Vázquez, 29; and John Walton, “Guadalajara: Creating the Divided City,” in *Metropolitan Latin America: The Challenge and the Response*, Latin American Urban Research series, vol. 6, ed. Wayne A. Cornelius and Robert V. Kemper (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1978), 25-50.

²³ Vázquez, 45.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 32-33.

progress showed up frequently in official discourse.²⁵ Since 1900, “modern,” “hygienic” colonias were developed— with Francesa, Moderna, and Americana the first three on the western side of the city.

Dynamics of residential segregation are prominent in the transformations of urban space in Guadalajara across the twentieth century and provide one of this study’s key historical continuities. The most important and widely recognized borderlands area is the Calzada Independencia (see fig. 1.2). Municipal and state governments collaborated to pave this central thoroughfare over the pipelined San Juan de Dios River in the first decade of the twentieth century, and the Calzada marked off socioeconomically organized sectors for the next hundred years.²⁶ One of the city’s central sociocultural antagonisms grew up around this wide avenue walled by a thriving commercial district. Prior to the twentieth century and layers of pavement, the river provided the meeting place across the socioeconomic divides and constituted a border zone. The working classes and urban poor lived on the east side in the compactly organized Reforma and Libertad sectors, while the middle classes and elites lived in the more spacious Hidalgo and Juárez sectors to the west. The continuities of this socio-spatial configuration across the twentieth century in Guadalajara are striking, particularly in the midst of dramatic changes brought about by the city’s ballooning population and surface area. The River/Calzada divide and the center-periphery dynamic solidified and became more

²⁵ Beatriz Núñez Miranda, “Tercera Parte: 1910-1990,” in *El crecimiento urbano de Guadalajara*, eds. Águeda Jiménez Pelayo, Jaime Olveda, and Beatriz Núñez Miranda (Zapopan: El Colegio de Jalisco, 1995), 223. See also Núñez Miranda, *Guadalajara: una visión del siglo XX* (Zapopan: El Colegio de Jalisco, 1999).

²⁶ Núñez Miranda, “Tercera Parte: 1910-1990,” 222-23.

deeply entrenched through each additional phase of the city's growth into the late twentieth century.²⁷

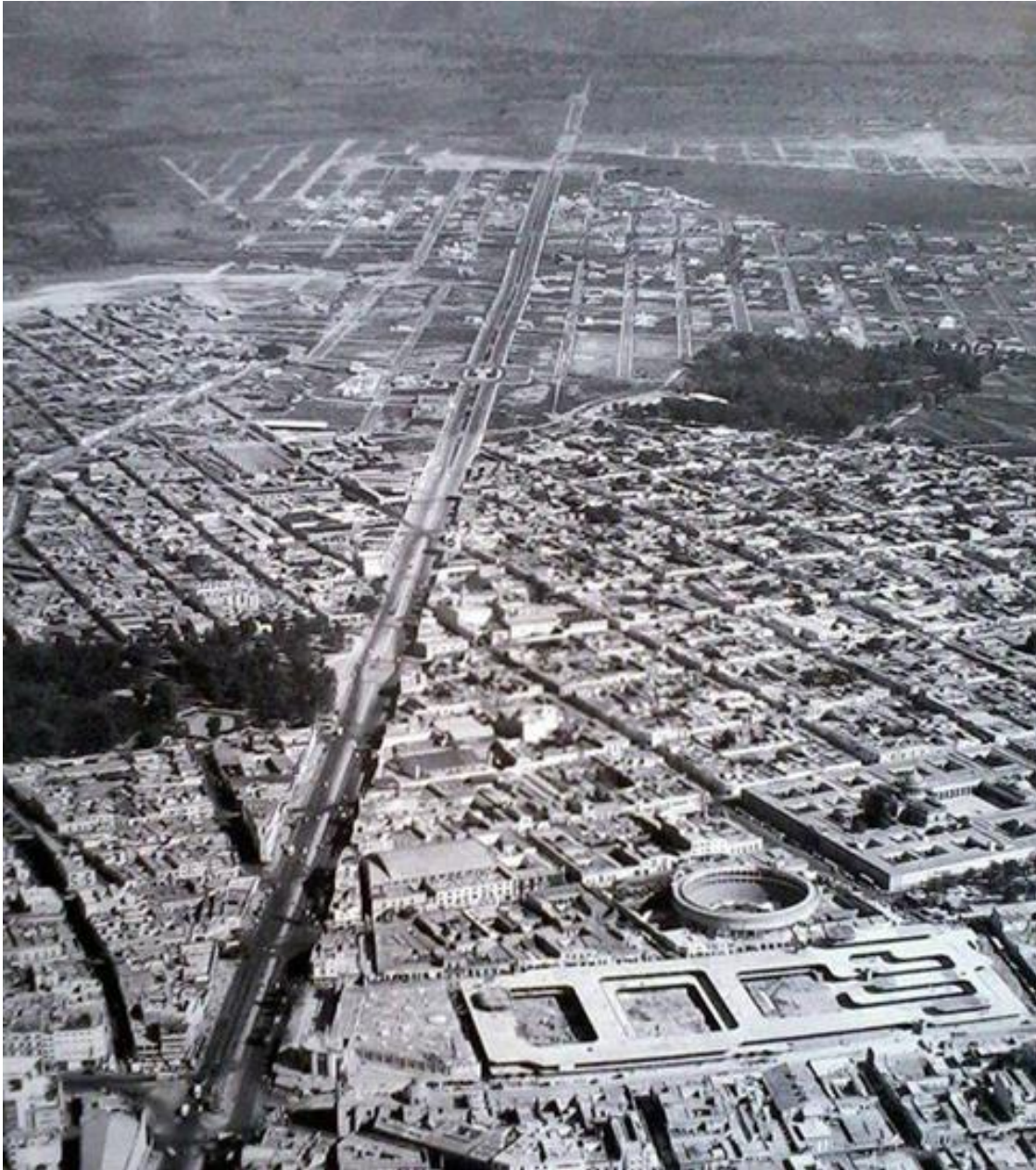


Figure 1.2. Aerial photo of Guadalajara with the Calzada Independencia dividing the city, 1960. Photo courtesy of the Archivo Municipal de Guadalajara.

²⁷ Beatriz Núñez Miranda, "Asentamientos y vivienda en Jalisco," in *Jalisco en un siglo. Población, poblamiento, vivienda y patrimonio, 1895-2005*, eds. Patricia Arias Rozas, et al. (Zapopan: El Colegio de Jalisco, 2010), 125-189.

Along with the Calzada Independencia dividing the city down the middle, “social classes and economic status were demonstrated and recognized by the distance from the center.”²⁸ Dramatic, unceasing growth in population and surface area from the 1960s forward increasingly complicated the socio-spatial schematic of the city, generating disjunctions and enclaves. Gated communities of high-end homes for a relative few popped up on the western side of Guadalajara and in the municipality of Zapopan. Even so, the basic organizational tendencies of west-east and core-periphery have remained fundamental.²⁹

In a process that faced opposition from many citizens and small-business owners and ultimately displaced most of the remaining working-class citizens from the city’s core, the downtown area of Guadalajara was remodeled entirely in the 1950s. Plazas were constructed on all four sides of the Cathedral, centering the church in this tightest spatial core of the city. One of the new parks immortalized official local and regional heroes—all men—in the Rotonda of Illustrious Jaliscienses,³⁰ (fig.) The Catholic Church in Mexico has never been content to cede high-profile spaces and weaken its position in a historical war of images. The Church completed construction of the stunning Templo Expiatorio on edge of downtown in 1955 (see fig. 1.3).³¹ The bulk of changes otherwise from the renovation came from the widening and reconstruction of principal streets to

²⁸ Vázquez, 71.

²⁹ Núñez Miranda, “Asentamientos y vivienda en Jalisco.”

³⁰ Archivo Municipal de Guadalajara (AMG), Fototeca, “Rotonda de las Jaliscienses Ilustres, sobre calle Liceo,” unclassified, 1954. This monument was originally named “Rotonda de los Hombres Ilustres,” prior to the addition of Rita Pérez Jiménez, Irene Robledo, and María Izquierdo to the twenty-plus statues in recent years.

³¹ AMG, Fototeca, “Templo Expiatorio, Guadalajara, Jal., Mex.,” unclassified, 1955.

accommodate the increasing automobile traffic of the middle classes, and an invasion of department stores and trendy European and North American retailers.



Figure 1.3. Templo Expiatorio in final stages of construction, c. 1960. Photo courtesy of the Archivo Municipal de Guadalajara.

In 1961 the State of Jalisco's General Board of Planning and Urbanization issued the Ordering Scheme, aiming to transform Guadalajara into what board members called the "ideal city," while also proposing the formal consolidation of connected cities into a metropolitan zone.³² Federal, state, and local government entities coordinated efforts to

³² Irma Beatriz García Rojas, *Olvidos, acatos y desacatos: políticas urbanas para Guadalajara* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 2002), 239. See the quote from official documents on creating the "ciudad ideal."

create the metropolitan area in the 1960s, in response to Guadalajara's steady absorption of adjacent cities and towns. Even as the surface area continued to expand, spaces in most of the city tightened because of exponential growth in numbers of people, structures, and cars. The city officially reached a population of one million in 1964. To facilitate automobile and bus traffic and relieve pressure from overcrowded streets, another incision was made across the landscape of the city equivalent to the Calzada Independencia. Federalismo and other spacious avenues and arteries were blasted out of the existing layout in the 1960s.³³

By the 1950s in Guadalajara, multinational corporate logos stood out on massive signage in the central parts of the city—Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Exxon, Kodak, Rolex, and Sears among the most common. European companies and products, alongside high-end locally owned stores, invaded the vistas of pedestrians and passengers in the downtown area, pushing jewelry, perfume, “gentleman’s clothing,” and luxury goods. The towering Cathedral of Guadalajara and dozens of impressive churches served as landmarks on the downtown landscape. This symbol of Church power worked its way into people’s lines of sight at innumerable locations on the ground (see fig. 1.4).³⁴ As recently appointed Pope John Paul II rode through the streets of Guadalajara while visiting Mexico in January 1979, throngs of the faithful straining to see the pope had Mobil and Firestone logos figure prominently in their views looking up the broad avenue (see fig. 1.5).³⁵ The state of Jalisco’s Palacio de Gobierno and other municipal and state government buildings cast

³³ BPEJ, Hemeroteca histórica, *El Sol de Guadalajara*, ca. 1969.

³⁴ AMG, Fototeca, “Centro,” unclassified, ca. 1979.

³⁵ AMG, Fototeca, “El Papá en Guadalajara,” unclassified, 1978.

imposing shadows in the heart of downtown. The heavy commercial activity downtown included exchanges with informal vendors of all types. Spaces in plazas, parks, on sidewalks, and beside buildings became the sources of tension and class struggle. The larger commercial and real estate interests downtown have lobbied governments, successfully at various junctures, to clear the informal vendors out of the downtown area.³⁶

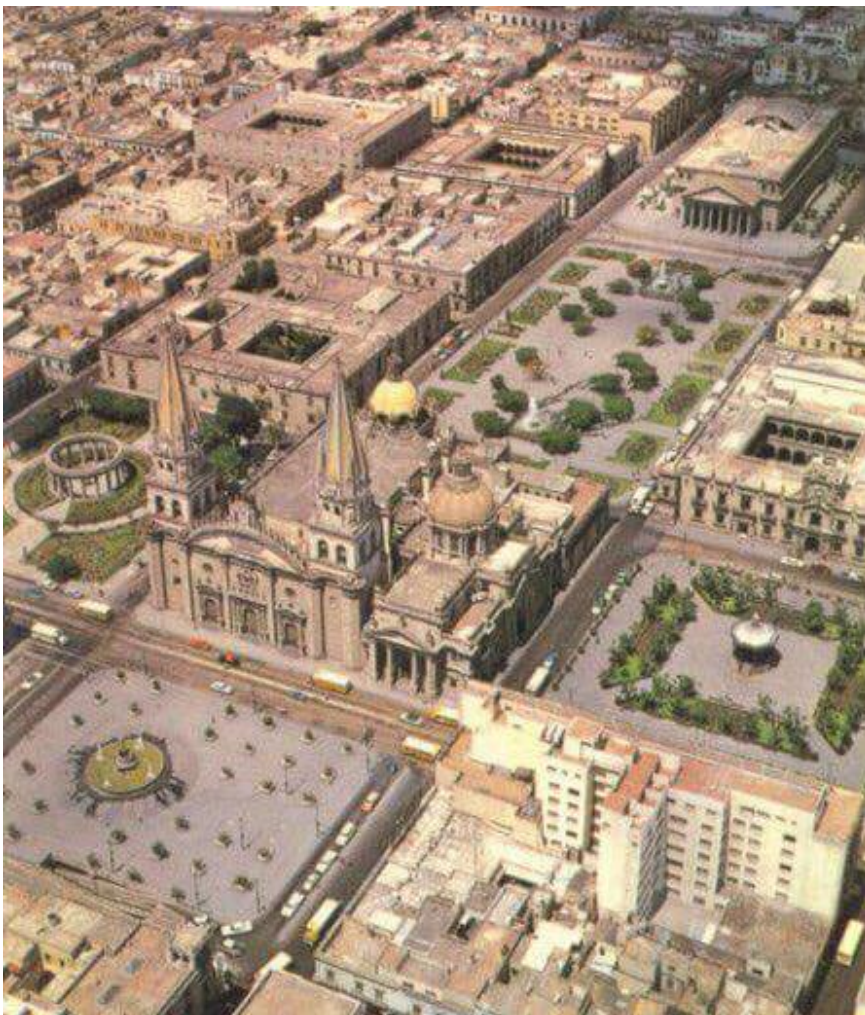


Figure 1.4. Aerial photo of the core downtown area, with the Cathedral and surrounding four plazas, ca. 1990. Photo courtesy of the Archivo Municipal de Guadalajara.

³⁶ The state imposed a ban on street vendors in the downtown area and most parts of the “ideal city,” under Movimiento Ciudadano government of Enrique Alfaro Ramírez as Guadalajara’s mayor. Alfaro is now governor of the state of Jalisco.



Figure 1.5. Pope John Paul II parades through the streets of Guadalajara during his visit to Mexico for the Conference of Latin American Bishops meeting in Puebla, January 1979. Photo courtesy of the Archivo Municipal de Guadalajara.

The local daily newspaper *El Occidental*, like other large media outlets in Mexico in this period, regurgitated the official line. Lead headlines in the January 5, 1969 issue informed readers that “Guadalajara Will Develop in Accordance with Its Demands,” assuring them also, “The New Ordinance on Construction Will Be Faithfully Applied.”³⁷

³⁷ BPEJ, Hemeroteca histórica, *El Occidental*, “Acorde a sus Exigencias se Desarrollará Guadalajara,” January 5, 1969, p. 1B.

Guadalajara's "demands," framed as propelling development forward inevitably, resulted in the "the biggest mall in Latin America" breaking ground there in 1969. The new Plaza del Sol was laid out in the more comfortable southwestern zone of the metropolitan area, and *El Occidental* featured a model of the mall in its January 10 edition.³⁸ The city's continued population growth prompted another pipelining project on the San Juan de Dios River, this time in the northern part of the metropolitan area, further extending the Calzada Independencia. In this developing, modernizing Latin American city in the 1970s, workers and residents crossing the intersection of Javier Mina and Independencia into the western part of the city were greeted with signs on the bridge above. There the municipal government reminded them before entering the ideal city— "Guadalajara is your home. Let's keep it clean!" while additional signage urged residents not to litter (see fig. 1.6).³⁹

³⁸ BPEJ, Hemeroteca histórica, *El Occidental*, "Coloca Hoy el Gobernador la Primera Piedra de Plaza del Sol," January 10, 1969, page number not known.

³⁹ AMG, Fototeca, "Javier Mina e Independencia," unclassified, ca. 1970.



Figure 1.6. The intersection of Javier Mina and Independencia, crossing from the city’s working-class eastern side into downtown and the west side, ca. 1970. Photo courtesy of the Archivo Municipal de Guadalajara.

Efrain Urzúa Macias closed out 1968 with his first state-of-the-city address as Guadalajara’s mayor, in national and international contexts of a year riddled with massive social protests and state repression in metropolitan areas. The government-friendly local press gave the speech extensive coverage. *El Occidental* ran a six-page spread on January 1, 1969 featuring the full text of Urzúa Macias’s address interspersed with a few pictures on each page. The new mayor titled the speech, “The City is the Extension of the Home: Achieving a More Humane and Harmonious Life is Everyone’s

Responsibility.”⁴⁰ It is instructive to consider the visual mosaic of the city painted by *El Occidental* editors and what it communicates about development, modernization, state formation, and struggles over representations of citizenship in Guadalajara in the late 1960s.

Readers took in images of a fleet of public works vehicles lined up uniformly around a plaza downtown, two hundred new trash containers arranged in orderly rows, the modern interiors of public works agencies’ office buildings, and local police standing at attention. Urzúa Macías’s administration projected the imagery of a city and a country achieving big things, while in the process of construction and renovation in still more modern and progressive ways. He touted the installation of the Olympic Fountain in the middle of the Calzada Independencia to commemorate the 1968 Olympic Games Mexico hosted. The municipal government moved to renovate public parks, and the mayor detailed those plans. *El Occidental* showed examples like La Gaceta park, located just off the Calzada.⁴¹ If the city was indeed the “extension of the home” as the mayor suggested, then public spaces would be places of sociability, recreation, and ritual. The paper featured a picture of the annual “Popular Municipal Festival” in the expansive Liberation Plaza, an event sponsored by the local government. An image of the mayor’s wife and other elite women signing as witnesses of a May 10 “collective marriage.” Public spaces were also understood as venues for commercial exchange, and *El Occidental* included a picture of the sprawling Abastos wholesale market in the southern part of the city.⁴²

⁴⁰ BPEJ, Hemeroteca histórica, *El Occidental*, “La Ciudad es Prolongación de la Casa,” January 1, 1969, p. 1A-6A.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

The post-revolutionary state in Mexico propagated a discourse of public works and social services as paternalistically undertaken for the sake of the common interest, with special consideration given to the poor. In the *El Occidental* spread, the mayor's speech was accompanied by images of a pavement project, the construction of a medical clinic in the working-class Reforma sector, and a half-completed "municipal children's daycare." Newly cobblestoned roads serving the low-income Yáñez and Huerta Vieja neighborhoods were presented as evidence of the municipal government reshaping the city's spaces "for the benefit of the residents in colonias populares."⁴³

Later that month, *El Occidental* repeated the municipal government's unfounded claim that citizens' necessities were being addressed and all social services adequately provided across the city— no "social needs" were unmet in Guadalajara.⁴⁴ That dominant discourse propagated almost unwaveringly through the mainstream media outlets locally provided the impetus for Christian base communities (CEBs) and urban popular movement groups based in peripheral colonias to create and publish street newspapers with "alternative information."⁴⁵ As detailed below, the urgent lack of basic services and dire material conditions in colonias populares fueled community organizing and collective action.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ BPEJ, Hemeroteca Histórica, Manuel Galindo Gaitán, "Suficientes Servicios Sociales Tienen Las Familias Humildes," *El Occidental*, January 16, 1969, p. 1.

⁴⁵ *El Alipuz* as a source of "alternative information" in Santa Cecilia during the 1970s comes from author interview with Isabel Aranguren, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

Urban growth since the 1950s presented problems of housing shortages, the provision of services and urban infrastructure basics, transportation (roadways and public transport systems), and waste disposal, along with environmental contamination— atmosphere, water, soil—and rapid ecological change in and around the metropolitan zone. Accelerated rates of migration from the countryside continued after the 1950s, and the city nearly doubling its surface area from 1970 to 1980. Guadalajara expanded from 11,000 to 20,000 hectares in a single decade. By 1980, it was home to three million people.⁴⁶ The Zona Conurbada de Guadalajara was formally constituted in 1978, incorporating the expanding municipalities of Tlaquepaque to the south, Zapopan to the west and north, and Tonalá to the southeast. Colonizing rural areas and smaller towns further, the Guadalajara Region was established with its own institutions and coordinating entities, encompassing—administratively and economically—towns and territory south to Lake Chapala.⁴⁷

Throughout a period of intense development, city planning, and regulation in the 1960s and 1970s, officials developed plans in response to crises stemming from the constant surface area expansion and population growth. Short-term schemes prevailed when long-term planning remained a perpetual need.⁴⁸ Such short-sightedness closely correlated to election cycles for local politicians. In addition to the paucity of long-term plans conceptualizing the city as a coherent system, local governments failed to follow

⁴⁶ Carlos Felipe Arias García, “Evolución de la legislación urbanística e instrumentos de planificación en Jalisco y Guadalajara, de 1933 a 1995 y hasta la actualidad,” in *Derecho urbanístico*, eds. Silvia Patricia López González and Jorge Fernández Ruiz (Mexico City: UNAM, 2011), 460.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 456.

⁴⁸ García Rojas, *Olvidos, acatos y desacatos*, 240.

through on commitments. In municipal documentation of the establishment of lower-class neighborhoods around the perimeter, one finds extensive planning and blueprints for fully urbanized colonias, with diagrams of water, sewer, and electricity delivery systems. But a consistent theme in the histories of colonias populares is the lack of implementation and residents pressuring the government and developers over time to finally deliver.

“Lost” City: Making “Misery Belts” and Conquering Space on the Peripheries

Jesuit priest Arnaldo Zenteno boarded the “Centro-Colonias” bus each day in 1971 while living on the western side of the city. He commuted to Santa Cecilia on the edge of Oblatos Canyon on the far eastern side, where he made pastoral visits and worked with the thriving CEB movement. Zenteno described the many Guadalajaras evident in the increasing diversity and persistent segregation of the city.

I think that when we only move around the downtown area or the Juárez sector, we do not really know what Guadalajara is. We know the tree-covered part with broad avenues, with well-dressed people, and we can show that to the tourists, and we can feel proud of ourselves for that. But people do not know the working-class neighborhoods of the *barranca* and the other end by the industrial zone of Guadalajara. I believe it is important to know these two, three, four Guadalajaras and that when we feel proud of the *Perla Tapatía*, we will not forget these simple people, beaten up by buses on the rocky roads— that is really the *Perla de Occidente*.⁴⁹

From center to peripheries in Guadalajara, streets transitioned from concrete and asphalt to cobblestone, gravel, and dirt. Most residents of the peripheries constructed their own homes over time as resources allowed. Through the end of the century, the poorest residents continued to be concentrated in zones around the edges of the

⁴⁹ Arnaldo Zenteno, S.J., *Encuentro con el pueblo y evangelización liberadora: búsqueda y experiencias de evangelización en una colonia popular* (Mexico City, Imprenta Mexicana, 1974), 24.

metropolitan area (see fig 1.7).⁵⁰ Industries dumped trash and toxic waste around heavily populated peripheral areas, especially along rivers and streams. While ozone levels raised alarms in the city's center, suburban residents lived next to mounds of garbage and industrial runoff. By the twenty-first century, all of the city's landfills and worst areas of industrial pollution congregated beyond the peripheral ring.

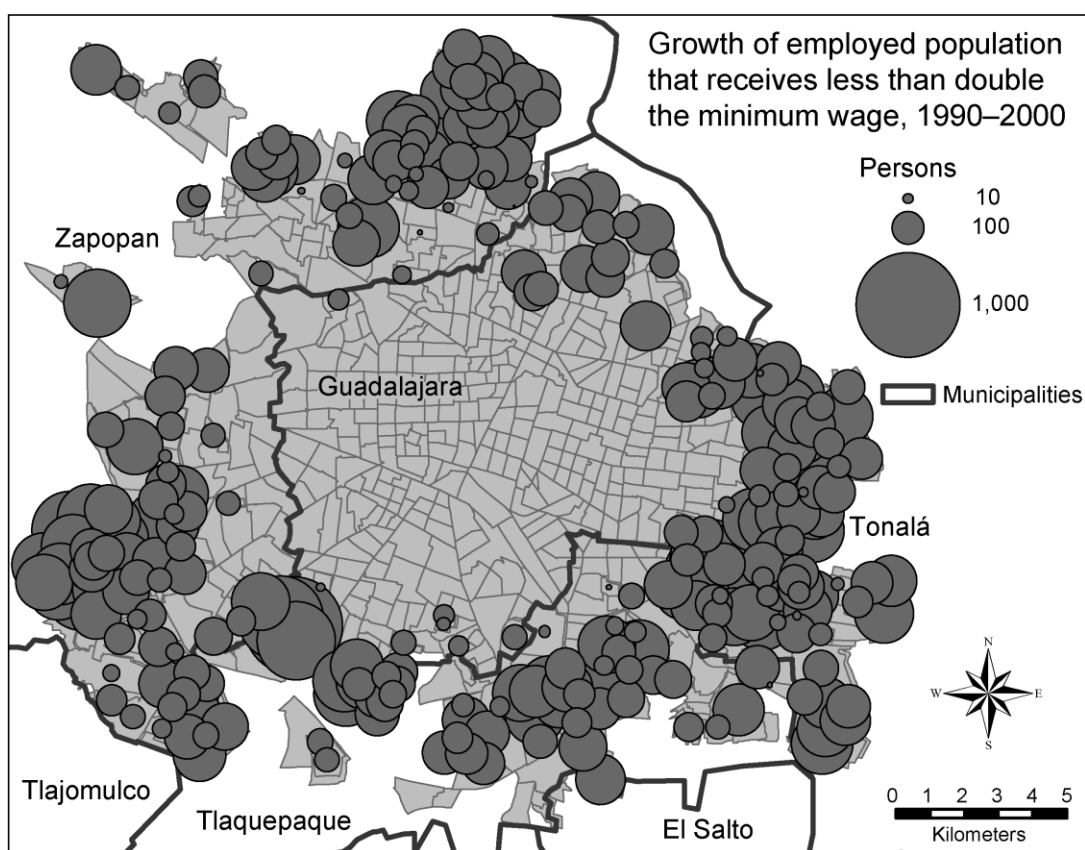


Figure 1.7. – Source: John Harner, Edith Jiménez Huerta, and Heriberto Cruz Solís, “Buying Development: Housing and Urban Growth in Guadalajara, Mexico,” *Urban Geography* 30, no. 5 (2009), 479. The authors used data from the 1990 and 2000 Mexican government censuses.

⁵⁰ John Harner, Edith Jiménez Huerta, and Heriberto Cruz Solís, “Buying Development: Housing and Urban Growth in Guadalajara, Mexico,” *Urban Geography* 30, no. 5 (2009), 479.

The urban intruded onto the rural in the frontier zone demarcated by the Peripheral Ring highway encircling the city. More and more territory became urbanized, and the city steadily advanced into the hinterlands. In Guadalajara as in other Latin American cities, the rural and the urban formed a continuum.⁵¹ In Santa Cecilia on the eastern periphery of Guadalajara, residents saw the landscape as “very rural.”⁵² In a 1986 *Christus* article, Sagrado Corazón nuns and base community participants narrated the arrival of Santa Cecilia’s first residents, where newcomers “found a desolate, rocky land, full of scrub bushes.”⁵³ Gloria Díaz moved there with her family in 1969, before completion of the Periférico highway separating the colonia from Oblatos Canyon. “There was nothing around here,” she recalls. The neighboring colonia resembled a field, with many residents growing corn and other vegetables and fruits in scattered plots. Jesús Osorio thought of Santa Cecilia as their “place in the hills.”⁵⁴ This rurality persisted in subsequent decades around the expanding peripheries. Sociologist Jon Shefner discusses the mix of urban modernity with a rural feel in the early 1990s in the area of the Cerro del Cuatro on the southern fringe.⁵⁵ People moving to the city from the countryside transformed the urban landscape when they got there, and the city reshaped them over

⁵¹ Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York, 1991), 87. Portelli uses “continuum” to describe the rural-urban relationship in his research in Terni, Italy. For a recent book on Mexico City that demonstrates the blurred lines between rural and urban, see Matthew Vitz, *A City on a Lake: Urban Political Ecology and the Growth of Mexico City* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018).

⁵² Author interview with Jesús Osorio, March 15, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁵³ Archivo Histórico Centros Educativos Oblatos (AHCEO), CEBs de una colonia suburbana, “Historia de nuestra comunidad 1970-1985,” *Christus* (March 1986), 1.

⁵⁴ Author interview with Gloria Díaz and Jesús Osorio, March 15, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁵⁵ Jon Shefner, *The Illusion of Civil Society: Democratization and Community Mobilization in Low-Income Mexico* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 59-60.

time. During the second half of the twentieth century, Guadalajara continually expanded through colonization of the hinterlands. Socioeconomic segregation increased apace in Mexico's second largest city during these decades, and spaces became even more hotly contested through a period of sustained economic crisis during the 1980s.⁵⁶

Contributions to a small volume published by Guadalajara's municipal government in 1992 sought to narrate the city in "the voice of its people." In a chapter with an Orientalist tinge, an outsider to *colonias populares* reports back to middle- and upper-class publics on his expedition there to observe and converse with residents. José de Jesús Fajardo especially aimed to understand the young men of poorer *colonias*, whom he dubbed "*los chavos chidos*" (the cool dudes). "The marginalized and disinherited have their own belongings," he wrote after attending a party in one peripheral *colonia*, "some damp walls, some sheets covering the casino—shelter from their nobody existence—a suburban *barrio* where they are the cool ones, true legends, the big men."⁵⁷ In a study of Lomas de Oblatos near Santa Cecilia in the eastern part of Guadalajara, Noemí Gómez ties identity closely to the *colonia*—its spaces and materiality, but also the imaginaries of diverse residents in relation to their place. "The *colonia* is inscribed in the subject's history like a tattoo of indelible belonging," Gómez contends. In Lomas de Oblatos, as in the other *colonias populares* covered here, collective memory was territorialized.⁵⁸

Organized citizens achieved "the conquest of this space," as Sagrado Corazón nun Ana

⁵⁶ Chapter Two further explores the rural-urban continuum and the experiences of people who moved to the urban periphery from rural parts of Jalisco and surrounding states.

⁵⁷ José de Jesús Fajardo Villalvazo, "Los Chavos Chidos," in *Guadalajara: La voz de su gente* (Guadalajara: Ayuntamiento de Guadalajara, 1992), 40.

⁵⁸ Gómez, *Habitar el lugar imaginado*, 100.

Elena Estrada described movement gains over time in Santa Cecilia.⁵⁹ Thousands of diverse people in economically precarious circumstances banded together to wield such power, even if fleetingly, by appealing to territorial identity anchored in their particular city-space— the colonia.

Residents of the urban peripheries, priests, nuns, social workers, and community groups used the spatial organization of the colonia's streets and divisions as the starting place for community organizing initiatives. In Santa Cecilia, Sagrado Corazón nuns divided the colonia into four zones, two on each side of the internal borderlands zone. Distinct identities and relationships developed over time “above” and “below” the main thoroughfare, Joaquín Amaro Avenue. Within their territorial zones, residents organized into groups of fifteen to thirty people and engaged in reflection, prayer and devotional practices, collective action, and community improvement campaigns.⁶⁰

Each colonia examined in this study bordered other colonias in their zones of the city. Other barriers also delimited these peripheral colonias on one or more sides. Santa Cecilia is marked off by the Periférico highway to the east and characterized by its downward slope toward Oblatos Canyon. Residents take in breathtaking views of the canyon from various points in the colonia looking east. Colonias in El Perdón parish— Vicente Guerrero, Santa Rosa, San Marcos, and San Vicente—are bordered to the north by the expansive Panteón Guadalajara cemetery. Santa Margarita straddles the Periférico

⁵⁹ Estrada gave this assessment during remarks at a fiftieth-anniversary celebration of Santa Cecilia's founding at Centros Educativos Oblatos in May 2018, in Guadalajara. Noemí Gómez similarly characterizes citizens' historical collective achievements in nearby Lomas de Oblatos as “the conquest of public and private space.” See Gómez, *Habitar el lugar imaginado*, 24.

⁶⁰ Author interview with Marina Sahagún, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

on the northwestern side of the metropolitan zone in Zapopan, with a section on each side of the highway. Santa Margarita provides the starkest illustration of the city's inequality among the selected colonias. It borders an affluent zone that now has residential towers, high-end shopping centers, gated communities, and a golf course. Residents of colonias on the southern peripheries, like Lomas de Polanco, had “our mountain,” with the Cerro del Cuatro in easy walking distance to the south.⁶¹

Founded in 1967, the sprawling colonia Santa Cecilia stretched to the Periférico near Oblatos Canyon by 1970. Struggles over land, housing, and urban services united residents of this colonia throughout the 1970s in community organizing campaigns to obtain the necessities for dignified lives in the city. The Catholic temple in Santa Cecilia functioned as community center, festival grounds, and popular assembly venue. Churches served as central points of reference in the occasionally disorienting street layouts and variegated built environments of the urban peripheries. As they moved around the spaces of colonias populares, people were treated to vistas that consistently featured the religious symbol of the cross as the tallest part of the built environment and churches as the landscape's largest structure.

Just northwest of Santa Cecilia—still east of the Calzada Independencia and near the Periférico—El Señor del Perdón parish priests drew maps of their territory. Penciled neighborhood diagrams produced by Catholic priests and nuns—often the first surveyors and census-takers in peripheral neighborhoods—display the checkerboard layout

⁶¹ Author interview with Susana Montoya and Esther Carrillo, January 17, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico. For thorough analyses of Lomas de Polanco and issues of space, identity, and social movements, see Elba Noemí Gómez Gómez, ed., *Agentes y lazos sociales: la experiencia de volverse comunidad* (Tlaquepaque, Mexico: ITESO, 2015); and Valentina Napolitano, *Migration, Mujercitas, and Medicine Men: Living in Urban Mexico* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002).

characteristic of residential areas in Guadalajara and other Latin American cities for centuries. Street names all corresponded to saints in this barrio, mostly men.⁶² Residents of adjoining Santa Rosa and Vicente Guerrero colonias organized in Christian base communities fought for a school to serve the thousands of children in their two neighborhoods with no other educational opportunities. After a long and increasingly public struggle involving local and state officials, developers, and *ejido* landowners, residents built Vicente Guerrero School in the center of their adjacent neighborhoods. They forced the issue by invading the spaces of and presenting it to the mayor, the governor, and even the president— in high-profile settings using tactics that forced reaction from powerful actors.⁶³

⁶² Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Guadalajara (AHAG), Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, El Señor del Perdón, 1960-2000, Exp. 20, Caja 1, “Proyecto de la Vicaria del Señor del Perdón.”

⁶³ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, El Señor del Perdón, 1960-2000, Exp. 20, Caja 1, Anexo no. 2, Comité Pro-Construcción de la Escuela Vicente Guerrero, pp. 1-2. I discuss this campaign further in Chapter Four.

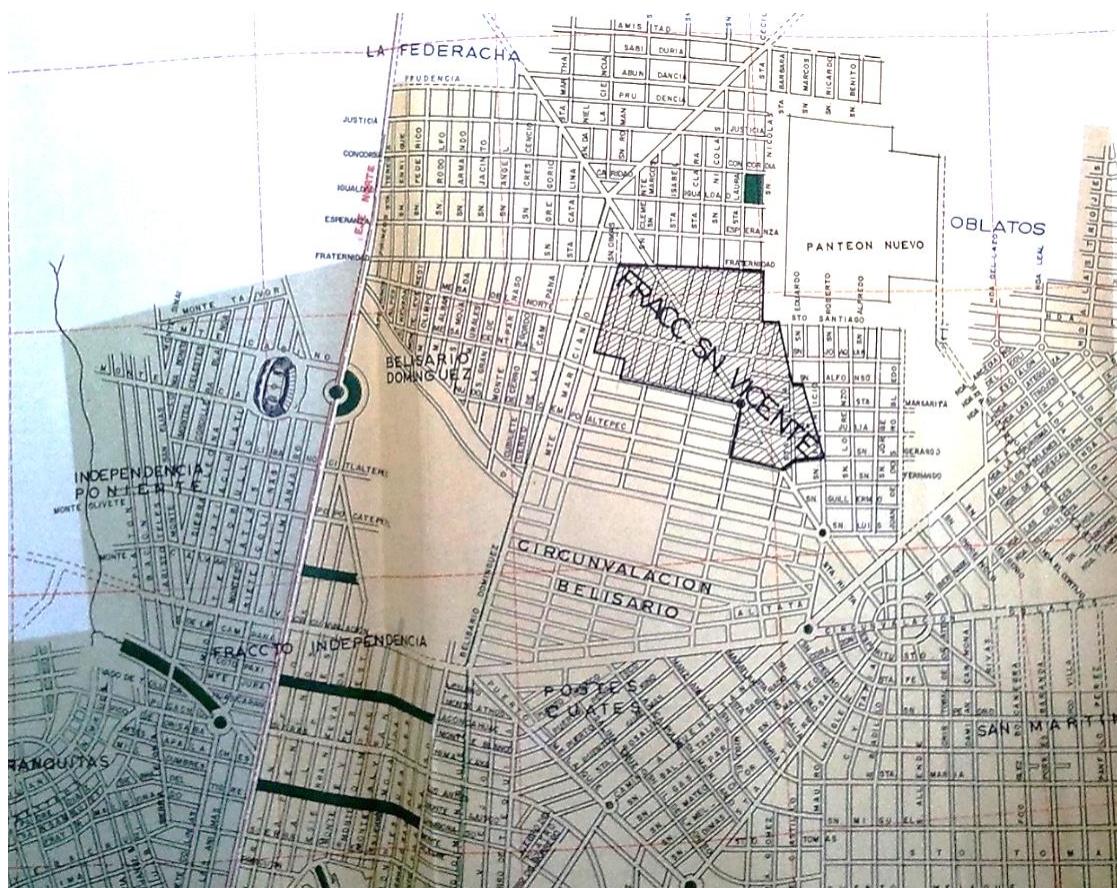


Figure 1.8. Portion of map showing the new development of colonia San Vicente near the Panteón Guadalajara on the northeastern limits of the city, February 1966. Image used with permission of the Archivo Municipal de Guadalajara.

In the case of Santa Margarita, real-estate developers surveyed the substantial patch of land and divided it into small plots, commodifying the space to put its pieces on the market. Migrants from rural areas of western Mexico and working-class people priced out of neighborhoods closer to the city center clamored for opportunities on Guadalajara's periphery. In Santa Margarita, the streets were all named after saints, not an atypical set of choices in the Catholic stronghold of Guadalajara. But in the case of Santa Margarita, all the saints are women— Laura, Cecilia, Estela, Alicia, Paula, Clara, Catalina, Esther, Rosa, Lucrecia, and Teresa. Santa Margarita Reina church stood in the

far corner of the neighborhood, bordering the Periférico and the parish limits.⁶⁴ Santa Margarita did not come equipped with most of the basic elements of urban infrastructure and its thousands of residents struggled for years to obtain necessary services. Conditions were so squalid that it was newsworthy when the colonia got one water well in 1975, as municipal authorities finally partially delivered the service to one of Guadalajara's most "populated and humble" zones.⁶⁵

In Santa Cecilia, Lomas de Polanco, Santa Margarita, and other colonias populares, the nomenclature of public spaces differed between official and popular versions.⁶⁶ Residents knew streets, even the colonia itself, by unofficial names. Streets and places tended to be referred to as proper names or numbers. Developers and urban planners produced systems of street names to order and systematize, but the city's ordinary practitioners used them differently, attaching diverse meanings and imaginaries. Santa Cecilia started out as the generic "Colonia Popular," before widespread vernacular usage of the Catholic parish's name "Santa Cecilia" won out. When the colonia seemed mostly fields and hills in the late 1960s, its streets carried animal names. But by the early 1970s with the population surging over 30,000, residents felt the nomenclature should become more dignified and streets were renamed for popular Mexican musicians and entertainers (see fig. 1.9).⁶⁷ In Santa Margarita, the Prieto sisters developed and sold the

⁶⁴ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita Reyna, mapa del territorio, ca. 1968.

⁶⁵ BPEJ, Hemeroteca histórica, Pablo García Zavalza, "Perímetro," *El Occidental*, April 6, 1975.

⁶⁶ Gómez, et al. mention this in "Lomas de Polanco. Del desencanto al encantamiento del espacio," in Gómez, ed. *Agentes y lazos*, 51-81.

⁶⁷ AHCEO, "Nombres antiguos de las calles de nuestra colonia," no. 3, 1982. This document is reproduced in the image below on the next page, which shows original and new street names.

lots, baptizing each street with the name of a woman saint. On the city’s southern peripheries, Lomas de Polanco’s streets were numbered when developed in the early 1960s. The municipal government later changed the nomenclature by populating it with proper names, but residents ignored the imposition in everyday usage and continued using numbers.

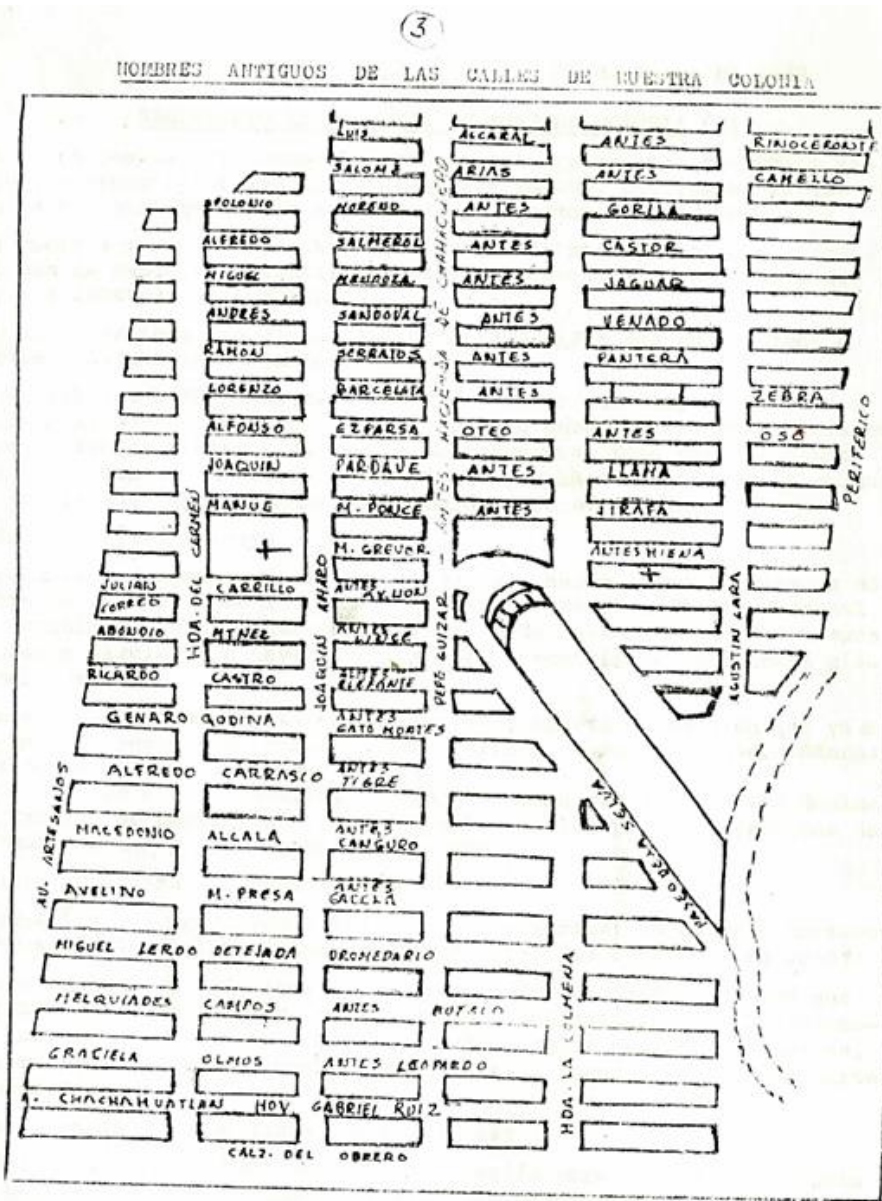


Figure 1.9. Map of colonia Santa Cecilia with street name changes, ca. 1972. Courtesy of Centros Educativos Oblatos (CEO).

Conflicts over land and property were commonplace in most parts of Guadalajara during this sustained period of growth, but they were more numerous and involved more actors in the rapidly commodifying spaces on the city's expanding frontier. Important changes began in the 1960s with "[t]he integration of *ejidatarios* and *comuneros* and their lands to urban life."⁶⁸ Land invasions and squatter settlements proliferated, and the government lacked the capacity to arbitrate each instance. Political parties sought to capitalize on potential voting blocs they envisioned in densely populated irregular settlements. In the cases of Lomas de Polanco, Santa Cecilia, and other colonias populares, developers sold the same plot of land twice, pitting new residents against each other in desperate situations. Ejidos established forty to fifty years earlier during the redistributive bursts that followed the Mexican Revolution were now being speculated on, sold off, and invaded.

Around the peripheries, landowners, developers, the state, and poor residents ("*gentes de escasos recursos*") contested a range of issues— water and drainage infrastructure chief among them. In April 1975, the government announced plans to take "drastic measures in Tlaquepaque against clandestine developers."⁶⁹ In addition to its stated intent of curbing the exploitative practices of clandestine developers, the local government soon announced it would initiate a program of "regularization of land

⁶⁸ Núñez Miranda, "Tercera Parte: 1910-1990," 220.

⁶⁹ BPEJ, Hemeroteca histórica, *El Occidental*, "Drásticas Medidas en Tlaquepaque Contra Fraccionadores Clandestinos," April 4, 1975, page number not known.

ownership on the periphery of the city.” The still modernizing state hoped these measures would make peripheral and ejidal zones in the city “less problematic.”⁷⁰

In concert with government entities and functionaries, developers of peripheral subdivisions bore considerable responsibility for “problematic” aspects of low-income residential zones. They did not typically operate clandestinely, as government officials and *El Occidental* suggested. Instead, developers went through the bureaucratic processes and submitted required documents and plans to the government. But ultimately they failed to construct subdivisions to the minimum standards of urbanization, much less build the “fully urbanized” neighborhoods with city services and green space they advertised to the public. Santa Cecilia resident María de los Angeles Arroyo said the developer there “cheated us” since the beginning.

When the developer sold us the lots, he sold them to us already urbanized with water, electricity, drainage. It turns out we don’t have anything. What do we do? Well, we’re going to ask for the water, because, I mean—no, that’s a right we have to demand. It’s not a thing where you say, “Whenever they want. When God wills it, the water will be here.” So, we went. We protested in front of the mayor’s office.⁷¹

Developers and real-estate firms skirted the law in dealings on the city’s peripheries with the tacit approval of municipal governments. Through citizen research efforts, Santa Cecilia resident and base community leader Ampelia Orozco discovered that lots in their colonia were drawn much wider on maps at the municipal government’s office than residents received them in reality. The developer divided up more spacious lots and sold the smaller parcels. This recipe for dense population led to ongoing

⁷⁰ BPEJ, Hemeroteca histórica, *El Occidental*, “Iniciarán la Regularización de la Tenencia de la Tierra en la Periferia de la Ciudad,” April 3, 1975, p. 2B.

⁷¹ Orozco, “Los Fraccionadores,” *Lo que pasa en mi barrio*, Track 5.

problems with water, drainage, and other urban services. Each house is now two or more stories, set on lots just five meters wide. The infrastructure for water, electricity, and sewer cannot support the number of people. Orozco maintains the colonia suffered because “[developers] wanted to sell fast” in that 5x15 plots, which left lasting challenges still troubling the colonia today.⁷²

⁷² Author interview with Ampelia Orozco, November 30, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.



Figure 1.10. Editorial cartoon by Carlos Valenzuela in *El Sol de Guadalajara*, January 25, 1979. Titled “Agrarian Reform,” it depicts a developer (*fraccionador*) on the city’s periphery. He says, “We’re putting an end to the agrarian problem: no more land, no more conflict... Right?” A sign on the cornstalk behind him advertises, “Buy your plot and plant your house.”

One defining characteristic of residents' experience of the city on its peripheries was the need to build their own family homes. They did so in stages, turning one-room shelters covered with cardboard into two- and three-story houses over the years, depending on their circumstances and capacities. Residents adopted a pattern of eating well one week and building their houses the next week, unable to afford both.⁷³ Cecilia González remembers laying the "first stone" of her family's home in Santa Cecilia. She slept on the ground outside with her children and husband for a brief period initially, while the family constructed the house in stages according to their ability to obtain the materials and find the time.⁷⁴ Explaining the origins of small houses on her street in Santa Cecilia, González said,

We didn't have enough [money] to get too much land here. I mean, we were so poor that we didn't have enough to afford much space. So, the majority have five meters. Five meters, no more, because everyone was dirt poor. Everybody, everybody. There weren't any rich people here.⁷⁵

Owners of a small plot of land and nothing more initially, residents built relationships with neighbors "out of necessity."⁷⁶ Immediate family members worked slowly and steadily on their own house, and extended family members and next door neighbors chipped in to make bigger advances.

⁷³ Jesuit priest David Velasco recalled new arrivals' routine of *comer* one week, *construir* the next week in his homily at the fiftieth-anniversary celebration of Santa Cecilia's founding on November 1, 2018.

⁷⁴ Author interview with Cecilia González, December 15, 2017, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁷⁵ Author interview with Cecilia González, September 27, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁷⁶ Author interview with Ramona Deniz, May 29, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.



Figure 1.11. Two men working on the earliest stages of constructing a house in Santa Cecilia in 1968, while a young boy stares at the camera. Notice the slant down to the right side of the photo, toward Oblatos Canyon. Above and behind them is the main street Joaquin Amaro Avenue. Photo used by permission from Centros Educativos Oblatos.

María Pereyra moved from rural Zacatecas to Santa Cecilia in the early 1970s with her husband, a concrete-mine worker, and their five children. The couple shared the labor home construction. Recalling the *autoconstrucción* (auto-construction) process, Pereyra said,

Between the two of us, I made the mix, I prepared the bricks, and he grabbed them and put up the walls. Over here, I filled them in, and he put them up. And in the few chances we had, because he was working— whatever his job allowed. And that’s how we made a life. But we were poor, poor. We didn’t even have anything to grab onto, and we barely knew anybody. But we hung in there, see, with everything— forty years... We suffered, but we made it through.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Author interview with María Pereyra, September 27, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

Not only did residents of Santa Cecilia build their own homes, but they also financed and supplied labor for construction of the parish temple. The spaces of Church property figure prominently into histories of colonias populares in Guadalajara. In each neighborhood surveyed here, church buildings were central, but increasingly displaced in diverse ways over time. In Santa Cecilia, the parish temple's expansive front patio became the scene of *teatro popular* performances and popular festivals on Sundays. The church grounds served as distribution point for alternative information sources like *El Alipuz* and the occasional "Periódico Mural" greeting parishioners attending mass. What's more, the church patio featured perhaps the best view of the *barranca* and most of colonia.

Adjacent to the church, Sagrado Corazón nuns opened Colegio Santa Cecilia to provide primary and secondary education for some of the colonia's children, an integral piece of the order's wide-ranging educational mission in the colonia. The school served as headquarters, community center, and resource center for many residents. Families helped with everyone's fiestas and events. They borrowed chairs and tables from the school, worked together to move and set them up, then cleaned up and returned them. Mario Suárez and María Martínez sent their eleven children to the school. Suárez remembers helping organize performances of musical groups and dances there. "We transformed the lawn of the school into a theater," he says. Martínez recalls the elaborate stages and scenes they created by piecing together the simplest of materials. They celebrated mass on Sundays in the school's assembly hall.⁷⁸ And the nuns opened

⁷⁸ Author interview with Mario Suárez, María Martínez, and María del Refugio Suárez, March 16, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

Colegio Santa Cecilia on weekends for daycare, pickup soccer, and intergenerational family activities.⁷⁹ Families participated consistently in school activities and parents shared responsibilities for facilities maintenance and repair. “That was their collaboration with their children’s school,” Sagrado Corazón sister Isabel Aranguren says. “Then the school became theirs, really and truly. It was a school that very much belonged to the people.”⁸⁰

Perhaps as no other public spaces in the city, citizens appropriated the streets and sidewalks through everyday practice. Streets of colonias populares were places of social encounter. Sagrado Corazón nun Marina Sahagún describes the intensity of interaction in “going out to the street” in Santa Cecilia during the early 1970s. She and other sisters held catechism meetings on street curbs and sidewalks.⁸¹ Decentering the parish temple as exclusive place of the sacred, liberationist priests and nuns held mass in everyday spaces of the colonia. María Martínez remembers Jesuit priests José Luis Estrada, Arnaldo Zenteno, and Alfredo Zepeda holding “*misas de barrio*” on streets and in people’s homes. Residents spread word that “there’s going to be a mass over there” on a certain street corner or in a family’s home.⁸²

On the other hand, after sunset the dark streets and spaces of peripheral colonias after sunset presented a different sensation and a set of problems. Antonio Vázquez

⁷⁹ Author interview with Marina Sahagún, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

⁸⁰ Author interview with Isabel Aranguren, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

⁸¹ Author interview with Marina Sahagún, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

⁸² Author interview with María Martínez, March 16, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

recalls Santa Margarita as totally dark because of non-existent or spotty streetlighting.⁸³ In Santa Cecilia, on Cecilia González's block "below," residents relied on one 1000-watt bulb attached to a post. In the auto-urbanization process on the city's periphery, residents installed the light themselves, without the attention or support of the municipal government or developer.⁸⁴ The unlit spaces of *colonias populares* provided an element of continuity for rural migrants, but inadequate public lighting in densely populated neighborhoods created a sense of insecurity each night.

On the urban-rural continuum in Guadalajara's metropolitan zone, the *barrancas*—Oblatos and Huentitán canyons on the eastern and northeastern edges—occupy the most eminently rural position. Yet as the city developed across the 1960s and 1970s, *colonias populares* and other more improvised settlements began to extend into the paradigmatically difficult terrain of the *barranca*. Santa Cecilia proper ends at the Periférico, just above the entrance to trails descending into the canyon. But residents of that colonia laid claim to the scenic landscapes and forested spaces near the far rural end of the continuum. In the imaginaries of many, the *barranca* constituted an integral part of their colonia's spaces— a backyard. During the annual Fiesta de Santa Cecilia procession, hundreds of participants walked paths down "to the baths" in the *barranca* and then trudged back up the steep incline to the temple.⁸⁵ In those *fiestas patronales*, the spaces of Oblatos Canyon—outside of and separate from the city in conventional

⁸³ Luis Antonio Vázquez González, "Santa Margarita," in *Historia del lugar donde vivo* (Ayuntamiento de Zapopan, 2005), 191ff.

⁸⁴ Author interview with Cecilia González, September 27, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁸⁵ Author interview with Mario Suárez, March 16, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

understandings of the urban—were claimed through usage by citizens in Santa Cecilia and considered extensions of the colonia.

As spaces steadily urbanized over time, public parks frequently provided the only green spaces in colonias populares. The neighborhood park became a central space of contestation in both Lomas de Polanco and Santa Margarita. Park conditions functioned as a thermometer for quality of life in Lomas de Polanco on the southern periphery. Neighbors organized to establish the space and refurbish it at different junctures, as the park transitioned from hub of activity and social relations to abandoned, dark, unofficial trash dump. In Santa Margarita on the northwestern fringes of the city, community members organized for the restoration and improvement of Francisco Villa Park in the early-1990s, after years of neglect that ceded the space to literal and metaphorical darkness.⁸⁶ Parks and *unidades deportivas* (recreation centers) in colonias populares exist because residents acted strategically and in solidarity to pressure municipal governments to provide and preserve the space. Local people see a strong correlation between functional and well-maintained spaces for community and recreation and reduced levels of crime and insecurity.⁸⁷

Protracted campaigns of collective action at the grassroots level brought residents of the peripheries crucial victories in struggles over rights to city space. Participants saw themselves not as marginal actors on the urban scene but as citizens with equal rights to the city. Discursively, residents of colonias populares consistently counterposed material

⁸⁶ Archivo Municipal de Zapopan (AMZ), Hemeroteca Contemporánea, Sonia Arreola, “Nuestro parque Francisco Villa: ‘Necesitábamos recuperar nuestro parque para nuestros niños y jóvenes,’” *Nosotros: el periódico de tu colonia*, Octubre-Noviembre 2004, p. 10.

⁸⁷ Author interview with Elena Lupercio, November 4, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

conditions on the periphery with those in the center of the city. They witnessed the municipal government using water for large fountains downtown and the affluent wasting it on watering manicured lawns, while they got denied water infrastructure installation in poor neighborhoods.

Local elites and the mainstream media occasionally decided to do battle with residents of peripheral neighborhoods over the rights to enjoy the city's prime spaces and vistas. A major local newspaper published a story about Santa Cecilia in its weekly cultural supplement section on January 4, 1976 that portrayed the neighborhood as an eyesore ruining an otherwise beautiful landscape and wasting Guadalajara's most impressive views.⁸⁸ Highly organized around a politicized Christian base communities structure, Santa Cecilia residents challenged journalist Alfonso Meza's negative portrayal of them in the *El Informador* story. They convened a community assembly meeting and dispatched a group of representatives to the newspaper's offices to present their rebuttal and request the paper print it. After much negotiation and eventually agreeing to purchase a "paid insert," residents of Santa Cecilia successfully pressured the management at *El Informador*, the leading daily newspaper in Guadalajara, to run their strong refutation of the "Beauty and Poverty" smear article.⁸⁹ Cecilia González—base community *promotora* and one-time president of Santa Cecilia's Representative Assembly—recalls raising the money to pay the newspaper's unreasonable fee of three-thousand pesos to publish their statement. She describes the assertiveness with which she participated, arriving to homes,

⁸⁸ BPEJ, Hemeroteca histórica, Alfonso Meza, "La Belleza y la Pobreza," *El Informador*, January 4, 1976, Suplemento cultural, pp. 1-2.

⁸⁹ Biblioteca ITESO, Acervo General, Margarito Íñiguez, et al., *El Proyecto de Santa Cecilia*, (Guadalajara: ITESO, 1989), 5.

knocking on the door, and saying, “Listen, señora, are you okay with them calling us some dirty, filthy pigs?” “Who said that?!” “Well, this guy that came to tell us that we’re dirty pigs.”⁹⁰

Los Colonos de Santa Cecilia, led by Petra Vallín de Martínez, Margarito Íñiguez Estrada, María Guadalupe Montoya de Chávez, and Catarino Vallín Gutiérrez, crafted a thoroughgoing defense of their barrio and rights to the city. Since the Meza article implied prime views should only be enjoyed by deserving and “decent” people, the colonos of Santa Cecilia argued they had earned it and local elites were actually the “indecent” ones.⁹¹

From that side of the city where the streets look clean, with trees, yards, and fountains that end up wasting the water that we are lacking in our colonia and in many of the other colonias around the outskirts of Guadalajara, “the city of fountains and roses.” And all of this at the expense of the work and sweat of the people that reside in these colonias, in exchange for just a few pesos that barely allows us to live... In order to make everyone feel better, we not only admire the barranca in the early mornings when the sun’s starting to come out and we’re scared we’ll arrive to work late, but we also admire the stars and the moon at midnight when we are waiting to catch a few drops of water to wash the dishes. We admire it in silence, and within us a breath of hope comes out—the hope that one day we’ll change this situation of slavery.⁹²

Conclusion

William E. French argues that morality was projected onto urban spaces in the context of northern Mexico in the early twentieth century, and competing projections proved central

⁹⁰ Author interview with Cecilia González, September 27, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁹¹ Los Colonos de Santa Cecilia, “¿Qué Pensamos Los Colonos de Sta. Cecilia sobre ‘La Belleza y la Pobreza’?” in *El Proyecto de Santa Cecilia*, Appendix A.

⁹² *Ibid.*

to processes of class formation and ongoing struggles for power.⁹³ That certain people's presence in late-twentieth-century Guadalajara's city spaces devalued and made spaces "ugly" and "dangerous" shows the prescience of French's insight. Classes congealed around hegemonic discursive constructions of "*gente bien*" as the antithesis of "*indios*," "*feos*," "*pobres*," "*cochinos*." Residents of the *colonias populares* examined in this study, particularly participants in social movement activity, adopted the strategy of self-identifying as *pobres* and inverted the attempted slurs. Through processes of migration and auto-construction of homes, they set in motion what Gómez describes as a "symbolic complex" of "deterritorialization-reterritorialization."⁹⁴ In the example of Cecilia González, her move to the "nowhere" of the "lost" city was paradoxically a transition from "nobody" to "somebody." She was born in Santa Teresita during the 1930s, just west of the Calzada Independencia. When González was seven, her mother acquired a "vacant lot" in colonia Talpita, located at the eastern edge of the city in the working-class Oblatos zone. Like her four sisters, she married as a teenager, and moved to Santa Cecilia in 1968 with her husband and ten sons. González shifted across the city from center to periphery. There in Santa Cecilia, she says, "I became famous."⁹⁵

Residents on the perimeter engaged in struggles over place(s) on both material and discursive levels, as their collective actions involved contesting portrayals of their neighborhoods in the public sphere. Peripheral citizens crafted narratives about their

⁹³ William E. French, *A Peaceful and Working People: Manners, Morals, and Class Formation in Northern Mexico* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2009), 5.

⁹⁴ Gómez, *Habitar el lugar imaginado*, 101-102.

⁹⁵ Author interview with Cecilia González, September 27, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

communities and responded to others' representations of them in public because they understood discursive constructions as important means of building and exercising power.⁹⁶

In a uniquely comprehensive study of Guadalajara's history of urban planning and development, Irma García Rojas describes city officials' constant efforts to modernize and fully integrate the region into global processes of development. Scholars and ordinary citizens, note the sharp distinction between official discourse and reality—a chasm between plans and proposals and what gets implemented.⁹⁷ García Rojas concludes Guadalajara “has had a dynamic of growth and a process of urbanization dominated by speculation and the objective of private profit, in opposition to and to the detriment of the general interest.”⁹⁸ Similarly, but articulated outside of academia, Christian base communities (CEBs) in Santa Cecilia explained,

the Municipal [Government] approved the development with all its deficiencies and allowed the sale of lots. This was also part of the business deal between the municipality and the developer... Both of them took advantage of the high demand for land that resulted from so many people coming into the city from the countryside.⁹⁹

There is little to dispute in García Rojas's and Santa Cecilia CEBs' assessments of institutional policy and practice, and one could expect to reach similar conclusions about the importance of capitalist production and accumulation, and the defense of the status quo and preservation of elite hegemony, in many Latin American cities in the twentieth

⁹⁶ Claudio Lomnitz, *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: An Anthropology of Nationalism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 169-72.

⁹⁷ García Rojas, 287.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 283.

⁹⁹ AHCEO, Documentos, “Recordando la historia de nuestra colonia,” no. 3, January 18, 1982, p. 2.

century. The implications of the official discourse's distance from reality include needing to read government documents against the grain and the necessity of a hermeneutic of suspicion toward historical newspapers that too often re-presented the state's line on pressing issues.

Spatial segregation restricted access to development's benefits in the ideal city, while facilitating class formation on the periphery, where solidarity and collective action proved essential to community survival. The history of development and modernization in Guadalajara throughout the twentieth century is a story of unrealized benefits for the overwhelming majority of the city's residents. In the interdependent relationship of center and periphery, the center and elites defined the terms of exploitation, domination, and exclusion. The periphery and the city's poor majorities negotiated and struggled for justice, redistribution, dignity, and autonomy when confronted with structural disadvantages. The ideal city and its residents and image-shapers needed the periphery, *colonias populares*, and "*la gente humilde*" as the antitheses of identities they crafted for themselves in the public sphere.

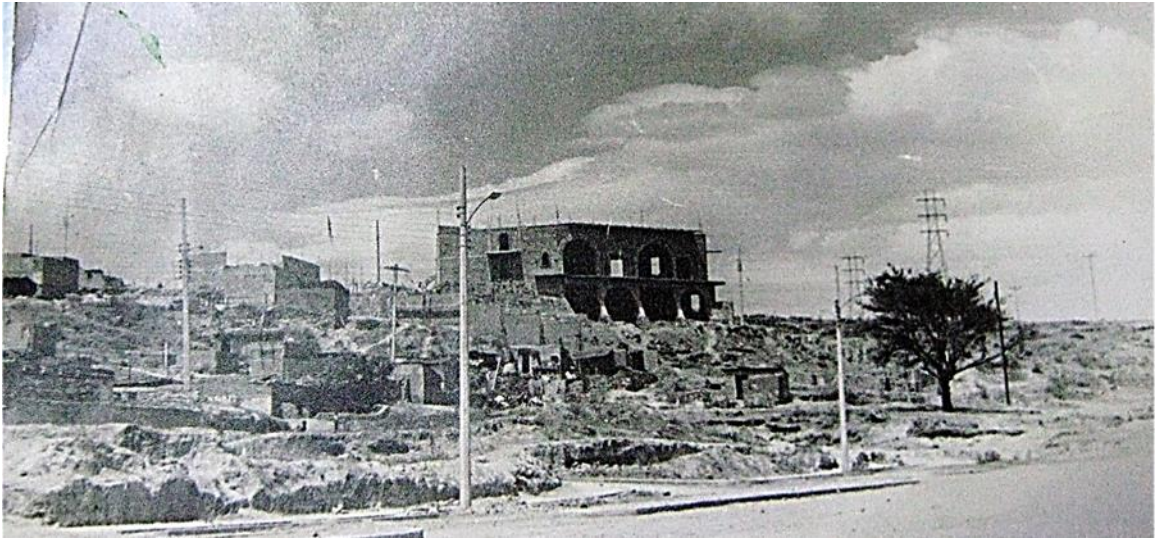


Figure 1.12. This early photo of Santa Cecilia taken from what would be the Periférico highway shows homes in the process of *autoconstrucción*, with rudimentary materials providing temporary shelter. The largest building in the background is the Sagrado Corazón nuns' first residence, dubbed "the palace" by residents for its enormous size compared to other structures in the colonia. Photo c. 1969, used by permission from Centros Educativos Oblatos.

CHAPTER II: FROM COUNTRYSIDE TO CITY, 1960-1979

How sad everything becomes, when the poor person is so poor.
 He knows his misery has a very long history.
 He keeps looking for traces of his betrayed struggle.
 -Efrén Orozco¹

Like major cities across Latin America, Guadalajara increasingly became a city of migrants in the last half of the twentieth century. By 1980, two-thirds of residents had been born elsewhere.² Why did rural people leave small towns and *ranchos* to live on the peripheries of Guadalajara during the 1960s and 1970s? Structurally, the reconfigurations of dependent capitalism and the dominance of industrial agriculture displaced significant portions of the peasantry during the so-called Mexican miracle.³ How did people experience such uprooting and transitions? How did moving from the country to the city change their lives and consciousness? Rural people moving to cities is one of the great human dramas of the twentieth century, of modernity, and of capitalism on regional, national, and global scales. How did rural migrants and displaced urban workers change the city and build up the urban environment? For the purposes of this study's focus on popular politics, how did migration to the city and the experiences of migrants contribute to a unique political culture taking shape in Guadalajara's *colonias populares* during the 1970s?

¹ Efrén Orozco, "Mañanita Serrana," *Lo que pasa en mi barrio* (Guadalajara: IMDEC, 1982), Audiocassette, Track 2.

² Mercedes González de la Rocha, *Los recursos de la pobreza. Familias de bajos ingresos de Guadalajara* (Guadalajara: CIESAS, 1986), 40.

³ Enrique C. Ochoa, *Feeding Mexico: The Political Uses of Food since 1910* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2000), 9, 127-128, 178.

In a 1975 study of the politics of rural migrants on the peripheries of Mexico City in the early 1970s, Wayne Cornelius suggested the move from the countryside to the city was itself revolutionary in Mexican contexts, even though new residents of the urban peripheries did not demonstrate particularly revolutionary politics.⁴ In the case of Guadalajara, scholars have shown the strategic nature of moves to the city's peripheries by people from the popular classes to self-construct homes on plots of land they owned (as small as those *terrenos* may have been).⁵ This chapter examines rural-to-urban migration in the 1960s and 1970s and how people experienced those processes. It attempts to shed light on social and cultural clashes and continuities in historical contexts of rapid transformation, as well as highlight important changes to the city, its politics, and identity.

To address these questions and issues in the particular context of Guadalajara, I draw from a range of narratives by historical actors— interviews with residents of Santa Cecilia and Barrio del Perdón; audio of songs performed in *colonias populares*; *historietas* from street newspaper *El Alipuz*;⁶ the writings of Jesuit priest Arnaldo Zenteno, IMDEC founder and popular educator Carlos Núñez, and Santa Cecilia community leaders; and mainstream media outlets representing middle class, elite, and

⁴ Wayne A. Cornelius, *Politics and the Migrant Poor in Mexico City* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975).

⁵ On the survival strategies of poor households in Guadalajara in the 1980s, see González de la Rocha, *Los recursos de la pobreza*. On the strategic aspects of moving to *colonias populares*, see Elba Noemí Gómez Gómez, *Habitar el lugar imaginado: formas de construir la ciudad desde un proyecto educativo político* (Guadalajara: ITESO, 2011), 61-124.

⁶ A *historieta* is a comic book style narration that unfolds over numerous episodes, usually featuring archetypal characters from a common social imagination. For more, see Irene Hemer, *Mitos y monitos. Historietas y fotonovelas en México* (Mexico: Editorial Nueva Imagen, 1979).

official viewpoints. Privileging the experience of ordinary people and the human capacity to learn and know from experience—echoing epistemological emphases in liberation theology and Freirian popular education—in this chapter, I trace the initial stages in the processual development of popular political cultures in one Mexican city. The chapter is organized and evidence presented in a mostly narrative format, with profiles of several residents of colonias populares that draw on their memories of experiences of migration and getting established in the city during the 1960s and 1970s. The chapter also introduces several colonias and explores living conditions in spaces on the city’s peripheries.

After World War II, “export-oriented industrial agriculture devastated traditional farming” in much of Latin America.⁷ Tom Angotti describes a “gigantic land grab” by global capital in rural Latin America at mid-century. Given massive displacement of rural people and the real-estate speculation bonanza on the edges of cities, struggles for urban land and spaces became “fundamentally community and class struggles.”⁸ As opportunities dried up in the Mexican countryside during the 1950s and 1960s, many people got word of better conditions in major cities and the United States. But their dreams often did not materialize in either destination. Víctor Quintana, community organizer for Servicios Educativos de Occidente (SEDOC) in Guadalajara during the 1970s and 1980s, wrote at the time, “In reality, rural underdevelopment is being transferred to urban underemployment.”⁹ Studies of colonias populares in Guadalajara

⁷ Tom Angotti, “Introduction: Urban Latin America: Violence, Enclaves, and Struggles for Land,” *Latin American Perspectives* 40, no. 2 (March 2013), 8.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

during the early twenty-first century contend recent generations of migrants often experience even more debilitating poverty in their new urban settings.¹⁰

Historians Paul Gillingham and Benjamin Smith describe migration to cities as a phenomenon of “the rarest brand of change” affecting “longue durée patterns” in the history of twentieth century Mexico.¹¹ Campesinos did not simply accept their apparent misfortune in processes of structural adjustment. By 1960, more Mexicans lived in cities than in the countryside. But mid-century economic growth excluded the expanding populations of urban poor, who were “forced to earn low wages in a (largely unmeasured) informal economy.”¹² Life and work in the countryside further deteriorated during the last two decades of the twentieth century, when Mexico’s accelerated neoliberal economic restructuring of the 1980s and 1990s drove scores of people to cities and the United States.¹³ In modern Mexican history, processes of migration from the countryside to the city have been both episodic and continual. This chapter contextualizes and shows some implications of migration to Guadalajara in the 1960s and 1970s.

⁹ Biblioteca ITESO, Acervo General, Víctor M. Quintana, “Educación popular y movimientos reivindicativos urbanos. El caso de Santa Margarita,” (Guadalajara: Servicios Educativos de Occidente, A.C., 1980), 39.

¹⁰ Rocío Enríquez-Rosas, *El crisol de la pobreza: mujeres, subjetividades, emociones y redes sociales* (Tlaquepaque: ITESO, 2009), 22.

¹¹ Paul Gillingham and Benjamin T. Smith, “Introduction: The Paradoxes of Revolution,” in *Dictablanda: Politics, Work, and Culture in Mexico, 1938-1968*, eds. Paul Gillingham and Benjamin T. Smith (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 10-12.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Jaime M. Pensado and Enrique C. Ochoa, “Preface,” in *Mexico Beyond 1968: Revolutionaries, Radicals, and Repression during the Global Sixties and the Subversive Seventies*, eds. Jaime M. Pensado and Enrique C. Ochoa (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2018), ix.

In Guadalajara, structural conditions and elite decision-making gave rise to an urbanization process that created extensive marginal and peripheral areas. In 1960, inadequate housing and high rent plagued central parts of the city. More low-income people lived in the city center prior to the downtown renovation and commercialization projects of the 1950s and 1960s. Over a few decades time in the mid-twentieth-century, Guadalajara saw “the repurposing of urban spaces previously occupied by low-income residents.”¹⁴ Though the urban renewal program displaced the lower classes from centrally located zones, many young families unable to afford rent in traditional working-class areas east of the Calzada Independencia chose to live in colonias populares around the peripheries of the city as a strategy for achieving economic independence and stability. Former country folk and lower-class city residents proved eager to have their own piece of land and family home.

Sociologists and anthropologists stress the heterogeneity of the popular classes in the metropolitan area during the late twentieth century. This capacious precariat class was composed of factory workers, domestic workers, service industry employees, construction workers, and a host of others who ran their own informal businesses.¹⁵ By the 1970s, the lower-class majorities in Guadalajara included nearly equal parts lifelong city-dwellers and rural people new to the urban scene. Even as we stress the diversity of the lower-class majority of the city’s residents, we can identify significant commonalities

¹⁴ Elba Noemí Gómez Gómez and Jaime Torres Guillen, “Análisis sociohistórico de Lomas de Polanco,” Unpublished manuscript (2015), p. 38.

¹⁵ Agustín Escobar and Guillermo de la Peña, “Introducción,” in *Crisis, conflicto y sobrevivencia: estudios sobre la sociedad urbana en México*, eds. Guillermo de la Peña, et al. (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1990), 19.

among people living in colonias populares across the peripheries. In processes of class formation among the majoritarian urban poor—everyone outside the upper and middle classes—in the 1970s and 1980s, myriad factors shaped individual and collective identities.¹⁶

The material and visual cultures permeating everyday life in colonias on Guadalajara's peripheries during the early stages of a neighborhood's establishment contributed to shaping identities and political subjectivities. In the spaces of the peripheries, transformations wrought by the urbanization process were on clear display. Landscapes of rurality remain imprinted on the memories of many residents. On the edges of the city during the 1960s and 1970s, they constantly viewed scenery typically associated with rural life. Residents inhabited landscapes that read as snapshots of stages of urbanization. They describe landscapes in their colonias during the early years as *llano* (plain), *cerro* (hills), *campestre* (country), *todo solo* (all alone), *bajada* (slope), and *barranca* (canyon). In the first years of Santa Cecilia's existence during the late 1960s and early 1970s, for example, incomplete constructions of adobe and brick, pieces of cardboard, and enormous stones and piles of earth around the colonia populated the landscape near Oblatos Canyon (Barranca de Oblatos). The landscapes and spaces framing community life included the Periférico bypass, canyons on the eastern fringe, hills around the southern outskirts, church and school facilities, corner stores, sidewalks,

¹⁶ See Alejandro Portes and Kelly Hoffman, "Latin American Class Structures: Their Composition and Change During the Neoliberal Era," *Latin American Research Review* 38, no. 1 (Winter 2003), 52; and Rafael López Rangel, *Marginación y vivienda en Guadalajara* (Mexico City: Centro de Ecodesarrollo, 1987), 60. Portes and Hoffman put 71% of the population in Mexico in this group, while López Rangel situates 60% of people in Guadalajara during the 1980s in this majority of the urban lower classes. According to State of Jalisco statistics published in 1973, 60% of the city's residents lived below the poverty line.

streets, bus stops, and buses. Narratives and representations of these urban spaces and landscapes tell us about the relationship between place and identity— what it means to belong to a place.

A significant portion of this expansive, heterogeneous precariat class united around the shared experience of building their own homes on the difficult terrains of the city's peripheries. During the 1960s and 1970s, most Mexicans could not access housing through the formal market. An enormous deficit in supply generated social problems across the country. Public housing offerings from the Institute of the National Fund for Worker Housing (INFONAVIT)—a federal agency created in 1972 during Luis Echeverría's presidency—proved too expensive for most workers.¹⁷ In Guadalajara and other Mexican cities, irregular settlements of residents who built their own homes functioned effectively in supplying a cheap, on-site labor force.

Though working-class and poor people faced socio-spatial exclusion from above in the city's development and urban policymaking, they turned territorial limitations into advantages and sources of solidarity. The culture of reciprocity infusing informal social networks in many colonias populares influenced the urban popular movement and its praxis and contributed to the pervasiveness and relative success of auto-construction settlements in Guadalajara.¹⁸ Building on that culture during the late 1960s and 1970s, community organizations and cooperatives supported the auto-construction phenomenon

¹⁷ John Walton, "Guadalajara: Creating the Divided City," in *Metropolitan Latin America: The Challenge and the Response*, Latin American Urban Research series, vol. 6, eds. Wayne A. Cornelius and Robert V. Kemper (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1978), 44.

¹⁸ Gómez and Torres, 44-50.

locally. At both local and national scales, the urban popular movement that began in the 1970s remained intimately connected to struggles for housing for another two decades.

***“El campo está bonito, pero...”*: Moving to the City**

The street newspaper *El Alipuz* in Santa Cecilia during the 1970s featured the *historieta* of the Chin-Chentavoz family, an unfolding cartoon drama inspired by the common experiences of residents.¹⁹ Santa Cecilia’s popular theater group also performed episodes of the Chin-Chentavoz family’s story in the colonia and around the city.

Migration from countryside to city was the “first experience narrated and written by the first theater group” in the colonia, according to IMDEC’s Carlos Núñez.²⁰ In the September 30, 1973 edition of *El Alipuz*, the family’s story begins with the opening line: “Things had gone from bad to worse at home” in the countryside. Pancho, the twenty-something son, dreams of a way out. He concludes staying there is not an option, since “there was only problems and misery.” Pancho first contemplates going north to the United States for work and discusses the possibility with his father and grandfather. The grandfather reminds Pancho of his stint in the U.S. as a *bracero* and how he did not reap the imagined benefits. After spending two years working in the U.S., he “returned without one single cent.” Pancho’s grandfather and Chinto, his father, counsel patience with life in the countryside because the ejidal representative recently promised their piece

¹⁹ The first few editions of *El Alipuz* in 1973 solicited Santa Cecilia residents’ help in naming the *historieta*’s family. The winning entry was “Chin-Chentatvoz,” which sounds like “*sin centavos*,” or “without cents.”

²⁰ ITESO University Library Special Collections, Fondo Carlos Núñez (ITESO-FCN), D-1211, Carlos Núñez H., “El caso de Santa Cecilia: sistematización de una experiencia concreta,” IMDEC, 1981, p. 7.

of land was coming soon. Pancho criticizes the older generations of men, while his mother Lucha understands the need for change and quietly agrees with her son.²¹

The Chin-Chentavoz family left the countryside because they could not make enough money to support themselves with low-wage agricultural work. They also urgently needed medical care for their sick youngest child, Pascual. “Let’s go to the city,” Pancho proposes to everyone. “It will go better for us there.” Chinto snaps back, “And what are we going to do there? If we’re doing bad here, in the city we’ll die of hunger.”²² After several more episodes of the *historieta*, family members finally reach a consensus about moving to Guadalajara. A subsequent scene in *El Alipuz* features Chinto by himself in the fields he toiled for decades, the day before they leave, talking to the land like a dear friend. “But the *tierra* didn’t answer him a word,” the narrator interjects. “It was an old, dried up *tierra*, with little sign of life. Chinto felt sad for her.”²³ Then *El Alipuz* portrayed the family leaving the countryside for the city. Chinto says goodbye to his skeptical but well-wishing *compadre*. “Now everyone was ready to leave,” the narrator tells us in the closing scene of the episode. “They put Pascual on the *burro*, and they started walking toward the highway. They were on the way to the city, and with each step they said goodbye to the land where they had always lived” (see fig. 2.1).²⁴

²¹ Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Guadalajara (AHAG), Gobierno, Parroquias, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, *El Alipuz* 5, September 30, 1973.

²² AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, *El Alipuz* 6, October 14, 1973, pp. 4-5.

²³ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, *El Alipuz* 12, February 10, 1974, p. 4.

²⁴ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, *El Alipuz* 18, September 1, 1974, pp. 4-6.

Emotional and mental dimensions of historical actors' experiences can be difficult to identify with confidence, especially from conventional documentary sources. The form and performative elements of oral history narratives open a window onto those fields. Popular print sources like *El Alipuz* offered representations of shared experiences and evoked feelings through storytelling and the illustrations of local artist Cancho Ayala. In one scene depicted by Ayala, the grandfather in the Chin-Chentavoz family expresses profound *tristeza* (sadness) to his granddaughter, after she overhears him talking alone to the tierra. "He who leaves the tierra leaves behind half of his life," the elderly man laments (see fig. 2.2).²⁵ Rural migrants in post-revolutionary Mexican history struggled with material conditions and the emotional weight of leaving everything they knew in the countryside. They ventured outside of their experience by leaving one place, then arrived in the new place on the edge of the city grasping for belonging and seeking social support. Mental illnesses were constant in processes of migration.²⁶

Residents of Santa Cecilia who participated in Christian base communities during the 1970s and 1980s periodically sought to reconstruct a baseline narrative of their colonia's history. "We remember what we have done so that it is not forgotten," they reasoned, "and it gives us greater motivation." Sagrado Corazón nuns and community residents reflected together in a series of group meetings during 1981 and 1982, where they produced one straightforward account of people's departure from the countryside in the post-World War II era.

²⁵ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, *El Alipuz* 13, February 24, 1974, p. 3.

²⁶ Andrés Ríos Molina, "Indigencia, migración y locura en el México posrevolucionario," *Historia Mexicana* 59, no. 4 (April-June 2010), 1319.

After 1950, many people started leaving the countryside and came to Guadalajara. Many came from other small towns in the state of Jalisco, and other people came from neighboring states. This happened because of problems with land in the countryside, and because of the city's attractiveness in offering more opportunities for work and survival.²⁷

²⁷ AHCEO, CEBs de Santa Cecilia, "Recordando la historia de nuestra colonia" #3, January 18, 1982.



Figure 2.1. Scenes from the Chin-Chintavoz family story in *El Alipuz*, drawings by Santa Cecilia resident Cancho Ayala. The family is leaving the countryside for the city, Guadalajara. In the top scene, Chinto says goodbye to a friend. "Goodbye compadre. I hope to see you over there some day. I'll send you our address soon." "That's good compa. May God be with you." Below, family members walk to the highway to wait for a bus. "Later, Chinto arrived back to his house. Everyone was already ready to leave. They put Pascual on the donkey and they started walking toward the highway. They were on the way to the city, and with each step they were saying goodbye to that land where they had always lived." Image courtesy of the Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Guadalajara.



Figure 2.2. A scene from the Chin-Chentavoz family’s saga in *El Alipuz*. Here the grandfather character is gripped with profound sadness as he reckons with the necessity of leaving the countryside. As he looks around the land, *el abuelo* reflects, “I’ve gotten all my children’s names from here. This place has given me food and all my memories. It’s impossible to leave it all without a piece of myself dying.”

This latest partial exodus from the countryside in western Mexico resulted in part from long-term processes of industrialization outside of major cities that began near the turn of the twentieth century and accelerated into the 1940s and 1950s. Small landholders and subsistence farmers across the region watched opportunities dry up in rural zones. In Nayarit, a small state bordering Jalisco to the northwest, the Mexican government weighed in to favor large landholders and companies while withholding agricultural subsidies from most campesinos and indigenous peoples.²⁸ Rural people came to Guadalajara “fundamentally in order to improve their job opportunities and living circumstances,” according to home surveys conducted in low-income barrios from 1972 and 1986.²⁹

Base community participants and Sagrado Corazón nuns in Santa Cecilia crafted a collective narrative of the colonia’s history on the occasion of its fifteenth anniversary in 1983. In the opening paragraphs, they wrote,

Some of us already lived here, in other colonias, renting a room or living in really ugly *vecindades* or staying with relatives. But the majority of us came directly from our pueblos and ranchos. We were all looking for work, and there they were saying that everything was different here, that there was a way to earn a living, to have doctors and schools, and make money... Basically, that it would be easier for us to survive.³⁰

²⁸ Verónica Castillo-Muñoz, “Historical Roots of Rural Migration: Land Reform, Corn Credit, and the Displacement of Rural Farmers in Nayarit, Mexico, 1900-1952,” *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 29, no. 1 (Winter 2013): 36-60.

²⁹ Jesús Arroyo Alejandro and Luis A. Velázquez, “La migración hacia Guadalajara: algunas comparaciones de las encuestas de hogares de 1972 y 1986,” in *Crisis, conflicto y sobrevivencia: estudios sobre la sociedad urbana en México*, eds. Guillermo de la Peña, et al. (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1990), 25.

³⁰ AHCEO, CEBs de una colonia suburbana 1970-1985, “Historia de nuestra comunidad, 1970-1985,” *Christus* (March 1986): 1-7.

Agustín Pérez, one of the first residents of the colonia popular of Santa Rosa, narrated the change from countryside to city when interviewed in the late 1970s. He stressed the disadvantages of rural life, while indicating continued connections between residents of the urban periphery and pueblos and ranchos of the hinterlands.

The countryside is really nice. I mean, it's good when you want to go back to visit, have some fun, go see some relatives. But you don't want to live there, because we don't have any communities, and we've never had money for us to live in decent communities... You know, there the thing is finding some piece of land to live on. You have to find some *tierrita* and a little space to grow something beside it. But it's very uncertain because sometimes they give you a chance to plant, or they give you a job— or sometimes they don't give you any work. So what are you supposed to do? You have to eat every day. And that's the reason we're waiting, because it's happened to us before that we've hoped for what the government promised us, and that day has never arrived. A government comes in, and as soon as they get there, it's the same thing. They give us nothing but *puras promesas*.³¹

For most rural people in the Centro-Occidente region of Mexico, the countryside became a place that lacked networks of mutual support and solidarity, access to land, and basic material necessities. Many felt they had better odds of finding those essentials or organizing to obtain them in Guadalajara. After arriving to the city and being excluded from most of its economic and social benefits, Pérez and a growing number of lower-class residents living on the city's peripheries stressed the state's responsibility to them as citizens. But in the history of their interactions with politicians and governments, the continuity across administrations—and across rural and urban contexts—was unfulfilled promises from above.

³¹ Efrén Orozco, "Mañanita Serrana," *Lo que pasa en mi barrio* (Guadalajara: IMDEC, 1982) Audiocassette, Track 1. I use a pseudonym for the interviewee.

For the popular classes, state policy after 1940 fed a shift in urban Mexico from rental housing in central areas to “self-help” ownership on the periphery.³² Urban planning and policymaking, and maneuvering by real estate interests, shaped the development of the periphery as precarious space. A crucial component in Guadalajara’s urbanization was the influence of big business on the city’s construction and development after 1940. In 1943, the Municipal Collaboration Council of Guadalajara was created, an entity that played a key role in the solidification and consistent predominance of private, business, and elite interests in decision-making processes.³³ At the same time, three or four real estate firms began to dominate the speculative market on the city’s outskirts.³⁴

The 1950s saw significant uptick in new colonias across the city, with seventy-three settlements registered that decade. State officials expanded the limits of urban Guadalajara to include the municipalities of Zapopan to the west and Tlaquepaque to the south. The 1960s brought more accelerated growth, with one hundred twenty-three new settlements established. The municipality of Tonalá to the southeast was added to the metropolitan zone in 1964.³⁵ Irregular settlements began in the 1960s in Guadalajara, but they grew more rapidly during the early 1970s.³⁶ With the incorporation of ejidal lands and their sale, illegal settlements multiplied in Guadalajara during the 1970s. The

³² Alan Gilbert and Ann Varley, *Landlord and Tenant: Housing the Poor in Urban Mexico* (London: Routledge, 1991), 14, 43.

³³ López Rangel, 62-63.

³⁴ Quintana, 64.

³⁵ Beatriz Núñez Miranda, “Conformación socio-espacial de Guadalajara entre 1910 y 1990,” in *El crecimiento urbano de Guadalajara*, Águeda Jiménez Pelayo, Jaime Olveda, and Beatriz Núñez Miranda, eds. (Zapopan: El Colegio de Jalisco, 1995), 229.

³⁶ Gómez and Torres, 38.

Mexican government set up the legal framework to regularize such settlements with the creation of the Commission for the Regularization of Land Tenancy (CORETT) at the federal level in 1973, and the passage of the Federal Law on Human Settlements in 1976.³⁷ Further exacerbating the city's existing socio-spatial polarization, since roughly 1970 big businesses and elites created malls and commercial plazas on the west side of Guadalajara and ceded downtown and colonias populares to informal vendors and *tianguis*.³⁸

A 2016 article in the local daily newspaper *El Informador* describes the colonia of Lomas de Polanco as one of fifty-one zones of the city “considered ‘no-man’s-land.’” Near the southern industrial zone and the Cerro del Cuatro, Lomas de Polanco sat on the edge of the city during the 1960s and 1970s. Layers of more recently created colonias populares beyond it to the south shifted its relative positioning miles inside the metropolitan zone’s limits. Many residents of Lomas de Polanco still live in “legal uncertainty,”³⁹ having made their homes on ejidal lands sold at least twice. The battle for property titles continues fifty years later. Carlos Quezada bought a lot from developer Jaime Lozano Gómez in 1967. Unbeknownst to Quezada, scam-artist Alfonso Pelayo Ramírez purchased that and many other lots in the colonia years earlier. Forty years later

³⁷ Guillermo de la Peña, “Políticas sociales, intermediación y participación popular en Guadalajara,” *Estudios Demográficos y Urbanos* (May 1998), 415.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 416. *Tianguis* are open-air markets.

³⁹ *El Informador*, “Aquejan estafadores a la colonia Lomas de Polanco,” June 31, 2016, <http://www.informador.com.mx/jalisco/2008/32432/1/aquejan-estafadores-a-la-colonia-lomas-de-polanco.htm>.

in 2007, a court order displaced Quezada from his home. Martina Robles Reyes also bought a lot from Lozano Gómez, and she recalled the developer's shady dealings.

At the point when you finished paying and you would ask him for the titles, he would pick up all the documents, and he would tell you to come back later to do the titles. When you came back again, none of your documents were there anymore. This happened to many older people from here.⁴⁰

Longtime Santa Rosa resident Efrén Orozco performed the song “Los fraccionadores” (the developers) with his band in Guadalajara during the 1970s and 1980s. Lyrics describe the dirty dealings of developers and real-estate firms in the beginnings of colonias populares. As the above case of Lomas de Polanco illustrates, injustices committed by *los fraccionadores*, “the ones in the suit and tie,”⁴¹ produced situations of permanent instability for residents of the peripheries. A chasm existed between what residents were told and sold when purchasing lots from developers and what they got in reality. Santa Cecilia residents were promised a “totally urbanized” colonia, with “abundant water,” sidewalks, parks, and buses.⁴² Though infrastructure plans and “authorization to begin urbanization works in the colonia was given in 1967,” CEB groups reported in 1982, “in reality it has never been finished— services of water, drainage, lighting, pavement, etc.”⁴³ The developer obtained the municipal government's

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Orozco, “Los fraccionadores,” *Lo que pasa en mi barrio*, Track 5.

⁴² AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, *El Alipuz*, #2, July 29, 1973, pp. 4-5.

⁴³ AHCEO, CEO Documents, “Recordanado la historia de nuestra colonia,” #3, January 18, 1982.

permission to create 1,264 lots in Santa Cecilia. But the firm sold 4,814 lots, condemning the colonia to chronic infrastructure woes and inordinately dense population.⁴⁴

Jesuit priest Arnaldo Zenteno emphasized the “oppression” of “unjust contracts” weighing on people in Santa Cecilia. “If they fall three payments behind, they can cancel their contract, and what they have constructed is turned over to the developer for not complying with the contract.”⁴⁵ The option of paying in monthly installments over six years made it possible for poor people to buy a piece of land, but residents soon concluded “it is also a business for the developer.” Organized Santa Cecilia residents asserted the municipal government had an extralegal arrangement with the developer to forego urbanization requirements in practice. “Both of them took advantage of the huge demand for plots of land because of the arrival of so many people from the country to the city,” they wrote.⁴⁶ Popular educator and architect Carlos Núñez described Santa Cecilia as “typical” of *fraccionamientos populares* (popular subdivisions) promoted by the dominant class as “semi-urbanized land” lacking urban services. He emphasized the scheme’s legality, as it depended on the “complicity of the authorities.”⁴⁷ Local scholars of housing issues in Guadalajara during the 1980s pointed out the Ley de Fraccionamientos looked good on paper but was mostly ignored in practice. Santa Cecilia

⁴⁴ Ibid. This data obtained from the *ayuntamiento* (municipal government) was published on the frontpage of *El Alipuz* #25 in 1975.

⁴⁵ Arnaldo Zenteno, S.J., *Encuentro con el pueblo y evangelización liberadora: búsqueda y experiencias de evangelización en una colonia popular* (Mexico City: Imprenta Mexicana, 1974), 14.

⁴⁶ AHCEO, CEO Documents, “Recordando la historia de nuestra colonia,” #3, January 18, 1982.

⁴⁷ Carlos Núñez H., *Educar para transformar, transformar para educar*, 10th Edition (Guadalajara: IMDEC, 1996), 182.

and Lomas de Polanco are paradigmatic local examples of ignoring and violating the Ley de Fraccionamientos.⁴⁸

Just west of Santa Cecilia in the northeastern quadrant of the metropolitan area, colonias within El Señor del Perdón parish territory underwent similar processes. Colonia Vicente Guerrero got established in 1950 on the edge of the city. Residents went without water service for twenty years before finally securing *agua potable* in 1970. Developers began selling lots in Santa Rosa colonia, an ejidal zone “absorbed by the city,” in 1963. Spanning thirty-four blocks, Santa Rosa did have water and drainage. But residents went without streetlights and traversed dirt roads into the 1970s. Parish priest Francisco Ortiz described people in Santa Rosa as “generally of campesino origin, very poor, religious, [and] uneducated.”⁴⁹ Parish priest Jesús Madrid designated that colonia the “most marginal” zone in El Perdón territory.⁵⁰ In 1967, San Vicente became the newest colonia in the parish. San Vicente had streetlights, water, drainage, cobblestone streets, and trash pickup. The lots there were even smaller, however, some just 4 x 15 meters. Ortiz characterized San Vicente residents as mostly from “los ranchos” and possessing “no special skills,” with “plenty of bricklayers (*albañiles*)” among them. Residents made payments on their lots through “great sacrifice,” and Ortiz described them as “healthy, happy people” who appeared “open to the Word of God.”⁵¹

⁴⁸ Jorge Regalado Santillán, “El movimiento popular independiente en Guadalajara,” *Perspectivas de los movimientos sociales en la región Centro-Occidente*, ed. Jaime Tamayo (Mexico City: Editorial Línea, 1986), 124.

⁴⁹ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias, Parroquias Urbanas, El Señor del Perdón, 1973-1981, *Informe de la actividad pastoral de la parroquia de El Señor del Perdón, agosto 1970—agosto 1973*, Anexo no. 2, p. 2.

⁵⁰ Biblioteca ITESO, Acervo General, Jesús Madrid and Roberto Gómez, “El Proyecto Parroquial del Perdón,” in *El Proyecto de Santa Cecilia*, Guadalajara, c. 1989.

Many young couples moved their families to Santa Rosa in the 1970s. Jorge Aguilar migrated from his rancho to the city for educational opportunities. The countryside offered “no way to study,” and Aguilar found possibilities in Guadalajara. When narrating his transition from rural Jalisco to the state capital, he quickly shifted to the reality experienced since arriving,

In the city, for the rich, they have it all. For us, the poor, the jobs don’t pay like they should. We have fewer services, whether it’s police patrols, transportation, electricity, streetlights, water, everything— drainage. How many floods have we had here in this residential area? And they were over in Chapalita colonia— well, they were going around over there with water and sewer. And here, there’s nothing.⁵²

Community organizations conducted research in 1974 and estimated that more than 50,000 new residents came to Guadalajara every year.⁵³ The cover of a July 1974 edition of *El Alipuz* depicts migrants’ arrival to the city, “The residents were all coming from their former lands, and they did not know each other.” Artist Cancho Ayala, who lived in Santa Cecilia and worked as a *carbonero* (coal vendor), created the illustrations representing rural Mexicans entering the city in sandals and sombreros; men wearing long mustaches; women with children clinging to them; with farm animals in tow (see fig. 2.3).⁵⁴

⁵¹ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias, Parroquias Urbanas, El Señor del Perdón, 1973-1981, *Informe de la actividad pastoral de la parroquia de El Señor del Perdón, agosto 1970—agosto 1973*, Anexo no. 2, p. 2.

⁵² Orozco, “Señor Turista,” *Lo que pasa en mi barrio*, Track 7. Pseudonym used for interviewee. Chapalita is one of the city’s most affluent neighborhoods, located just west of downtown.

⁵³ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, *El Alipuz* 17, August 18, 1974, p. 1.

⁵⁴ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, *El Alipuz*, 16, July 7, 1974, p. 1.



Figure 2.3. Frontpage of July 7, 1974 edition of street newspaper *El Alipuz*. Image courtesy of Archivo Historico de la Arquidiocesis de Guadalajara.

MANUEL M. PONCE 2795
STA. CECILIA.

4

PLANOS Y MATERIALES SA.

LANOS Y

- CONSEJOS PARA QUE USTED CONSTRUYA MEJOR Y MAS BARATO.
- INFORMACIÓN DE CÓMO Y DÓNDE PUEDE SACAR SUS PERMISOS DE CONSTRUCCIÓN.
- DIBUJO DE PLANOS.




SURTIDO EN MATERIALES PARA:

- ELECTRICIDAD
- FONTANERIA
- CONSTRUCCION

A PRECIOS MÁS BAJOS
Y CON SERVICIO A DOMICILIO.

¡POR UNA VIVIENDA MEJOR!

Figure 2.4. Promotional page for Planos y Materiales construction materials cooperative in *El Alipuz*, 1974. Courtesy of Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Guadalajara.

Santa Cecilia resident, CEB participant, and eventual IMDEC staff member

Margarito Íñiguez narrated the colonia's beginnings,

Those of us just arriving— workers, many times without specialization, looking for work where there was some, even in subcontracted jobs, maquilas... Obviously, these people, we didn't know each other. There was no interpersonal relationship, and there was a lot of distrust between each other. There wasn't anything at the level of neighbors, much less more broadly speaking in terms of organization.⁵⁵

David Velasco, a Jesuit priest who served his novitiate year in Santa Cecilia in 1971, describes the first residents as “mostly campesinos.” In the auto-construction process and poverty of the urban peripheries, many people chose between eating and building their homes. Velasco recalls a pattern of “eat one week and build one week.”⁵⁶ Rural people from western Mexico had strong traditions of valuing ownership of a small plot of land and were accustomed to auto-construction processes prior to coming to Guadalajara.⁵⁷

Carlos Núñez, who trained as an architect, offered the following analysis of the auto-construction phenomenon in Santa Cecilia,

The process of physical settlement by the residents was realized in the vast majority of cases through their own efforts, without much guidance and with many limitations. It was truly dynamic, and the physical form it acquired in each case reflected the cultural interpretation of how residents understood and expressed their vision of housing and the habitat in which it was being developed.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Biblioteca ITESO, Acervo General, Margarito Íñiguez, “El Proyecto de Santa Cecilia en los 70's,” in *El Proyecto de Santa Cecilia*, Guadalajara, c. 1987, p. 1.

⁵⁶ David Velasco, S.J., Homily during 50th Anniversary Celebration, Santa Cecilia, Guadalajara, November 1, 2018.

⁵⁷ Gilbert and Varley, 79.

⁵⁸ Núñez, *Educación para transformar*, 186.

Núñez was the director of the community organization IMDEC, and their work in Santa Cecilia included operating a construction materials cooperative. Through the materials cooperative, IMDEC provided residents technical assistance with surveying, blueprints and plans, and advice on codes and permits. Most importantly, they sold construction materials to residents for a small fraction of the price paid on the commercial market. Planos y Materiales, S.A. remained in operation from 1973 to 1978 in Santa Cecilia, supplying scores of auto-constructed homes with electrical wiring, plumbing supplies, and a range of construction materials (see fig. 2.4).

In the early 1970s, Jesuit priest Arnaldo Zenteno described Santa Cecilia as “marginal” and “popular,” but also as a “new, dynamic colonia.”⁵⁹ Estimates from contemporary sources vary, but after five years, the colonia’s population was between 25,000 and 35,000 in 1973.⁶⁰ Santa Cecilia was a “simple and open colonia,” Zenteno wrote, “like the people who have come from the countryside to construct it and live there.”⁶¹ Low wages, underemployment, and a lack of basic urban services characterized the obstacles for residents. “There is not a single telephone,” the young Jesuit observed, “letters cost fifty cents to receive, telegrams two pesos; half the colonia doesn’t have water during the day; there was no trash service for two years; nor police (is that actually a benefit?).”⁶²

⁵⁹ Zenteno, 13.

⁶⁰ See Zenteno, 13; AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, *El Alipuz*, 16, July 7, 1974, p. 1 (see fig. 2.3); and Núñez, *Educar para transformar*, 182. Each referring to Santa Cecilia’s population in 1973: Zenteno 25,000, *El Alipuz* 30,000, and Núñez 35,000.

⁶¹ Zenteno, 13.

⁶² *Ibid*, 14.

In 1969, María de Jesús Ledesma left her rancho near Arandas in the Los Altos region of Jalisco and moved south to Santa Cecilia in Guadalajara. She and her partner chose the colonia because her uncle lived there already, and lots were for sale with installment payments. They found a small plot on Salome Aguirre Street and began constructing their house “little by little.” The couple arrived with one child, got married in the city and had nine more. Santa Cecilia had few houses and many empty lots in 1969. But construction of the parish temple had begun and Sagrado Corazón nuns already lived there and worked with reflection groups across the steadily populating colonia. Ledesma instantly gravitated to the nuns and the array of religious activities. In her rancho, she always participated in parish meetings and masses, and prayed the rosary. Ledesma’s mother put her in charge of the rosary for the rancho when she was just ten. In Santa Cecilia, she became a *catequista* and *promotora* of base communities.⁶³

The example of María de Jesús Ledesma illustrates the continuities of identity and cultural practice from rural to urban life for migrants in the region. She continued active devotional practices and lay participation via the parish and other Catholic groups, perpetuating aspects of her formative experiences in the rancho. Ledesma did not strictly separate the religious from the political or private from public in her thinking. In Santa Cecilia and other colonias populares surveyed here, *fiestas patronales* and other public religious and cultural expressions were frequent and collective efforts that remain etched in people’s memories. After nearly a decade of living and working Santa Cecilia, popular education guru Carlos Núñez viewed the fiestas patronales each November as a crucial

⁶³ Author interview with María de Jesús Ledesma, February 7, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

means by which former campesinos turned city dwellers “rediscovers their cultural identity, creating a sense of belonging to the new venue: the barrio.”⁶⁴

In 1970, Ampelia Orozco left the town of Cocula, Jalisco, about thirty-five miles southwest of Guadalajara, and moved to the city with her husband and seven children. They rented in the working-class colonia Talpita initially, then transitioned to another rental in San Onofre, a colonia popular bordering Santa Cecilia to the south. The couple heard of lots for sale in Santa Cecilia and bought one at the colonia’s lower end (*abajo*) toward the barranca. Orozco remembers the short drive from San Onofre in a truck loaded with family possessions. They passed the roundabout on Calzada Obreros, then turned left onto Joaquin Amaro Avenue and marveled at the spacious, new street running the length of the neighborhood. Most of the colonia was occupied by residents at various stages of home construction. Further “abajo” toward the barranca, families lived in provisional one-room shelters.⁶⁵

The family purchased their particular lot in Santa Cecilia because Orozco’s uncle lived next door. Their lot remained untouched, overgrown with weeds and littered with trash. Nevertheless, the seven children were quite happy to be there. Affective bonds with relatives sustained many residents emotionally in contexts of dire material conditions. Orozco wonders how her family of nine would have survived without the multifaceted support of extended family members.⁶⁶ Emotional bonds and mutual aid between relatives provided lifelines for low-income people just starting out in the city.

⁶⁴ Núñez, *Educación para transformar*, 226.

⁶⁵ Author interview with Ampelia Orozco, November 30, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

Some families wasted no time setting the auto-construction process in motion. Orozco's husband levelled out the uneven and rocky terrain, making impressive progress the first day. Orozco's uncle helped after returning from work that day, and they completed a one-room structure (*cuartito*) covered by a sheet of cardboard for that first night. Family members made bricks and built a small kitchen the next day. Most kids worked alongside the adults. Orozco's husband had experience with tasks required in home construction, like many men in Santa Cecilia during the 1970s. Orozco recalls running cables and hoses, connecting to sources of electricity and water, and "not lacking anything" in the new setting on the peripheries.⁶⁷

On housing conditions in the early years, CEB members in Santa Cecilia later recalled,

The first of us to arrive found a desolate, rocky piece of land, full of shrubs... When it rained, we had to pile into a little corner to avoid getting wet, and it was necessary to put up tarps because everything got soaked. Others were able to put up their roof, but they didn't have doors or a floor or anything. When the season of Lent arrived with its strong winds, the wind blew off the sheet roofs and everything filled with dirt. Of course, the majority of us didn't have furniture, not even a little table to eat on; no dishes to cook with. Many people's stoves were the campfires we made with sticks on the ground. Kitchen? There wasn't one!... We lived for months and even years in this situation, until, with God's help, we were able to build something.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ CEBs de una colonia suburbana 1970-1985, 1.



Figure 2.5. House constructed on the difficult ground sloping toward the Barranca de Oblatos in colonia Santa Cecilia, ca. 1969. Photo used by permission of Centros Educativos Oblatos.

Socorro Ramírez and family moved to Santa Cecilia from the nearby small town of Huentitán el Alto in 1974. “We left because of poverty,” Ramírez says. “You left because it rained a whole lot that year and the harvest was lost. The crops didn’t grow. And since my husband had a brother here, he told him, ‘Well, come over here.’” Ramírez and family lived temporarily with her brother-in-law’s family in the colonia popular of Las Juntas on Guadalajara’s southern periphery. She and her husband found employment and began “saving a few cents.” After several months, they purchased a lot in Santa

Cecilia because of the installment payments option. Ramírez's lot was just 5 x 20 meters.⁶⁹

Local musical group La Voz del Pueblo performed the well-known "*Casitas de cartón*" (Cardboard Houses) at weekly popular festivals on Sundays in Santa Cecilia. "I mean, that's what we had, cardboard houses," Ramírez says. "My house was a cardboard house... The colonia was in really bad shape when we got here. Nothing but cobblestone streets. The trash didn't come by. There was barely any water." Residents of colonias populares found *convivencia* and solidarity in vibrant community life at the colonia level, which counterbalanced impoverished living conditions in the city's "misery belts." Santa Cecilia residents ventured down into Oblatos Canyon regularly for convivencias, seeing the natural area of canyon and forest as a rural extension of the colonia. A grove of olive trees halfway down the trail to the baths served as a place to hang out, run races, and do other group activities with neighbors.⁷⁰

Children reveled in the simplest parts of life on the urban peripheries. Their presence buoyed many adults emotionally, and often economically, during periods of transition. Socorro Ramírez's kids worked in household production and informal vending since they were little. Furthermore, little separation existed between the social spheres of adults and children. "I was going around like a hen with little chicks," she remembers. "I didn't leave any at home."⁷¹ Based on his experiences living in colonias populares in

⁶⁹ Author interview with Socorro Ramírez, February 11, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Mexico City and Guadalajara, the Jesuit priest Zenteno argued one crucial marker differentiating social classes was that children in colonias populares resembled adults “in terms of the responsibilities that life imposes on them, not just on vacations [like middle-class youth] but continuously.”⁷²

Popular educators Carlos Núñez and Graciela Bustillos moved with their children to Santa Cecilia in 1973, where they worked full-time on IMDEC’s project in the colonia. Reflecting on their kids’ experiences living in Santa Cecilia, they later talked about the “socialization” of toys. Their middle-class children adjusted to distinct social and cultural norms in the colonia popular. Growing up on the more affluent west side of Guadalajara, their two daughters and one son had the “egoistic” notion that their toys were for their personal enjoyment and no one else’s. “About two days after arriving to the barrio,” Núñez later recalled, “I saw my son standing in line to use his own bicycle. That is, his toy had been ‘socialized.’ Now it wasn’t like when he used to play with his cousins, ‘This is mine. I’m not letting you borrow it.’ No, it was already naturally part of the culture of those children that they would need to socialize their toys, because they didn’t have one for each kid.”⁷³ This “socialization” of prized possessions held for adults too, in many cases. The few people who owned cars in Santa Cecilia in the 1970s drove desperate neighbors to hospitals and other urgent destinations outside of walking distance. Núñez and Bustillos responded to such emergencies, often during early morning hours.⁷⁴ The

⁷² Zenteno, 42, 49.

⁷³ Carlos Núñez and Graciela Bustillos, “Rompiendo esquemas,” in *Más sabe el pueblo: anécdotas y testimonios de educadores populares latinoamericanos* (Guadalajara: IMDEC, 1990), 17.

⁷⁴ Author interview with Juan Carlos Núñez Bustillos, April 26, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

first few telephones were installed on particular residents' properties, but many other people on their blocks needed to place calls. Similarly, people with running water on their property "socialized" that crucial resource by allowing neighbors to draw from it at certain hours of the day.

Susana Montoya grew up with ten people in her family's home in Lomas de Polanco on the southern periphery. They began with one room and built the house up over time. Montoya's mother described the house and sleeping arrangements as, "From the front door to the back, it's all one big mattress."⁷⁵ Parish priests conducted the first census of Lomas de Polanco, and numbers resembled colonias populares around the city's peripheries. A total of thirty people lived in four houses surveyed on one block of Calle 10. A couple in their sixties resided at 3075 A with their three adult children ages nineteen to twenty-two. Next door in 3075 B, a widowed thirty-year-old mother lived with four children ages three to eleven. A couple in their forties resided at 3077 with twelve children ages ten months to nineteen years. And a couple in their late twenties with four children ages four months to eight years lived at 3079.⁷⁶ Cramped housing conditions typified life on the peripheries and throughout much of the city. In 1970, an average of 7.9 people lived in each household in Guadalajara, compared to 6.3 and 6.7 per household in Monterrey and Mexico City respectively.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Author interview with Susana Montoya, January 28, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁷⁶ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa María Magdalena, CENSO- Capellanía de Sta. María Magdalena, Manzana no. 8 y 9.

⁷⁷ González de la Rocha, 45-46.



Figure 2.6. Children in Santa Cecilia, ca. 1969. Photo courtesy of Centros Educativos Oblatos.

Montoya spent the earliest years of her life in the northern state of Sonora. Her father worked for the railroads, and the family moved to several different cities around the state— including Cananea, Ciudad Obregón, and Empalme. Her father’s railroad job eventually brought them to Guadalajara. “More than anything,” Montoya says, “he was thinking about his kids, about being in a city where there was opportunity.” He imagined that in Sonora his children would become railroad workers, mine workers, or “get wet” crossing to the United States. Montoya’s parents wanted education for their children. Her father journeyed to Guadalajara and returned with a positive report on the city with multiple universities. The railroad offered him a job as telegraph operator, and he later became auditor for the Guadalajara-Nogales line. Montoya’s father travelled frequently, while the family stayed behind in Lomas de Polanco.⁷⁸

When the Montoya family arrived in Guadalajara in 1972, they rented in the more centrally located colonia del Fresno. Out toward the periphery from del Fresno, the initial development of Lomas de Polanco began in the late 1950s. Developers envisioned an upper-middle class subdivision and evoked Mexico City’s upscale Polanco neighborhood with the colonia’s name. They constructed model homes, but the project never achieved their ambitions. Developers faced legal quandaries from Lomas de Polanco’s location on ejidal land and eventually sold the remainder in lots during the 1960s. Montoya’s father seized the opportunity to buy a lot. Though he earned decent income with the railroads, it supported Montoya’s mother, six children, Montoya’s recently divorced aunt and child, and Montoya’s grandfather. Lomas de Polanco carried a social status below her father’s

⁷⁸ Author interview with Susana Montoya, January 16, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

level of income, but their large household necessitated the cheaper housing option. Once again, the opportunity to own a lot and home proved decisive.⁷⁹

When the Montoya family moved to Lomas de Polanco in 1972, some residents had completed their homes but many more were still in process. In the early 1970s, Lomas de Polanco was located at the very edge of the city. “There was Polanco and that was it,” Montoya remembers. Public perceptions around the city understood the colonia as especially insecure. Montoya and other children and youth who lived there did not experience it that way.⁸⁰

Not everyone moved directly to colonias populares from rural areas. Jesús Osorio and Gloria Díaz moved to Santa Cecilia from colonia del Fresno, where rent became unaffordable. In a moment of “craziness,” Osorio told the del Fresno landlord they would not pay any more rent. Like other young couples, Díaz and Osorio heard about the new colonia Santa Cecilia, within reach of poorer residents because of installment payments.⁸¹ Consuelo Lucio’s family moved to Guadalajara from the neighboring state of Zacatecas when she was a teenager in the 1950s. In Guadalajara, they settled in colonia Santa Teresita first, then at the northwestern edge of the city. Lucio transited to several different colonias, settling down in Santa Cecilia from 1970 until the late 1980s.⁸² Other new arrivals to Santa Cecilia moved from the formerly peripheral colonias of Oblatos, Talpita, and San Onofre.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Author interview with Jesús Osorio and Gloria Díaz, March 16, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁸² Author interview with Consuelo Lucio and Elena Casanova, March 16, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.



Figure 2.7. A young girl stands in front of large rocks and constructions in the background in colonia Santa Cecilia, ca. 1969. Photo courtesy of Centros Educativos Oblatos.

Priests and nuns often did the first surveys and censuses of people and living conditions in newly established colonias populares. In his book *Encuentro con el Pueblo*, Arnaldo Zenteno included ethnographic observations from time spent in numerous colonias populares on the peripheries in 1971. On the western side of the metropolitan zone in Zapopan, Prados Tepeyac was a half-constructed colonia “invaded by some two-hundred families... Two or three families live in each house, using the garage, the bedrooms, etc.” Nearby on the western periphery, El Colli developed intentionally as “a more organized project.” Mercedarias Misioneras de Bérriz nuns donated five hectares for a cooperative housing project, then built a school for residents and a house for the team of nuns. The nuns and IMDEC designed and set aside El Colli for people from the most precarious conditions in the city. Dozens of families with no alternative moved there and lived in cement-block houses. “These are families of very poor people,” Zenteno reported, “and the children look very dirty and ragged.”⁸³

In Zapopan, on the northern side of the metropolitan zone along the Periférico, Santa Margarita and El Vigía were “*fraccionamientos populares* with cobblestone streets, and with one-story brick houses.”⁸⁴ The firm Fraccionadora San Pablo developed Santa Margarita and began selling lots in 1966. Diocesan priest Arturo Mendoza Hernández reported 14,000 residents in the part of the colonia within Santa Margarita Reina’s parish in 1976.⁸⁵

⁸³ Zenteno, 25.

⁸⁴ Ibid. *Fraccionamientos populares* are popular subdivisions or developments.

⁸⁵ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, Arturo Mendoza Hernández to José Salazar López, April 22, 1976.

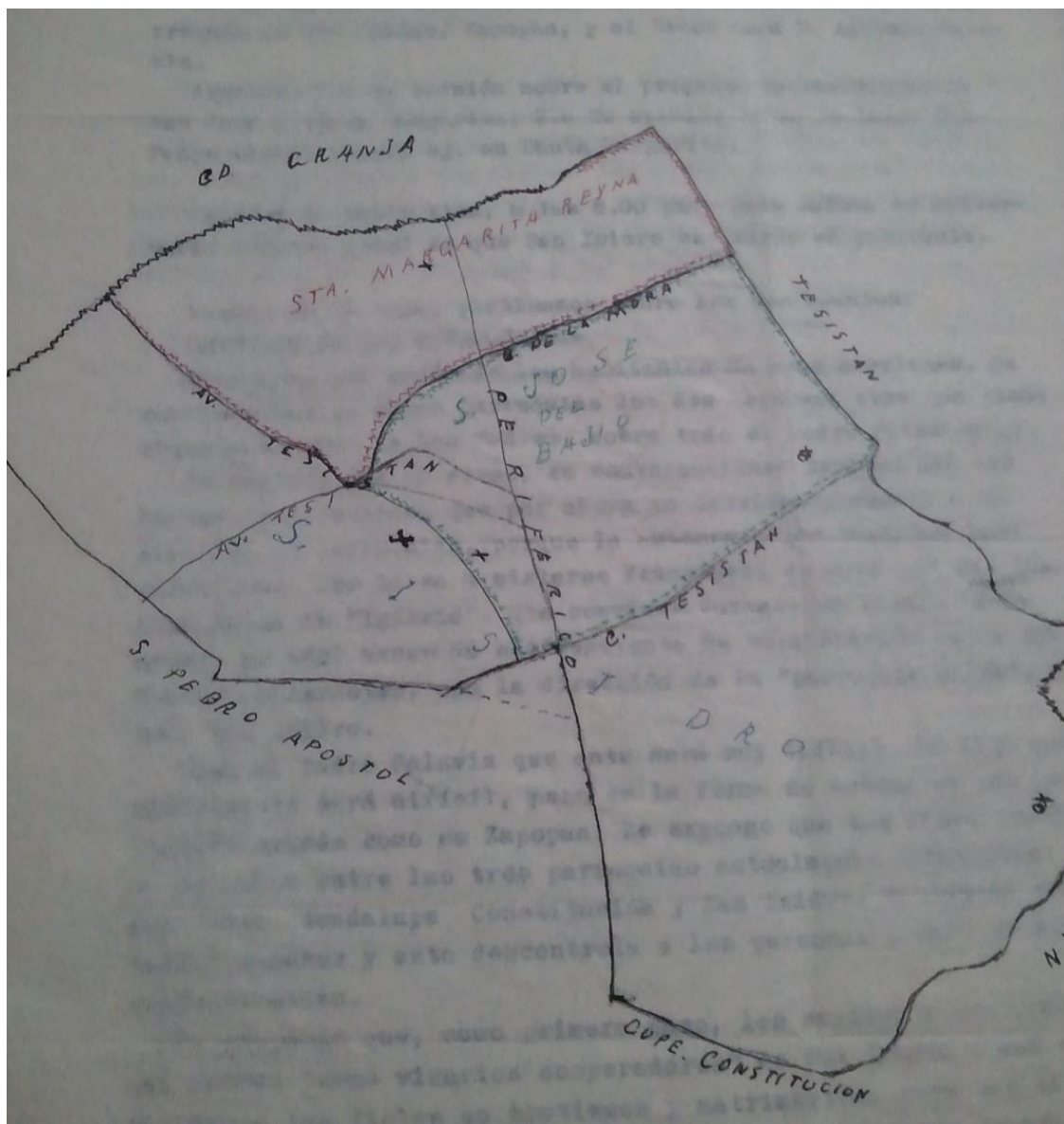


Figure 2.8. Hand-drawn map of the area around colonia Santa Margarita. Courtesy of the Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Guadalajara.

Mendoza calculated that children twelve-and-under comprised thirty-four percent of Santa Margarita’s total population, and “adolescents and youth” were thirty-six percent.⁸⁶ SEDOC organizer Víctor Quintana also noted the colonia’s predominance of

⁸⁶ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, Arturo Mendoza Hernández to José Salazar López, April 22, 1976.

“youth and migrants.”⁸⁷ In the mid-1970s, only twenty-five percent of kids there attended secondary school. But Mendoza observed, “There is no illiteracy among the children because this part of the colonia has two official primary schools with two to three rotations per day.”⁸⁸ Research done by the Equipo Promocional Santa Margarita—a team of priests and nuns based in the colonia—showed twenty-seven percent of 14,000 residents could not read.⁸⁹

Most residents of Santa Margarita migrated to the city from the neighboring states of Zacatecas and Michoacán. The majority of economically active residents worked outside the colonia. But a sizeable minority created informal work in Santa Margarita. In 1976, Mendoza reported there were few sources of employment, but many residents had workshops and stores on a portion of their properties. With the thriving informal economy in colonias populares, unemployment was not the problem because most residents held those jobs.⁹⁰ According to a study conducted by the Equipo Promocional, the typical diet of residents consisted of beans and milk for breakfast, pasta and beans for lunch, and beans and milk for dinner. They noted low levels of meat, fruit, and vegetable consumption.⁹¹ “Almost all are owners of their lots that they go along paying for little by

⁸⁷ Quintana, 64.

⁸⁸ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, Arturo Mendoza Hernández to José Salazar López, April 22, 1976.

⁸⁹ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, Folleto, “Equipo Promocional Santa Margarita,” 1975, p. 5.

⁹⁰ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, Arturo Mendoza Hernández to José Salazar López, April 22, 1976.

⁹¹ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita, Santa Margarita Reina 1974-1984, Folleto, “Equipo Promocional Santa Margarita,” 1975, p. 6.

little, and constructing their houses at the same time,” Mendoza reported to Guadalajara’s archbishop José Salazar López, “which results in the majority of the population established now, with only a small transient portion.”⁹²

Arnaldo Zenteno’s 1971 ethnographic survey of the eastern fringes of Guadalajara took him to the colonias of Barrio del Perdón and colonia Division del Norte. There he discovered “much poorer colonias” with no urban services. In exchange for deprived and disconnected conditions, residents paid less for lots. Continuing south and east along the Periferico, Zenteno came to the colonias populares of Oblatos, Ciudad Perdida, San Onofre, and Talpita. The government built the middle-class gated community Rio Verde for bureaucrats in the middle of colonias populares on the far eastern side of the city. Rio Verde was closed off from the rest of the zone and its residents enjoyed more trees and “nicer” housing.⁹³

Moving along the periphery south and west toward Lomas de Polanco, colonia Echeverría sits beside a prison on the southern fringes of city, next to the industrial zone and cerros. Interviewed by local journalists in 1972, residents claimed the colonia took the name Echeverría with the idea, “let’s see if that gets him [Mexican president Luis Echeverría] and he gives us justice.” With just over three hundred people in 1972, the colonia did not have water, electricity, or legal status as a settlement. Echeverría residents lived “practically in a lost city.” But most people there fled exorbitant rent and abusive, corrupt landlords to live on the city’s peripheries where they became owners. Residents

⁹² AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, Arturo Mendoza Hernández to José Salazar López, April 22, 1976.

⁹³ Zenteno, 26.

dug improvised wells and found temporary water sources throughout the 1970s until the municipal government finally installed infrastructure. Families constructed their own homes in Echeverría, surviving on income of twenty to forty pesos per day.⁹⁴



Figure 2.9. Residents in the unpaved streets of Santa Cecilia, ca. 1969. Courtesy of Centros Educativos Oblatos.

Implications for the Development of Political Cultures

In the above exploration of narratives of migration and the establishment of colonias populares during the 1960s and 1970s in Guadalajara, there are several discernible elements of a popular political culture in construction. Constitutive components of this culture of the political were forged in migration experiences, the

⁹⁴ BPEJ, Hemeroteca Histórica, *Debate*, “En Guadalajara: cinturón de miseria,” pp. 20-21.

fractures of rural-urban, and the tension between diverse life histories and emergent belonging to new places and groups. This chapter surveys material conditions in colonias populares because “misery” was the “detonator” for the urban popular movement of the 1970s and 1980s.⁹⁵ Residents of the urban peripheries organized and mobilized based on material and economic “necessity.” They self-identified as poor people and fashioned a political discourse and imaginary that consistently juxtaposed their circumstances with the affluent minority on the city’s west side.

Leaving the countryside often involved active rejection of rural institutions and authority figures. Migration meant throwing off the oppression of *patrones* (landowner bosses) and an exploitative rural labor system. In *El Alipuz*’s representations of typical experiences of Santa Cecilia residents, the Chin-Chentavoz family’s move to the city is prefaced by both Lucha and Chinto confronting the patrón over years of unjust treatment.⁹⁶ There was a subaltern political culture of being on the wrong end of asymmetrical power relations. Exploitative and abusive relations with *patrones* and landlords continued across the transition from countryside to city. The importance of informal work to discussions of rural-urban migration in this period complicates that picture, as half of Guadalajara’s economically active residents held jobs in the so-called informal economy.⁹⁷ Abandoning the countryside meant exiting a system.⁹⁸ María

⁹⁵ Regalado, “El movimiento popular independiente en Guadalajara,” 126-127.

⁹⁶ See AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, *El Alipuz* 14, March 10, 1974, p. 4; and *El Alipuz* 17, August 18, 1974, pp. 3-6.

⁹⁷ Arroyo and Velázquez, 30.

⁹⁸ Author interview with Jesús Osorio, January 17, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

Pereyra rejected the toxicity and gossip of her pueblo's confined social circles. In leaving Jerez, Zacatecas for Guadalajara in 1970, she also revolted against a patriarchal culture that forced her to funnel dwindling, hard-earned money to support her father-in-law's excessive drinking and womanizing.⁹⁹

Popular Catholicism undergirded political culture in Guadalajara's colonias populares during this period. In pueblos and ranchos and in new settings on the fringes of the city, historical actors in this study operated more in the shadow of the Church than the state. The Catholic Church remained the institutional presence and power that intersected most with the daily lives of residents of colonias populares. Based in prior experiences in the countryside, most people knew and trusted the Church and its representatives in the colonia. Unlike politicians and government officials who gave them "empty promises," nuns and Jesuits who lived in their neighborhood and sat at their kitchen tables proved to be "very dedicated people" who helped better their lives and colonia.¹⁰⁰

Many rural people and residents of colonias populares in the 1960s and 1970s supported large families, a reality that conditioned decisions to move to the city and choose particular places to live. The extended family constituted the core network for socialization across rural and urban contexts. Young couples with few resources often chose colonias and plots of land based on the proximity of uncles, aunts, brothers, or sisters. In the household and in community life, little division existed between the social spheres of adults and children. Intergenerational interaction and cooperation proved the norm in the colonias at the center of this study. Among family, friends, and allies, shared,

⁹⁹ Author interview with María Pereyra, September 27, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

¹⁰⁰ Author interview with María de Jesús Ledesma, February 9, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

lived experiences became the most powerful and durable basis for solidarity and unity in colonias and around the city's peripheries.

People moving from the countryside to the peripheries of Guadalajara valued and established deep relationships with the land they lived on and places they inhabited. Upon arriving to the city, they started the intermittent process of constructing their homes. The sloping landscapes of colonias on the eastern peripheries registered the incompleteness and improvisation of auto-construction and popular urbanization. Residents of colonias populares did not observe strict divisions of rural and urban. They transited across the metropolitan zone, communicated with and travelled back to the countryside, and appropriated spaces like the cerros and barrancas as extensions of the colonia.

To some degree, these former rural people became risk takers, and they inhabited spaces of rapid transformation on the city's edges. Yet their pace was often deliberate, reflecting life in the countryside. That unhurried tempo facilitated *convivencia*. From organized larger gatherings to two neighbors sitting on the street and chatting, *convivencia* aided in overcoming initial distrust among people from diverse parts of the region. Residents of Santa Cecilia, Santa Rosa, Lomas de Polanco, and other colonias on the urban peripheries often gathered around the myriad forms of popular culture that pervaded community life— street theater, fiestas patronales, Sunday festivals, and singing and dancing competitions.

Rural people moved to cities in search of educational opportunities. Narrators cite education for themselves and their children as a prime motivating factor in long-term planning and decision-making. With the assistance of progressive nuns, priests, and social workers influenced by the Freirian popular education movement, they cultivated

habits of reflection, group discussion, and shared decision-making. In the emergent culture of politics among the lower classes, children and adults “socialized” their favorite things, waiting in lines to use bikes and telephones. At its best, it became a culture of reciprocity. Yet there was not much to reciprocate with in such impoverished settings. Scarcity of resources prompted creative solutions. As Mario Suárez remembers the collective preparations for theater performances and religious processions, “we improvised it all.”¹⁰¹

New arrivals to Guadalajara brought a culture of expectation for something better than before, and of waiting on promises seldom fulfilled. Residents of colonias populares during the 1960s and 1970s appeared easily satisfied because of the material depravity of their recent past and their present. Did those tendencies translate into settling for less than full rights to the city? Were the lower-class majorities especially subject to political cooptation in exchange for meager benefits? In interviews and other narratives, residents self-identified as poor people, though this development perhaps owed more to the teachings and preaching of liberationist priests and nuns after Vatican II. Their orientation is toward a constant dialectical analysis of the predicament of the poor in relation to the rich. The emergent political culture in colonias populares during this period included a willingness to move deliberately, but also a commitment to use direct action to achieve collective goals. It advocated public exposure and accountability for government, private, and church institutions and powerful figures.

¹⁰¹ Author interview with Mario Suárez, March 15, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

A major challenge to the development of democratic political culture and counterhegemonic movements on the Left in Latin America during this late Cold War period is what Greg Grandin describes as the growing disconnects between self and solidarity.¹⁰² The development of movement cultures in *colonias populares* in Guadalajara is significant for running counter to larger-scale historical trends and occurring outside the settings of traditional peasant movements, political parties, and armed revolutionary groups. The narrative arc in this dissertation follows the strengthening and weakening of solidarity and community, highlighting moments of forging common identity and working for common cause in a historical period when—from *longue durée* and global perspectives—the social fabric was slowly being torn apart.

¹⁰² Greg Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004).



Figure 2.10. Crowd at a soccer game in Santa Cecilia, ca. 1969. Courtesy of Centros Educativos Oblatos.

CHAPTER III: WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN URBAN POPULAR MOVEMENTS: POLITICS AND RELIGION IN SANTA CECILIA, 1968-1985

Liberationist Christianity and the Freirian popular education movement have shaped political practices among grassroots bases of citizens in local contexts across the Americas since the 1960s. This chapter profiles the lower-class colonia of Santa Cecilia in Guadalajara through an interpretation of diverse archival sources and recently constructed oral history narratives by people who lived and worked there during the 1970s and 1980s. This unique but not entirely atypical case is framed by women's overwhelming leadership in the social and cultural movements that emerged. *Machismo* continued to plague the dominant culture in Mexico and patriarchal power persisted in social structures and institutions of church and state. But the collective and individual agency of Mexican women changed circumstances and altered configurations of power. Christian base communities (CEBs) and popular education projects in Santa Cecilia shaped alternative local knowledge production from below, with hundreds of poor women and a community of Catholic nuns fueling an alternative, oppositional politics in the city.

Santa Cecilia CEB participants built broader local and national alliances and modeled successful mass, grassroots organizing for the emerging urban popular movement.¹ At the outset of the era of neoliberal rule, they pioneered a repertoire of

¹ On the *movimiento urbano popular* (urban popular movement) in Mexico, see Paul Haber, *Power from Experience: Urban Popular Movements in Late Twentieth-Century Mexico* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006). On the movement in Guadalajara, see Juan Manuel Ramírez Sáiz, "La internacionalización y las identidades del movimiento urbano popular en el área metropolitana de Guadalajara," *Espiral: Estudios sobre Estado y Sociedad* 2, no. 5 (enero-abril 1996): 177-196.

citizenship and popular democracy practices that persisted into the 1990s. The legacy of Santa Cecilia's popular struggle grounded in Christian base communities and led by women is fivefold: commitment to Freirian popular education, community self-determination, mutual support, intergenerational and cross-class collaboration, and liberationist spirituality.

Examining the intersections of social movements and everyday life, this chapter charts the processual and disjunctive development of political subjectivities—individual and collective—among the urban poor and their activist-intellectual allies from 1968 to 1985. Santa Cecilia's first residents felt isolated upon moving to the colonia from other Guadalajara barrios or their pueblos and ranchos in Jalisco and surrounding states. Women across the sprawling neighborhood soon began gathering in “reflection groups” facilitated by Sagrado Corazón nuns. They created a thriving network of base communities by 1970. Women contributed to building their families' houses and constructing a colonia over time, while continuing to fulfill traditional household functions of childcare and meal preparation. Together with Jesuit priests, community organizations, and the neighborhood's Catholic parish, poor women and liberationist nuns from middle- and upper-class backgrounds organized to obtain basic urban services like water and trash collection and launched durable educational programs.

In a March 1974 edition of Santa Cecilia's street newspaper *El Alipuz*, the mother of the Chin-Chentavoz family has a conversion experience of sorts and determines to confront the exploitative and abusive forces in their lives and prevent further mistreatment of her family. After Lucha's infant son Pascual becomes seriously ill, while they still lived in the countryside, she decides to intervene to improve their worsening

circumstances. “He got sick because we have let the *patrón* exploit us,” Lucha ruminates in one scene of *El Alipuz*’s ongoing *historieta*. “[The *patrón*] and his children have all the health they want because they can pay for it.” Becoming increasingly indignant, she reflects, “But we have never demanded the right we have to be healthy.” This marked an important shift in Lucha’s thinking. Her resolve turns to action. “I will go face the *patrón* and ask him to cure [my son],” she says to herself. “He has enriched himself at our cost. I’m not going to ask for charity, but for something that he owes us.” The final scene shows Lucha bundling up Pascual and confidently striding out of her house toward the *patrón*’s residence. “She had lost the fear upon realizing she could now speak and even scream,” concludes the narrator. “She knew that now she could let out those words she had kept in her throat for so many years.”²

The above episode from *El Alipuz* represents the agency and growing militancy of women in Santa Cecilia and other colonias populares in Mexico’s biggest cities during the second half of the twentieth century. In line with Catholicism’s personal conversion emphasis reinforced by Vatican II, the faithful would need to examine themselves, reorient their lives, deepen their commitments, and act for social change. Lucha reflects on her experience, is moved by contemplating injustice, then leaves the home (domestic/private sphere) to confront and make demands on a powerful man. Many women interviewed recently in Santa Cecilia narrated moments when they confronted men, and overpowered and defeated them. Much like Lucha going to the *patrón* with a set of demands, they were driven by anger, injustice, and commitment to the interests of the

² Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Guadalajara (AHAG), Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, 1970-, Revistas, *El Alipuz* 14, 30 de marzo de 1974, p. 4.

vulnerable— a sick child, or *el pueblo* (the people) more broadly. In this local history from Guadalajara, low-income women devoted more time and energy than their male counterparts to collective reflection and action that benefited the whole colonia.

Cecilia González, one of Santa Cecilia's first residents in 1968, rebuked a condescending bishop who visited her colonia to review the heterodox discourse and practice of CEBs there. González misidentified the archbishop in her recollection of "the cardinal" who visited the parish one day in the 1970s, but the performative aspects of her reenacting the conversation in raised voices communicated her point about taking on the powerful and winning. That occasion on González's turf in Santa Cecilia, the bishop asked her "what class of people" she recruited to her base community group. "Clean clothes don't need to be washed," she responded. González also led hundreds of residents to the mayor's office downtown, where they ridiculed authorities with humor, rejected attempts to placate them with handouts, and demanded their rights to the city and improvements in the colonia's material conditions.³ Sagrado Corazón nun Isabel Aranguren confronted the conservative parish priest over property titles for Oblatos Education Center (CEO) facilities in the early 1980s, and she frustrated the plans of a subsequent parish priest attempting to seize control of Colegio Santa Cecilia property.⁴ Yet, even as Aranguren, González, and many women acted in open defiance, others tell of constant surveillance and confinement to their homes by fathers and husbands.

³ Author interview with Cecilia González, September 27, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁴ Author interview with Isabel Aranguren, December 19, 2017, Zapopan, Mexico.

Earlier ethnographic studies pointed to the outsized role of women in community organizing in Santa Cecilia.⁵ Recent oral histories show that women directed the school, helped start the first men's group, and demonstrated greater advances in processes of conscientization. Women controlled the land and capital necessary to establish and sustain the Religiosas del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús (RSCJ) presence in the community and tapped social and political connections to occasionally secure material and economic resources for Santa Cecilia residents. Women led the community in overcoming internal conflicts, and they removed opportunistic men from leadership positions when necessary. Women ensured Santa Cecilia's CEB movement prevailed in "flea versus elephant" battles with political parties, the state, the Church, the media, and influential public figures.⁶

When attempting to view this urban history in Guadalajara from the socio-spatial margins, we find it was not only middle-class women entering the public sphere and becoming political in 1970s and 1980s Mexico, but also women from the class of domestic servants—the "*muchachas*" who worked in the homes of the middle class and elite.⁷ The fact that women were protagonist actors in colonias populares during the 1970s and 1980s continues a long history of Mexican women challenging the dominant culture's division between public and private.⁸ Women were not the marginal actors the

⁵ Kathleen Logan, *Haciendo Pueblo: The Development of a Guadalaran Suburb* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1984).

⁶ Author interview with Isabel Aranguren, December 19, 2017, Zapopan, Mexico. Aranguren characterizes various struggles from this time and place as "flea versus elephant."

⁷ *Muchacha* is loaded with derisive, classist connotations when used by middle-class and elite Mexicans to refer to domestic servants.

bulk of documentary sources and extant scholarly literature would have us believe, but instead participated actively in the twentieth century's major processes of social and political change.⁹ For our local context, Teresa Fernández Aceves has overturned “the stereotype represented in the historiography of Mexico that the women of Guadalajara and the state of Jalisco were passive, pious, and apolitical Catholics.”¹⁰ In this case, Catholic women proved to be pious, but assertive and political at the same time.

Centering women in historical narratives implies revisions to our understandings of the development of liberation theology and Freirian popular education and their influences in particular Latin American contexts. Liberationists hoped to transform hierarchical relations across axes of power. They sided with the poor and oppressed and against the rich and authoritarian. Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff argued liberation theology's starting place was not methods or themes but “the living insertion of the theologian together with the poor, understood as collective, conflictive, and active reality.”¹¹ For their part, Sagrado Corazón nuns exercised such power of convocation and mobilization on the eastern periphery of Guadalajara because they immersed themselves in the colonia and cultivated relationships of *cariño* (affection) with local people.

⁸ For exemplary studies of twentieth-century Mexico, see Alejandra Massolo, *Por amor y coraje: mujeres en movimientos urbanos de la Ciudad de México* (México: El Colegio de México, 1992); Jocelyn Olcott, *Revolutionary Women in Postrevolutionary Mexico* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); María Teresa Fernández Aceves, *Mujeres en el cambio social en el siglo XX mexicano* (México: Siglo XXI, 2014); and Robert F. Alegre, *Railroad Radicals in Cold War Mexico: Gender, Class, and Memory* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2014).

⁹ Fernández Aceves, *Mujeres en el cambio social en el siglo XX mexicano*.

¹⁰ María Teresa Fernández Aceves, “Rethinking Twentieth-Century Guadalajara,” *Gender & History* 20, no. 1 (2008), 162.

¹¹ As paraphrased in Elba Noemí Gómez Gómez and Jaime Torres Guillen, “Análisis Socio Histórico Cultural, Lomas de Polanco,” unpublished manuscript (2014), 55.

Counterhegemonic social movements had a mass base of participants in some contexts in urban Mexico and garnered the support of a relatively few middle-class intellectuals and activists who adopted liberationist discourse and practice. Perhaps the most impactful mass organizing in the urban popular movement of these decades in Guadalajara came from progressive nuns who lived alongside the urban poor in colonias populares, and more broadly from activists and organizers in community organizations influenced by the approaches of Freirian popular education. Liberationist nuns and priests in Mexico after the watershed 1968 Medellín (Colombia) conference of Latin American bishops were just as influenced by Freire and other popular educators who utilized critical pedagogy as they were by liberation theology. There was little talk on the ground of “liberation theology” as such. People in colonias populares like Santa Cecilia believed God sided with the poor, and Christian scriptures prioritized by liberationists—Exodus, the Prophets, and the Gospels—supported that belief. Indeed, Catholic laypeople read the bible after Vatican II as never before, a profound experience for women who had always been told they should not read, or even touch, the book. Christian base communities were the vehicles for popular political participation and liberationist praxis in Guadalajara.

The pedagogy and politics of both liberation theology and the Freirian popular education movement began with an epistemological shift. Both privileged the input of the experience of poor people and trusted the capacity of the poor majorities in Latin America to drive social change and provoke the necessary revolutions according to context. Popular educators in Mexico took a unique approach, with a *dialectical methodology* and a *politics of supporting popular struggles* as its two distinctive

components.¹² The political formation many residents of Guadalajara's colonias populares experienced through educational programs and participation in popular movements empowered them to question powerful people and interests, while valuing and building upon their own experiences.

New actors burst onto the political scene in urban Mexico during the 1970s and 1980s, with the poor majorities and non-profit organizations the most significant for the purposes of this study. Certain sectors of an increasingly heterogeneous Catholic Church expanded involvement in politics and engagement with other realms of civil society.¹³ Liberationists contributed to shaping the capacity and popular political organizing of the Left, and they created democratic structures and practices outside of formal politics. Public spheres changed with new entries into the dominant one and expanded peripheral publics.¹⁴ In a time of increasing austerity and reduced social services, and an expansion of the informal economy, popular movements based in CEBs reconfigured hegemonic arrangements and transformed the spaces of the city.

The history of CEBs is essential to tracing the formation of political cultures among the excluded sectors of society in Guadalajara during the 1970s and 1980s.

¹² Carlos Núñez stressed these aspects regularly in writings and talks. See, for example, Núñez, *Permiso para pensar: Educación popular, propuesta y debate* (Guadalajara: IMDEC, 1995).

¹³ See Renée de la Torre, *La Ecclesia nostra: El catolicismo desde la perspectiva de los laicos: el caso de Guadalajara* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2006). De la Torre argues that increasing diversification of religious belief and practice among Catholic laity in Guadalajara is the most impactful and wide-ranging development since Vatican II. She examines base communities alongside other lay movements, including Acción Católica and the Movimiento Familiar Cristiano.

¹⁴ I conceptualize public spheres in the plural, following Claudio Lomnitz and others. See Lomnitz, *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: An Anthropology of Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 145ff. We can think of a "nationally articulated" public sphere, while also recognizing class and regional segmentation in Mexican society, as Lomnitz puts it, which has facilitated the formation of public spheres among numerous publics.

Locally, characteristics of these political cultures included barrio-based autonomy and independent organizing, augmented capacities for individual and collective agency, and solidarity and reciprocity forged in shared lived experiences and relationships of *cariño*. Santa Cecilia, like the parallel case of Lomas de Polanco in the southern part of the city, “was also a seedbed for new organizations and new forms of citizenship.”¹⁵ Though this chapter shows the decline and end of a movement, a certain spirit of CEBs refuses to die. The social and organizational networks established during the 1970s maintain an impressive power of convocation in colonias populares on the city’s eastern edges. These networks continue developing popular education initiatives and promoting popular movements in Guadalajara. Santa Cecilia’s base communities served as a model movement and produced “knowledge-practices” that contributed to urban popular movements locally, the CEB movement nationally in Mexico, and popular education and liberationist Christianity projects across the Americas.¹⁶

This chapter is pivotal because Santa Cecilia was a generator of experiences, with important influences passing through and reverberating out from this colonia during the 1970s and 1980s. Chapter Three is organized into five sections and a conclusion. The first section examines the process by which poor women and Catholic nuns living in Santa Cecilia founded a movement and shaped the emergence of urban popular politics on Guadalajara’s peripheries. The second focuses on popular theater and the street

¹⁵ Elba Noemí Gómez Gómez, Olivia Penilla, Arlette Vaca, and Betsabé Pérez, “Lomas de Polanco. Del desencanto al encantamiento del espacio,” in *Agentes y lazos sociales: La experiencia de volverse comunidad*, ed. Elba Noemí Gómez Gómez (Guadalajara: ITESO, 2015), 51.

¹⁶ On the concept of “knowledge-practices,” see María Isabel Casas-Cortés, Michal Osterweil, and Dana E. Powell, “Blurring Boundaries: Recognizing Knowledge-Practices in the Study of Social Movements,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 81, no.1 (2008): 17-58.

newspaper *El Alipuz* in communication and mobilization during the movement, and how those forms helped create counterpublics. Third, I discuss some of the *luchas reivindicativas* and other spatial contestations. The fourth section looks at Santa Cecilia residents contesting mainstream public discourse about them and inverting definitions of terms originally crafted by elites. Finally, the fifth section charts the CEB movement's decline in Santa Cecilia, a process of conflict and departure that began in 1977 and wound down in the early 1990s.

Politicized Catholicism was nothing new in twentieth-century Guadalajara.¹⁷ But CEBs experimented with and generated “new forms of relationship between politics and religion.”¹⁸ Base communities in the 1970s and 1980s differed from earlier Catholic Action organizing in their independence from the institutional Church and their leftist political orientation that discarded the Catholic hierarchy's concern for class harmony.

After a decade of the base community movement, Mexican Jesuit theologian Álvaro Quiroz Magaña concluded CEBs gave poor people “greater access to the decisions that affect them.”¹⁹ Groups in Santa Cecilia provide one instance of the real, on-the-ground, democratic opening and transition of the 1970s and 1980s in Mexico that lasted and endures. Democratization from below is evident in citizens from “the other Guadalajara” and “the other Mexico” making wide-ranging demands on the powerful in

¹⁷ See Robert Curley, *Citizens and Believers: Religion and Politics in Revolutionary Jalisco, 1900-1930* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2018).

¹⁸ Hugo José Suárez, “New Forms of the Relationship between Politics and Religion: Ecclesiastical Base Community Activists in Mexico City,” *Latin American Perspectives* 43, no. 3 (May 2016): 51-68.

¹⁹ Álvaro Quiroz Magaña, *Eclesiología en la teología de la liberación* (Salamanca, Spain: Sígueme, 1983), 334.

public and achieving collective voice and asserting their rights to make claims on the state and the Church. They developed practices of popular democracy by petitioning, protesting by the hundreds in central city spaces, paying frequent visits to government offices, and engaging the mainstream media and creative alternative forms to intervene in public spheres. The CEB movement in Santa Cecilia practiced citizenship in movement, emphasizing the responsibilities of perpetual learning and active engagement with public processes.

Neighborhood Women and Catholic Nuns in Movement

Sagrado Corazón nuns moved to Santa Cecilia before other organizers and religious workers, arriving in 1968 when residents had just begun making payments on lots and building temporary shelters. The García Ramírez family supplied important financial support to establish the RSCJ community's presence in the colonia.²⁰ Sagrado Corazón nun Luz García was a key figure on the first team in Santa Cecilia. García convinced family decision-makers to fund construction of the nun's residence and provide considerable financing to build the RSCJ's Colegio Santa Cecilia. García Ramírez family members solicited donations from a handful of other "business owners" in Guadalajara for the construction projects of religious institutions in the colonia during its first few years.²¹

Sagrado Corazón nuns began to establish their presence on the eastern periphery a few years prior, working in the parochial school of neighboring San Onofre colonia from

²⁰ Archivo Histórico de las Religiosas del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús, Provincia de México (AHRSCJ-MX), Proy. Apostólico – Santa Cecilia 1970, "Santa Cecilia," pp. 1-6.

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 1.

1965 to 1969. There the sisters met parish priest Salvador Sánchez, who the archdiocese appointed to Santa Cecilia in 1970. Sánchez quickly made a formal request for them to join him in the new parish to administrate and teach in an RSCJ school—Colegio Santa Cecilia—adjacent to the parish temple.²² The nuns began with an ambitious mission for the eastern peripheries of the city. Through their recently formed non-profit organization, Oblatos Education Centers (CEO), the RSCJ proposed a regional education project that would create primary, secondary, and preparatory schools, in addition to a series of initiatives that included “social work training centers,” “industrial and agricultural technical experimentation centers,” and “art schools.”²³

From the perspective of the RSCJ congregation, the history of Catholic reforms since the 1960s features a somewhat different set of institutional signposts. After Vatican II concluded in 1965, the Sagrado Corazón order convened its 1967 General Chapter and put forward a Eurocentric interpretation of the monumental Council’s reforms. Mexican nun Isabel Aranguren sees the 1967 Chapter as the first rumblings of change in her order. It initiated an opening to the world and the end of *clausura*, which was the practice of remaining secluded in the convent. These transformations precipitated a crisis for the RSCJ and many nuns unsatisfied with the new orientation left the order. The reforms produced theological changes, a shift in the focus of community life, and an overhaul of the tradition of *clausura*.²⁴

²² Author Interview with Consuelo Romo, February 28, 2019, Zapopan, Mexico. For the formal invitation from Sánchez to the RSCJ, see AHRSCJ-MX, Guadalajara, Sta. Cecilia, Sr. Cura Salvador Sánchez y Luz García Ramírez, r.s.c.j., “Las Religiosas del Sagrado Corazón estarán...”, Guadalajara, 14 octubre de 1970.

²³ Archivo Municipal de Guadalajara (AMG), Obras Públicas, Colonias, Colonia Popular, Centros Educativos Oblatos, A.C. al Presidente Municipal Efraín Urzúa Macías, 19 de noviembre de 1968.

On the heels of the 1968 CELAM meeting in Medellín, Sagrado Corazón nuns followed up with their 1970 General Chapter. In that convening, which Aranguren calls “the voice of Medellín,” the congregation committed to the “option for the poor.” Any RSCJ sisters who wanted to work and live among the poor received institutional support. This implied a reconfigured relationship to laypeople, a deepened commitment to their educational mission, and “an opening up of horizons.” The 1970 Chapter was the RSCJ’s Latin American interpretation and has been definitive in the life of their order in the Americas since. The shift by Sagrado Corazón nuns in Mexico away from the convent toward an “opening to the world” resulted in “*una limpia*” (a cleansing) within the congregation. Many nuns who had studied and secured a stable career in *clausura* decided to depart. Having invested all their efforts in the convent, some felt incapable of starting over on such a different path. Despite the “major crisis” in the congregation with this exodus of nuns, Aranguren stresses that “we maintained our presence in the popular field.”²⁵

For a Sagrado Corazón congregation—referred to as “*las damas*” (the ladies) by some—overwhelmingly composed of women from middle-class and elite Mexican families, the shift from the relative comfort of their early lives to sharing conditions with the city’s poorest residents on the outskirts revolutionized their practices as nuns. Many narrate their “first insertion among the poor” in Santa Cecilia, where cultural illegibility complicated efforts at times. The sincere solidarity of middle-class nuns, priests, and activists and their collective commitments to sharing the material conditions of the poor

²⁴ Author interview with Isabel Aranguren, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

did not automatically equalize relationships of power with working-class and poor Santa Cecilia residents. “We are all in agreement about that,” wrote Carlos Núñez, IMDEC director and temporary Santa Cecilia resident in the mid-1970s. “We are not—by origin, history, situation, circumstances, and many other things—*el pueblo*. We are different, but we do not want to be distant.” Núñez addressed the class divide between his cohort of popular educators in Latin America and the people they worked with in order to “avoid a false populist vision.”²⁶ Though IMDEC, the RSCJ, and Jesuit priests all sought to avoid such pitfalls, middle-class tendencies toward paternalism, imposition, and fostering institutional dependencies in social relations with the popular classes contributed to the movement’s loss of a mass base over time.

In Santa Cecilia, the RSCJ community initially conceptualized two components of its work. The first was pastoral, consisting of base communities and catechism centers. After getting established and becoming active, all base communities and catechism centers had lay leadership—*promotores* and *catequistas*. By 1972, twenty base community groups met regularly, with around five hundred families participating. Nuns trained forty *promotores* for the already thriving CEB groups.²⁷ They organized eleven catechism centers across the colonia. Sixty laypeople completed training as *catequistas*, enabling them to offer the religious service to three thousand children.²⁸

²⁶ Carlos Núñez, ed. *Más sabe el pueblo... Anécdotas y testimonios de educadores populares latinoamericanos* (Guadalajara: IMDEC, 1990), 3-4.

²⁷ AHRSCJ-MX, Ficha de Información de Obras Apostólicas en educación sistemática. 1972, “Santa Cecilia / Guadalajara,” p. 1.

²⁸ AHRSCJ-MX, Ficha de Información de Obras Apostólicas en educación sistemática. 1972, “Catequesis Santa Cecilia,” pp. 1-2.

The second component of the RSCJ “apostolic project” in Santa Cecilia was the school— education, both formal and informal. Nuns assembled a team of teachers from the popular classes in the same community. The teachers—mostly women—enabled the RSCJ to focus their own time and efforts on forming and supporting a *Padres de Familia* group. With the founding of a parents’ organization, the RSCJ hoped to cultivate “Christian human formation and commitment in the colonia.”²⁹ The *Padres de Familia* met every two weeks, with about eighty-percent participation from parents. Colegio Santa Cecilia enrolled four hundred and five children in morning classes in 1972, and three hundred fifty adults registered for night school. The nuns reported to provincial leadership that both sets of classes “respond to an urgent need of a lack of culture and give rise to promotion and evangelization.”³⁰

Officially, the RSCJ’s apostolic project in Santa Cecilia began in September 1970. Seven women from the order moved to the colonia for their “insertion” among the urban poor.³¹ Living together in their residence constructed across the street from the parish temple, Luz García, Adela Pliego, Guadalupe Rábago, Juanita Pérez, Marina Sahagún, Guadalupe Gómez Unda, and María Efrén Saucedo comprised the first community. Mexican Jesuit priest Arnaldo Zenteno arrived in 1971 to work with the broader pastoral project in Santa Cecilia. Casa Loyola, A.C., a non-profit organization formed by local Jesuits and the community organization IMDEC, directed financial

²⁹ Ibid, p. 1.

³⁰ AHRSCJ-MX, Ficha de Información de Obras Apostólicas en educación sistemática. 1972, “Sta. Cecilia – Colegio,” p. 1.

³¹ Ibid; and author interview with Isabel Aranguren, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

resources to the “popular promotion” initiative.³² In collaborative efforts with IMDEC and the Jesuits, Sagrado Corazón nuns assumed responsibility for the evangelization and pastoral areas, and for educational components. Differences in objectives and “ideological approaches” became evident early on, particularly between the nuns and IMDEC. Already by 1973, RSCJ written reports warned, “The divergence with IMDEC is beginning to create a climate of tension and attrition in the interior of the community such that community relations are deteriorating, and group unity is breaking up.”³³

Sagrado Corazón nun Marina Sahagún moved to Santa Cecilia in 1969. During her time there through 1972, they organized “reflection groups.” In Santa Cecilia, the groups were composed “entirely of women.” “It became a really big women’s promotional movement compared to the men,” Sahagún stresses. “The men were falling behind.”³⁴ Reflection groups used the “see-think-act” methodology from the Catholic Worker Youth (JOC).³⁵ Participants did not understand this as “liberation theology” at the time. The small groups worked based on themes and issues grounded in daily life. The meetings and their moments of collective reflection and discussion gave birth to a process.³⁶

³² AHRSCJ-MX, Proy. Apostólico Sta. Cecilia Sept. 1970, “Santa Cecilia,” pp. 1-7.

³³ Ibid, p. 2.

³⁴ Author interview with Marina Sahagún, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

³⁵ For more on the JOC, see José Aparecido Gomes Moreira, “Para una historia de la Juventud Obrera Católica (1959-1985),” *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 49, no. 3 (July-Sept. 1987): 205-220. I examine their organizing and continued influence in Barrio del Perdón in Chapter Four.

³⁶ Author interview with Marina Sahagún, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

Nuns who lived and worked in Santa Cecilia remember when community organizing came easy during the early 1970s, in terms of numbers of people and encouraging participation. “It was like if you went out to the street,” Sahagún says, “the people were expressing great need to get together because they came from different places in Jalisco and from other states.” Nuns found the situation in Santa Cecilia unique. “It was incredible because at any day and hour a woman would stop you in the street and say they had a group,” Sahagún notes. “There was an explosion of groups.”³⁷ The RSCJ and other members of the pastoral team began to have the fortunate dilemma of excessive activity in Santa Cecilia during the early 1970s.

Adjacent to the church, Sagrado Corazón nuns opened Colegio Santa Cecilia to provide primary and secondary schooling for a portion of the colonia’s children, an integral piece of their wide-ranging educational mission. The school served as headquarters, community center, and resource hub for many residents. Mario Suárez and María Martínez sent their eleven children to the school. Suárez remembers organizing dances and performances of musical groups on school grounds. “We transformed the lawn of the school into a theater,” he recalls. Residents created elaborate stages and scenes by piecing together the simplest of materials. “We improvised it all, everything,” Suárez says. They celebrated mass on Sundays in the school’s assembly hall.³⁸ Nuns opened Colegio Santa Cecilia on weekends for daycare, pickup soccer, and intergenerational games.³⁹ Families participated consistently in school activities and

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Author interview with Mario Suárez, María Vázquez, and María del Refugio Suárez, March 16, 2018, Guadalajara, México.

parents shared responsibilities for the facility's maintenance and repair. "That was their collaboration with their children's school," Sagrado Corazón sister Isabel Aranguren says. "Then the school became theirs, really and truly. It was a school that very much belonged to the people."⁴⁰

Sahagún served as director of Colegio Santa Cecilia for a brief stint during the early 1970s. On weekdays, nuns and teachers worked with children in the mornings and women in the afternoons.⁴¹ Their "night school" for adults and "active school" for kids both utilized pedagogical methods influenced by Freirian popular education. Nuns and the teachers they recruited aimed to raise social consciousness in adults through literacy programs, and they hoped children would learn to express themselves in a range of ways. They adopted an "active education" approach with children, featuring kids doing "their own conferences." Parents assisted with certain aspects, but students selected themes and made presentations. Nuns and teachers offered an "open school" promoted by the government for children ten to fifteen years of age who could not otherwise enroll in public schools. Perhaps most groundbreaking, Sagrado Corazón nuns provided "night school" with different levels for diverse adult and youth learners. Many Santa Cecilia residents learned to read and received primary and secondary education through the *escuela nocturna* (night school). Educator Alberto Minacata and others utilized Freirian

³⁹ Author interview with Marina Sahagún, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

⁴⁰ Author interview with Isabel Aranguren, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

⁴¹ Author interview with Marina Sahagún, December 19, 2017, Zapopan, Mexico.

pedagogy in the evening classes, and nuns believed the courses had conscientizing effects with children and adult learners.⁴²

Jesuits and nuns in Santa Cecilia operated from an epistemology of radical trust in residents and the poor generally. That radical trust infused liberation theology and the “pedagogy of the oppressed” and is conversant with subaltern studies in its corresponding proposal of not trusting the explanations and historical narratives of elites.⁴³ In settings outside the academy, social movement participants contributed to historical knowledge, dedicating themselves to practices of ethnography, social science research, and oral history. The small groups that provided the infrastructure of the movement in Santa Cecilia integrated reflection and evaluation into every work plan and project. As North American popular educator Myles Horton observed, we only learn from experiences that we learn from.⁴⁴ That is, periods of reflection on and analysis of experience are essential to learning processes.

Weekly reflection-group discussions and occasional workshops often dealt with themes such as relations between men and women and machismo.⁴⁵ In his 1974 book on Santa Cecilia, Zenteno discussed the mostly illiterate women in CEB groups achieving a

⁴² Ibid. Minacata and the non-profit organization Educational Services of the West (SEDOC) collaborated with Sagrado Corazón nuns on Santa Cecilia’s escuela nocturna beginning in 1977. SEDOC and other popular education and community organizing efforts into the 1980s around the city are examined further in Chapter Five.

⁴³ See Ranajit Guha, “The Prose of Counterinsurgency,” in *Subaltern Studies II: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, ed. Ranajit Guha, 1-42 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

⁴⁴ Horton made this observation in a 1981 interview with journalist Bill Moyers. See Bill Moyers and Myles Horton, “The Adventures of a Radical Hillbilly: An Interview with Myles Horton,” *Appalachian Journal* 9, no. 4 (1982): 248-85. For the connections between Horton and Paulo Freire, see Paulo Freire, Myles Horton, Brenda Bell, et al., *We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).

⁴⁵ Author interview with Marina Sahagún, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

“liberation of the word” through their participation and leadership.⁴⁶ *El Alipuz* represented breakthroughs in women’s agency with Lucha’s conversion story. That “liberation of the word” is evident in Cecilia González’s experience of being able to touch and handle a bible as a woman. It is attested to by María Martínez’s description of the “space for women” group that provided neighborhood women a venue to discuss issues understood as off-limits under men’s surveillance.⁴⁷

Neighborhood men in Santa Cecilia eventually got involved in CEBs after noting changes in the women in their lives. Sagrado Corazón nuns collaborated with Jesuit priests on spiritual exercises, in the tradition of Ignatian spirituality. One evening in 1972, when Sahagún was leading spiritual exercises with Arnaldo Zenteno, participants asked for support in starting their own men’s reflection group. “They didn’t want any women in their group,” Sahagún points out, “because those women were already far ahead conceptually and everything.” She and Zenteno facilitated the group of more than forty men, which lasted several years during the 1970s.⁴⁸

Uniquely outgoing and uninhibited in her personality, street vendor Cecilia González provides oral history narratives that crystallize common sociocultural dynamics and speak to fields of politics and power in the worlds of lower-class women in Mexican cities during this period from the late 1960s through the 1970s. When Guadalajara archbishop José Salazar López visited Santa Cecilia in the early 1970s to meet with base

⁴⁶ Arnaldo Zenteno, *Encuentro con el pueblo y evangelización liberadora: búsqueda y experiencias de evangelización en una colonia popular*, (Mexico City: Imprenta Mexicana, 1974), 34.

⁴⁷ Author interview with María Martínez, September 22, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁴⁸ Author interview with Marina Sahagún, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

community promotoras at the Colegio Santa Cecilia, he encountered a room full of women, with González on the front row.⁴⁹ “I came here for one reason,” an energetic Salazar López announced to CEB leaders.

They say that Santa Cecilia is so ‘popular,’ that you have many promotoras who really know everything, that we [bishops and priests] don’t even know what you know. So I just came to tell you that if you’re such exceptional promotoras, and you took that work from us, then we’ll have to leave it to you women... I’m only going to ask you one question. What kind of people are you bringing to your groups? What kind of people? Tell me.

González stood up and responded, “Señor, I bring in all the helpless people from the street, and the people who don’t know God, because that’s how I got to know God.” “Like who?” Salazar López replied. She listed “non-married” people and “desperate youth,” before the archbishop cut her off, interjecting, “Those filthy people (*esa gente cochambrosa*)?” “Yeah, nothing but filthy people (*pura gente cochambrosa*),” González asserted. “What do you want me to do, invite the priest or the nun? Or the mother of the nun?” Irritated, she then walked toward the door to exit the meeting, but Salazar López asked her to come back. “Are you mad, woman?” the archbishop asked. González remembers the scene with the archbishop and his entourage as “having judges there deciding who was good and who was bad.”⁵⁰

The experience of base communities and relationships with laypeople in Santa Cecilia shaped Marina Sahagún’s evolving sense of vocation during the early 1970s. Base communities provided her with “the meaning of relating faith with life.” In the experience of her first insertion among the poor, Sahagún began to understand faith and

⁴⁹ Author interview with Cecilia Gonzalez, September 27, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

spirituality as neither “personalist” nor “individualist.” Instead, in the praxis of Santa Cecilia’s base communities, they integrated “reality” and took “concrete steps” together. Group meetings started from “the people’s reality.” “Through questions, people responded about their reality,” Sahagún recalls. Recasting the *ver-pensar-actuar* (see-think-act) formula associated with CEBs and earlier JOC groups, she says base community meetings began with reality, moved to “illumination” via scripture readings, and then the whole group made their “commitment” to collective action.⁵¹

Bible reading as a common practice in small groups represented a significant shift in Catholic practice post-Vatican II. Daniel Levine stresses that the phenomenon of laypeople reading the bible, discussing those readings in groups, and seeking inspiration and guidance from explicitly biblical imagery and passages did not exist “on any significant scale before the mid-1960s” in Latin America.⁵² Ramona Deniz emphasizes the importance of reading the bible in her base community group, in which some twenty people participated.⁵³ Cecilia González’s group met on Saturdays at the nuns’ residence, and each participant used a bible. “I had never had a bible in my hands before,” González says. “For me, the bible was something sacred, and us as women couldn’t touch it.” In her earlier experiences with other parishes in low-income neighborhoods in Guadalajara, the priest “turned his back” to the laity and spoke in Latin. But in Santa Cecilia, nuns taught CEB participants to read the bible and assured them everyone could take and touch

⁵¹ Author interview with Marina Sahagún, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

⁵² Daniel H. Levine, “Religion, the Poor, and Politics in Latin America Today,” in *Religion and Political Conflict in Latin America*, ed. Daniel H. Levine (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 10.

⁵³ Author interview with Ramona Deniz, March 15, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

it. González explains how base community groups reflected in order to learn and know, and they analyzed passages of Christian scripture in order to understand what god was telling them. Given that each person understood the readings in different ways, group discussions in CEBs produced a process of significant learning.⁵⁴

Each CEB participant in Santa Cecilia had her own copies of *las fichas* (handouts) for the week. In the base community group Gloria Díaz and Jesús Osorio participated in, one weekly theme asked members to consider their parental roles as “collaborators with God in the procreation and education of children.” The ficha in that thematic session encouraged parents to “help [their children] have a life that is truly human and useful for the society in which they live.” After introducing the session’s theme and objectives, participants’ fichas included a section titled, “What are we living through?”, where they posed a series of questions for reflection and group conversation.⁵⁵

In order to effectively organize the colonia’s diverse groups and religious activities, the pastoral team in Santa Cecilia divided the territory into four zones initially, then nine after neighborhood population continued rising. Each Sagrado Corazón sister was assigned to one zone and a set of responsibilities. Residents of each zone organized processions and fiestas based on their own ideas and needs. CEB groups carried the weight of each zone’s participation in colonia-wide events and activities. Participants gave each base community group its own name, generally that of a saint. Santa Cecilia residents attended and contributed to religious processions and fiestas patronales in

⁵⁴ Author interview with Cecilia González, September 27, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁵⁵ Personal Collection of Gloria Díaz and Jesús Osorio (GDJO), Fichas de las CEBs Santa Cecilia, Ficha 7, “Cooperadores con Dios en la procreación y educación de los hijos.” Hoja Personal no. 15.

large numbers. “People were really happy there,” recalls María Martínez. “You could help, *convivir*, and participate in one way or another.” Organizers created informal competitions and prizes on a regular basis, and Santa Cecilia residents proved highly motivated to partake.⁵⁶

On the side of the colonia further “*abajo*” toward the barranca, Guadalupe Rojas helped catalyze the first CEB groups in her zone. Rojas and neighbors kept watch over Gloria Díaz and her small children while Jesús Osorio worked nights outside the colonia. Women of different origins and circumstances now bound territorially met for lunch, talked in the streets, and visited each other’s houses frequently in 1970s Santa Cecilia. Despite precarious material conditions, Díaz remembers this period for its “really beautiful *convivencia*.” Nuns lived on the same street she did. Díaz emphasizes the horizontal nature of relations between nuns and laypeople. “The nuns were like family to us.” Sagrado Corazón nuns told Santa Cecilia residents, “Don’t make us special meals. We’ll eat what you’re eating.” Díaz and Osorio attribute their participation in base communities to the nuns— informal chats with them, and their constant presence in their daily lives. In short, relationships of *cariño* flourished between Sagrado Corazón nuns and Santa Cecilia residents.⁵⁷

Díaz got involved in base communities after other women invited her to one of “doña Lupe’s talks.” She arrived to hear RSCJ nun, Consuelo Romo, playing the guitar, and she joined the singing.⁵⁸ CEB groups sang traditional Mexican songs such as “*Las*

⁵⁶ Author interview with María Martínez, March 16, 2018, Guadalajara, México.

⁵⁷ Author interview with Gloria Díaz and Jesús Osorio, March 15, 2018, Guadalajara, México.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

cuatro milpas” and “*Cielito lindo*.”⁵⁹ Fichas used by Díaz’s group show each meeting included scripture readings, commentary and discussion, questions for reflection, and singing. She participated without her husband initially, attending meetings secretly. “He was always so mad about that,” Díaz recalls. Other women in the group suggested she invite Osorio to meetings. “No, this son of a bitch doesn’t want to come,” she responded. “He’s mad that I’m here.” The nuns told her, “You’ll see. We’re going to go invite him.” Osorio eventually began participating in the base communities, and he and Díaz became promotores. The couple describe a consistent trajectory of growth through their CEB participation, “all the way to going to demand the water” downtown at the Government Palace in meetings and protests between 1974 and 1980.⁶⁰

Cecilia González narrates her participation in base communities as a process of learning and personal growth made possible by nuns and educators. “Thanks to the nuns that made me get involved in the Christian base communities— they made me a promotora,” González says. “They took me to many places. I didn’t know how to read or write, nothing. But that changed thanks to some teachers that came and directed the school for us. They taught us to sign our name, because I only knew how to sign with a finger.” She and other promotoras represented the colonia at regional and national CEB meetings beginning in 1975, where they learned from experiences in other contexts in Mexico and shared understandings and practices from what became a regional model for successful grassroots organizing in Santa Cecilia. In addition to her promotora role in the base community group, residents elected González president of the colonia-wide

⁵⁹ Author interview with Consuelo Romo, February 28, 2019, Zapopan, Mexico.

⁶⁰ Author interview with Gloria Díaz, March 15, 2018, Guadalajara, México.

Representative Assembly in the mid-1970s. She stresses the crucial outcome of Santa Cecilia residents involved in CEBs learning “how to defend our rights.”⁶¹



Figure 3.1. Cecilia González addresses an assembly meeting in Santa Cecilia, ca. 1978. Also pictured is María de Jesús Ledesma, second to the left from Gonzalez, seated. Used by permission of Centros Educativos Oblatos (CEO).

María de Jesús Ledesma began participating in Santa Cecilia’s reflection groups when she and her family arrived in 1969, continuing her involvement in local parishes from the rancho to the city. Other members asked Ledesma to serve as the group’s promotora after one year of participation. She remained in leadership roles in base

⁶¹ Author interview with Cecilia González, September 27, 2018, Guadalajara, México.

communities from 1970 until the early 1990s. In addition to her background of committed devotional practice and Catholic Action leadership, the style and congruency of praxis shown by Sagrado Corazón nuns and Jesuit priests motivated Ledesma's participation in CEBs. "What they said, they also lived," she says. "They were courageous."⁶²

Santa Cecilia resident and eventual IMDEC staff member Margarito Íñiguez characterized the colonia in its founding years as "virgin" territory politically and residents as "depoliticized." But the CEB movement achieved a "qualitative-quantitative leap" during 1973 when the total number of base community groups reached eighty, with around 2200 people participating.⁶³ In an extensive 1973 report to the archdiocese on the state of Santa Cecilia's CEB-driven parish project, Jesuit priest Arnaldo Zenteno concluded that "the incipient force of the Comunidad Central of the parish is the most promising in the long term in matters of organization and active participation of the laity with the priests and nuns." The popular assembly met regularly to discuss and decide on actions and orientations affecting the entire colonia. *El Alipuz* celebrated, "We have taken a big step toward the unity of our colonia: 'the Comunidad Central.'" Featuring sketches of people holding hands, the illustrated scene included a simple dialogue. The woman character questions the man, "Do you know why we are united?" The man character replies, "Why?" "Because divided we're not worth anything," she tells him.⁶⁴ This

⁶² Author interview with María de Jesús Ledesma, February 9, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁶³ Biblioteca ITESO, Acervo General, Margarito Íñiguez, et al., *El Proyecto de Santa Cecilia en los 70s*, pp. 1-2.

⁶⁴ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, 1970-, Revistas, *El Alipuz*, 9, 9 de diciembre de 1973, p. 1.

popular political culture of collective action and movement-building stressed unity and organization. As the chorus of an anthem performed by local popular educator and singer Efrén Orozco intoned, “Here we are how we are, because we are not organized. Here we are how we are, that’s why we never progress.”⁶⁵

In 1973, Zenteno interviewed Santa Cecilia base community participants, registering their opinions and inclinations toward formal politics and the relationship between Christianity and politics. Members of a CEB group composed of married couples told the Jesuit priest they voted because their children’s school required it, while others cited responsibility as citizens. Some CEB participants voted to “go against the PRI,” while a few saw it as part of being a Christian. Zenteno asked the couples’ group about the meaning of politics and its relevance to Christianity. Individual responses show the varied consciousnesses and political education levels in the collective at that stage in the mid-1970s. “Politics is abiding by the laws that govern us,” suggested one participant, while another said, “Politics is being an active member of the party.” Other group members thought, “Politics is working in the government,” or alternatively, “Voting and deciding what affects the people is politics.” When Zenteno inquired into views on religion and politics, they cited stories of the historical Jesus’s political practice. “Christ got into politics when confronting the Pharisees and the bankers,” argued one CEB member. Another highlighted how “Christ ran the vendors out of the temple and got Peter out of jail.”⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Efrén Orozco, “Los Profesionistas,” *Lo que pasa en mi barrio* (Guadalajara: IMDEC, 1982), Audiocassette, Track 3. “*Aquí estamos como estamos, porque no estamos organizados. Aquí estamos como estamos, por eso nunca progresamos.*”

⁶⁶ Zenteno, *Encuentro con el pueblo*, 129-131.

Overlapping with base communities, a strong parents' organization developed connected to Colegio Santa Cecilia.⁶⁷ One of its leaders, construction worker Mario Suárez, suggests, "Without the Padres de Familia, there wouldn't have been anything."⁶⁸ Women teachers from the colonia staffed the school, including Cuquita Salazar de Salazar, Martha Robles Sánchez, and Irma Leticia Márquez Soto.⁶⁹ After her appointment to Santa Cecilia's RSCJ community in 1976, one of Isabel Aranguren's responsibilities was to support the team of teachers and attend their leadership's monthly meeting to provide assistance. One of the teachers supported the Padres de Familia in conducting regular assembly meetings.⁷⁰ The Padres de Familia built, led, and maintained the Colegio Santa Cecilia. CEBs participated in school-sponsored activities and events too, but not all CEB participants had children enrolled in that school. There was not complete overlap between CEBs and the Padres de Familia, but there was considerable intersection.⁷¹

Religious processions provide one key example of community activity where the Padres de Familia and CEBs intersected. Suárez remembers near full participation of parents during the 1970s, with teams designated to coordinate numerous activities for the public ritual events that traversed most of the populous colonia's streets. The

⁶⁷ Author interview with Isabel Aranguren, December 19, 2017, Zapopan, Mexico.

⁶⁸ Author interview with Mario Suárez, March 16, 2018, Guadalajara, México.

⁶⁹ AHRSCJ-MX, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, Folleto, Eventos Conmemorativos del 25 aniversario del Colegio Santa Cecilia, octubre-noviembre 1995, p. 5.

⁷⁰ Author interview with Isabel Aranguren, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

⁷¹ Author interview with Mario Suárez, March 16, 2018, Guadalajara, México.

processionals stand out in his memory as “some really beautiful organizing.”⁷² The Padres de Familia created four committees— maintenance, assemblies and meetings, *festejos* (public event coordination), and communication.⁷³ With large numbers of people taking on specific tasks—from sports to traffic, emergencies and invitations—the massive processionals ran smoothly because a few people did not get overwhelmed with responsibilities.⁷⁴

Parent organization member María Martínez credits Sagrado Corazón nuns with inculcating a culture of sharing, serving others, and participation. In addition to the *convivencia* of working alongside each other on projects, a Catholic ethical understanding told participants “it was service.”⁷⁵ Nuns conceptualized the school as “integrating faith and culture, faith and life in one single educational process.” They wanted to avoid “the dichotomy” of envisioning those aspects separately. That faith-life or faith-culture dialectic demonstrated the Colegio Santa Cecilia followed the “guidelines of Vatican II, Medellín,” and the RSCJ congregation.⁷⁶

In 1974, Santa Cecilia hosted the first of several important religious events with national and international reach during the 1970s. The Taize Youth Council held its international gathering there in December 1974, and residents welcomed youth and

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ AHRSCJ-MX, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, Folleto, Eventos Conmemorativos del 25 aniversario del Colegio Santa Cecilia, octubre-noviembre 1995, “Padres de Familia,” pp. 7-8.

⁷⁴ Author interview with Mario Suárez, March 16, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁷⁵ Author interview with María Martínez, March 16, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁷⁶ AHRSCJ-MX, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, “Colegio Santa Cecilia: Interpretación y diagnóstico global,” junio de 1978, p. 3.

religious workers from around the world as guests in their homes. The Taize meeting's heterodox approach to Catholic spirituality and coed youth attendance attracted the negative attention of Guadalajara's numerous, powerful ultra-traditionalist, right-wing Catholics. Santa Cecilia residents remember bomb threats and other acts of intimidation in the days leading up to the Youth Council convening.⁷⁷ An uneasy archbishop José Salazar López wrote Santa Cecilia parish priest Salvador Sánchez months before the event requesting detailed plans and the program, which Sánchez promptly mailed to the archdiocese.⁷⁸ The Taize gathering ultimately served to galvanize youth participation in CEBs and other organizing in the colonia. At the height of Santa Cecilia's CEB movement in the ensuing months and years, thirty youth groups met regularly and participated fully in the colonia's larger network.⁷⁹

Socorro Ramírez moved to Santa Cecilia with her family in 1974. She soon became promotora of her CEB group. The group of twenty-five people met in Ramírez's home, a few blocks up the street from Díaz and Osorio. Weekly CEB meetings filled the spaces of her house. "And there were groups all over the colonia like that," she recalls, "those small evangelization groups." Promotoras attended weekly meetings with the nuns, "to listen to the ficha in order to bring it back here and teach it to the others." CEB groups served as organizational scaffolding and communication channels for a range of colonia-wide activities. When events and actions required largescale planning and

⁷⁷ Author interview with Ampelia Orozco, November 30, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁷⁸ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, José Card. Salazar López to Sr. Cura D. Salvador Sánchez, octubre 25 de 1973; and AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, "Concilio de los jóvenes," pp. 1-5.

⁷⁹ Biblioteca ITESO, Acervo General, Margarito Íñiguez, et al., *El Proyecto de Santa Cecilia*, p. 14.

organizational efforts, promotoras ensured group members engaged, and base community participants spread the word to other residents not involved in CEBs. “We had to let them know,” Ramírez notes, ““We’re going to meet at this location; we’re going to do this; we’re going to do that.””⁸⁰

Santa Cecilia’s consumer cooperative had members (*socios*), and hundreds of households participated. Residents signed up because “we all had a lot of needs,” Ramírez says. “We were all poor.” The consumer cooperative received some subsidized provisions from government agency CONASUPO (National Company of Popular Subsistence). Base community members also pooled funds to purchase certain staple food products wholesale at Guadalajara’s sprawling Abastos Market. Sagrado Corazón nuns obtained cheaper *dispensas* (rations) “for those of us who didn’t have enough to buy expensive stuff,” Ramírez notes. CEB groups organized and coordinated *dispensas* to more than five hundred cooperative members, and the distribution of goods followed the colonia’s base community structure.⁸¹

Cuco Jiménez, Cecilia González’s husband, made cooperative pickups and deliveries in his truck. Promotoras and other CEB participants passed out beans, sugar, soap, and other basics when truckloads arrived. In the mid-1970s, Santa Cecilia CEBs’ consumer cooperative opened a store near the parish temple and Oblatos Education

⁸⁰ Author interview with Socorro Ramírez, February 11, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

Center library.⁸² The consumer cooperative had the longest lifespan of various CEB cooperatives in the colonia from 1969 through the late 1980s.⁸³

Jesuit priests and Sagrado Corazón nuns also forged strong personal connections to residents by helping them obtain necessities in a context of economic precarity.

Ramírez and her family arrived with very little in 1974.

That's how I poor I was. I received a lot of help from the priests and nuns, a lot. For me, Padre Alfredo [Zepeda]— one time I was dying with this tooth. He took me to his brother-in-law, and he fixed the tooth. Madre Chelo [Romo] gave me clothes— of hers, I suppose. She would say, 'Hey, do you want a bundle of clothes that I have?' They gave me a lot. I think that's why [my son] José turned out to be so charitable and giving... Because we already went through that. We lived it.⁸⁴

Liberationists understood assistentialism as insufficient but necessary to their ministries in colonias populares, alongside community organizing and critiques of structural sin.

With four institutions—the Catholic parish, the RSCJ, IMDEC, and the Jesuits—operating in the colonia from 1971 to 1978, Santa Cecilia residents accessed social services not available in most peripheral zones of the city. In the RSCJ building where Oblatos Education Center is now located, known as “the library,” social workers and doctors took cases and provided information and resources. In the 1970s, “there were many things that helped you out a lot,” as Ramírez puts it.⁸⁵

In describing the settings of base community meetings, Sagrado Corazón nun Consuelo Romo, who lived in Santa Cecilia from 1975 to 1983, highlights the

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Author interview with Consuelo Lucio, March 16, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁸⁴ Author interview with Socorro Ramírez, February 11, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

impoverished conditions and incompleteness of this auto-urbanizing colonia. Some CEB groups met at empty lots around the colonia, where attendees sat on rocks, the ground, or brought stools and chairs. “I felt like we were in the countryside,” Romo recalls. Two nuns convened CEB promotoras—about twenty women—at Oblatos Education Center every Monday to provide the format and thematic content leaders shared at group meetings around the colonia. Romo, Socorro Martínez, and Isabel Aranguren created CEBs’ weekly fichas. They built group sessions around themes that connected Catholic faith with both structural inequalities and interpersonal relationships. Romo’s tenure in Santa Cecilia began during peak years of base community activity. Her days typically included visits to two CEB groups and a session with married couples in the evening after many neighborhood men returned from work.⁸⁶

Socorro Martínez, one of the “more progressive” nuns, moved to Santa Cecilia in 1975 to serve as project coordinator for the RSCJ community.⁸⁷ Martínez collaborated effectively with IMDEC’s Carlos Núñez and lead Jesuit priest José Luis Estrada, which signaled a moment of renewed possibility after difficult tensions between institutions and individuals during 1973 and 1974. Santa Cecilia’s base communities also linked to the national organization of CEBs in 1975. Promotoras travelled as representatives to the national base communities gathering in Taxco, Guerrero that year. Santa Cecilia base communities forged alliances with other colonias’ CEBs in Guadalajara, especially Santa Margarita and Lomas de Polanco. Those trans-periphery relationships became the basis for the broad fronts characteristic of the urban popular movement in the 1980s. The mid-

⁸⁶ Author interview with Consuelo Romo, February 28, 2019, Zapopan, Mexico.

⁸⁷ Author interview with Consuelo Lucio, March 16, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

1970s was a period of continued strengthening of CEB groups in Santa Cecilia, and the formation of couples' groups in 1976 represented a milestone because CEBs had been composed almost entirely of women.⁸⁸

In a 1974 assessment of the Santa Cecilia project, Sagrado Corazón nuns described their overall approach as “consciousness-raising evangelization.”⁸⁹ Then the RSCJ community shifted from “an evangelization focus” to a “popular education” emphasis in 1975, corresponding to the arrival of new team members Martínez and Romo. At the provincial level, the RSCJ in Mexico first referenced popular education in their 1976 national convening. The community of nuns in Santa Cecilia reported that the transition from evangelization to popular education was challenging that year, while alluding to expanded possibilities the new “broader” framework offered.⁹⁰ They were just beginning to define the concept through their own practice in the colonia. First and foremost, popular education was “that which is directed to the popular classes.” The approach also “recognizes that education is not neutral, and, as such, it either favors changing reality or it reinforces the status quo.”⁹¹

⁸⁸ AHRSCJ-MX, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, Proy. Apostólico Sta. Cecilia Sept. 1970, “Santa Cecilia,” pp. 1-7.

⁸⁹ AHRSCJ-MX, Período Graciela Volpe, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, “Santa Cecilia,” 20 de octubre 1978, p. 2.

⁹⁰ AHRSCJ-MX, Período Graciela Volpe, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, Sta. Cecilia Evaluación, Comunidad de Santa Cecilia, “Evaluación del Proyecto Sta. Cecilia,” 5 de septiembre de 1979, 8: “Comunidades Cristianas de Base.”

⁹¹ AHRSCJ-MX, Período Graciela Volpe, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, Sta. Cecilia Evaluación, Comunidad de Santa Cecilia, “Evaluación del Proyecto Sta. Cecilia,” 5 de septiembre de 1979, 5: “Educación Popular.”

Street Theater, *El Alipuz*, and Counterpublics

RSCJ nuns have enduring memories of learning from Santa Cecilia residents. Isabel Aranguren attended the 1981 national CEBs gathering in Tehuantepec, Oaxaca and returned to Guadalajara anxious to transmit important teachings to the people. But her theoretical approach failed entirely, and group participants did not appear to understand. The veteran nun asked CEB members to contemplate it further and regroup the following week. When they met again, participants gave Aranguren a lasting lesson on how to communicate the relevance of themes she introduced to the popular classes. Their “symbolic and simple form of explaining theoretical things” moved her to reevaluate pedagogical approaches.⁹²

People who lived and worked in Santa Cecilia and other colonias populares experimented with many forms of communication to agitate, mobilize, educate, and elicit the participation of mass audiences of working-class and poor citizens. Drawing participants from the colonia’s CEBs, a vibrant popular theater group emerged. With training, coordination, and technical assistance from community organization IMDEC, the street theater group created and performed ten full-length plays and innumerable shorter “sociodramas” beginning in 1973.⁹³ Like most aspects of community organizing in Santa Cecilia, women led the *teatro popular* group. They often played men’s parts in public performances because the group was comprised of all women (“*puras mujeres*”)

⁹² Author interview with Isabel Aranguren, December 19, 2017, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁹³ ITESO University Library Special Collections, Fondo Carlos Núñez (ITESO-FCN), Documentos, D-1211, Arq. Carlos Núñez H., IMDEC, A.C., “El caso de Santa Cecilia: Sistematización de una experiencia concreta,” 1981, pp. 1-7.

during certain stages of its history.⁹⁴ On Sundays throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Santa Cecilia residents attended *festivales populares* (popular festivals) at the colonia's main intersection in front of the parish temple. Popular festivals included free meals, music and singing from local groups like La Voz del Pueblo, and dancing. The theater group presented "conscientizing representations" from the concrete stage on the expansive church patio, with the goal of "educating the people about their rights." CEB members also distributed an important print source of "alternative information" to crowds that averaged between one- and three-thousand people— the street newspaper *El Alipuz*.⁹⁵

IMDEC first conceived of the theater component of its "popular communication" project in Santa Cecilia as led by youth actors. Núñez and IMDEC organizers assembled a contingent of more than twenty teenagers and soon produced the first work, "*Los Incomunicados*." For this trial run, they provided the young actors with a script. The youth theater group moved to a model of "collective creation" for the next play. Núñez described IMDEC's approach of "using the methodology of expression exercises based in each one of the group participants' own recent history." He believed this approach "achieved the creation of a process of critical recovery of their historical consciousness." Material taken from group members' lived experiences was sufficient to produce a play about a typical family of campesino migrants, presenting the problematic that compelled them to leave the countryside, in addition to their first contact with urban culture. The group titled the participatory production, "*De allá me echaron y aquí me tienen*" ("They

⁹⁴ Author interview with Cecilia González, September 27, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁹⁵ Author interview with Isabel Aranguren, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

Threw Me Out of There and Here I Am”).⁹⁶ But after continued experimentation with other new works, the youth theater group fizzled out.⁹⁷

The next teatro popular group was composed of women, men, and youth who participated in Santa Cecilia’s base communities. A cadre of CEB members—promotores and active participants—chose street theater as their form of mass communication to the larger barrio. The group “decided to socialize all their knowledge and all their acquired experience with the rest of the colonia,” Núñez wrote several years later.⁹⁸ Actors met each Sunday morning at eleven for rehearsal and discussion. Inviting other Santa Cecilia residents to participate in December 1973, the emergent street theater group said its threefold mission was to “do simple theater, created by the people of the colonia; provoke the participation of everyone who lives in it so that we unite, and united we analyze our situation in order to start to change it, little by little; [and] do theater not only for fun, but for transformation.”⁹⁹

In 1973, the parish’s Holy Week festival organizers asked the teatro popular group to interpret the seventh station of the Via Crucis each Friday in Lent, reenacting Christ’s second fall while carrying the cross to Mount Calvary. The group met to discuss creative possibilities and decided to “demonstrate that the image of Christ continues to be present” in workers and campesinos, “who fall over and over again because of the weight

⁹⁶ ITESO-FCN, Documentos, D-1211, Arq. Carlos Núñez H., IMDEC, A.C., “El caso de Santa Cecilia: Sistematización de una experiencia concreta,” 1981, p. 3.

⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 4.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, Revistas, *El Alipuz* 9, 9 de diciembre de 1973, p. 8.

of the injustice of the system that dominates us.” Their dramatic performance of the seventh station stood out from others that represented scenes “statically” “with figures from the past.” The teatro popular group merged the Gospel story with realities facing Mexico’s popular classes. “This little dramatization caused an enormous impact and produced a large quantity of commentaries about the perspective the group had given to the Gospel story,” according to Núñez. Instead of traditional signs attached to the cross, such as “King of the Jews,” the teatro popular group posted signs about injustices heaped on working people in Mexico.¹⁰⁰ From 1974 to 1976, the parish team held a “living Via Crucis” around the temple on the expansive patio. In 1977, they started using Santa Cecilia’s streets for the living Via Crucis, with CEBs carrying the weight of participation.¹⁰¹

Feeling the enthusiasm and confidence the Via Crucis representations generated when performed in front of hundreds of people, the street theater group shifted thematic focus from the liturgical calendar to important dates on the secular calendar in 1973. They began in May with a Mother’s Day themed presentation, reasoning “the mother’s role is very meaningful, but it has also been seriously distorted by commercial propaganda that uses affective feelings toward mothers to profit from it.” The play portrayed daily lives of Mexican mothers, poor women above all, who were “forgotten,” “disregarded,” and forced to bear the weight of “all the manifestations of machismo.” The performance also ridiculed “commercial messages that, year after year, attempt to

¹⁰⁰ ITESO-FCN, Documentos, D-1211, Arq. Carlos Núñez H., IMDEC, A.C., 1981, “El caso de Santa Cecilia: Sistematización de una experiencia concreta,” Guadalajara, México, p. 4-5.

¹⁰¹ AHCEO, Documentos, CEBs de Santa Cecilia, “Recordando la historia de nuestra colonia IV (5),” 8 de febrero de 1982, pp. 1-2.

profit from the feelings of the people.”¹⁰² Consumer culture in the city became a favorite target of CEB messaging through street theater and *El Alipuz*. The teatro popular’s works reflected on the invention or commercialization of several holidays, including Father’s Day, Compadre’s Day, and the hyper-commercialization of Christmas.¹⁰³

Santa Cecilia’s theater group presented at Sunday festivals and other events in the colonia and around the city’s peripheries. One sociodrama during the Christmas season featured Mary giving birth to Jesus in the midst of the bricks and mortar of an incomplete house. Alongside rituals and convivencia in the streets during Christmas, the group of CEB members reimagined Joseph and Mary seeking posada. In their interpretation, the holy family went to the hospital to request care and they were turned away. Each play and sociodrama reflected experiences of the popular classes and excluded sectors in Mexican society, but “Judgment of a Worker” most explicitly conveyed a class-conscious message. Two other plays utilized the template of putting a subject on trial—“Judgment of an *Indio*” and “Judgment of a Mother”—with audiences serving as “popular juries.”¹⁰⁴

Like many elements of the Sunday festivales populares, teatro popular performances encouraged participation from Santa Cecilia residents in attendance. During Sunday performances on the stage overlooking the colonia and Oblatos Canyon (see fig. 3.2), theater group members “asked people to participate, say what they thought of it, what messages it left them with,” teatro popular actress María de Jesús Ledesma

¹⁰² ITESO-FCN, Documentos, D-1211, Arq. Carlos Núñez H., IMDEC, A.C., 1981, “El caso de Santa Cecilia: Sistematización de una experiencia concreta,” 1981, p. 5.

¹⁰³ Ibid, pp. 1-7.

¹⁰⁴ ITESO-FCN, Documentos, D-1211, Arq. Carlos Núñez H., IMDEC, A.C., “El caso de Santa Cecilia: Sistematización de una experiencia concreta,” 1981, pp. 1-7.

stresses.¹⁰⁵ Beyond participation during performances, Carlos Núñez envisioned the theater project “*creating with the people.*”¹⁰⁶



Figure 3.2. Stage for popular theater performances and other events, located on the Church patio in Santa Cecilia. Photo by author, 2017.

CEB leaders, nuns, Jesuit priests, and community activists collaborated to create *El Alipuz*, which Aranguren describes as an “alternative newspaper that gave different information from the [mainstream] news programs and newspapers.”¹⁰⁷ The “popular

¹⁰⁵ Author interview with María de Jesús Ledesma, February 9, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

¹⁰⁶ ITESO-FCN, Documentos, D-1211, Arq. Carlos Núñez H., IMDEC, A.C., “El caso de Santa Cecilia: Sistematización de una experiencia concreta,” 1981, p. 1. Italics are mine.

¹⁰⁷ Author interview with Isabel Aranguren, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

information bulletin” consisted of around ten pages of information and commentary communicated through text and hand-drawn, cartoon scenes. Santa Cecilia resident Cancho Ayala created the drawings, and IMDEC proved integral to the street newspaper’s operation. The nuns’ residence housed the printer and production of each edition happened there.¹⁰⁸ The first phase of *El Alipuz*, from 1973 to 1977, paralleled the best years of CEB activity and popular mobilization in the colonia. The second phase—after IMDEC’s departure in 1978, through the mid-1980s—was led by CEB members and reflected a broader national and continental focus and a reduced but committed local base of participation.

Like other popular communication tools employed by Santa Cecilia’s CEB movement, *El Alipuz* sought engagement and participation from its audience. On the frontpage of the second edition, the team of editors printed, “Attention: this newsletter is yours. Do you want to help make it? Send your name and address to 2797 Manuel M. Ponce.”¹⁰⁹ *El Alipuz* regularly announced contests and competitions with prizes, which proved effective in generating interest, particularly in the most active recruitment stages of the early to mid-1970s. An early edition featured a page-length announcement for the upcoming festival that included a contest for best original song, with prizes of a guitar or three hundred pesos.¹¹⁰ During its first year of production in 1973, *El Alipuz* ran the announcement, “Attention My Friends! Now you can participate in a new contest: What does it mean to be Mexican?” The winning poem or essay won one hundred pesos and

¹⁰⁸ Author interview with Jesús Osorio, March 15, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

¹⁰⁹ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, Revistas, *El Alipuz* 2, 29 de julio de 1973, p. 1.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 2.

publication. “It’s very easy,” editors suggested. “All of us can do it.” The street newspaper made a competition of naming the historieta’s family. With the name Chinchentavoz, Yolanda Arias won the contest “by popular decision.”¹¹¹ *El Alipuz* also prodded readers to reflect and, at times, question cherished traditions. It offered two hundred pesos and publication to the winner of an essay contest on the meaning of Christmas in December 1973.¹¹² Under the frontpage headline, “We Celebrate the Fiesta of Sta. Cecilia,” in November, editors prodded readers, “What is the reason for having this festival in our lives? Aside from celebrating it, are we committing to doing something for our colonia?”¹¹³

Social movements’ uses of popular communication tools during the 1970s and 1980s in Guadalajara provide a window onto the historical development of individual and collective political subjectivities. Street theater and newspapers contributed to the elaboration of a political culture characterized by popular Catholicism, critical thinking, participation, and democracy in peripheral colonias where the urban popular movement emerged. Political spaces opened up for the Left during the 1970s in Mexico because of a PRI-state discourse of “democratic opening” and pretensions of revived revolutionary nationalism, the solidarity of a marginal but committed sector of the Catholic Church

¹¹¹ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, Revistas, *El Alipuz* 5, 30 de septiembre de 1973, p. 8.

¹¹² AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, Revistas, *El Alipuz* 10, 23 de diciembre de 1973, p. 7.

¹¹³ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, Revistas, *El Alipuz* 8, 25 de noviembre de 1973, p. 1.

with the poor, and activities of the radical flank of armed revolutionary movements combined with the state's Dirty War on the Left.¹¹⁴

In Guadalajara, movements anchored in Christian base communities evidenced the strong influence of Freirian popular education in political consciousness and action. In this example of independent organizing and effective collective action outside the corporatist structures of the PRI-state, political parties, and unions, we see the fundamental role of religious ideas, practices, and institutions in the local context. In diverse works of popular theater and street newspapers like *El Alipuz*, activists and residents provided “alternative information” through narratives, illustrations, and performances. During this era of transition to neoliberal rule with its correspondent social fragmentation, these two forms of popular communication encouraged solidarity and impacted class formation. In the city's colonias populares, teatro popular and street newspapers cultivated a hermeneutic of suspicion and a class consciousness, even if framed by a simple rich-poor dichotomy.

From 1975 forward, the RSCJ conceptualized two categories of “mass actions” (*acciones masivas*) in Santa Cecilia— “*festivas*” and “*reivindicativas*,” with the struggles and conflict of *acciones reivindicativas* balanced and endured because of the *convivencia* and light-heartedness of *acciones festivas*. After several years in the colonia, Sagrado

¹¹⁴ The literature in both Spanish and English on the armed Left and Mexico's Guerra Sucia of the 1970s is now too vast to list here. For representative works that deal with both the national and local Guadalajara context, see Sergio Aguayo Quezada, *La charola: Una historia de los servicios de inteligencia en Mexico* (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 2001); Adela Cedillo and Fernando Herrera Calderón, *Challenging Authoritarianism in Mexico: Revolutionary Struggles and the Dirty War, 1964-1982* (London: Routledge, 2012); and chapters by Cedillo, Aviña, Calderón, and McCormick in Jaime M. Pensado and Enrique Ochoa, eds., *México Beyond 1968: Revolutionaries, Radicals, and Repression During the Global Sixties and Subversive Seventies* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2018).

Corazón nuns believed “two very important aspects of the idiosyncrasy of the people” undergirded such “mass actions”— their “popular religiosity” and “sense of fiesta.” The CEB movement utilized the liturgical calendar to schedule a regular slate of large public events in the colonia’s streets. In mass events and actions, they hoped to “communicate a strong and unified message to the colonia,” mobilize large numbers of people, and generate opportunities to participate at different levels. The movement sought to “break people’s fear of the public,” strengthen colonia-wide communication, and perpetuate “concrete actions” by the base communities.¹¹⁵

Struggles for Space: Organizing for Urban Services and Dignity

Working-class and poor residents of the city appropriated streets and sidewalks through everyday practice. Streets of colonias populares were places of encounter and socialization. Nuns held catechism meetings on streets curbs and sidewalks.¹¹⁶ Decentering the parish temple as exclusive place of the sacred, liberationist priests conducted mass in different spaces of the colonia. Jesuits José Luis Estrada, Arnaldo Zenteno, and Alfredo Zepeda led “*misas de barrio*” on the streets and in people’s homes during the 1970s. CEB participants spread word that “there’s going to be a mass over there” on a certain street corner or in a family’s home.¹¹⁷

Residents picked up the August 26, 1973 edition of *El Alipuz*, where the question was posed, “Can Sta. Cecilia Become a United Colonia?” In the frontpage scene, a man

¹¹⁵ AHRSCJ-MX, Período Graciela Volpe, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, Sta. Cecilia Evaluación, Comunidad de Santa Cecilia, “Evaluación del Proyecto Sta. Cecilia,” 5 de septiembre de 1979, 10-11: “Acciones Masivas.”

¹¹⁶ Author interview with Marina Sahagún, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

¹¹⁷ Author interview with María Martínez, March 16, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

in overalls and straw hat reflects, “Problems, Problems, Problems, and each person wants to solve them alone... As if we had not taken notice yet that we are how we are because we are not united.”¹¹⁸ The physical space of the colonia had the capacity for ten thousand residents, but the population surpassed thirty thousand by 1974, in route to fifty thousand by 1976. The colonia still lacked water service at the beginning of 1975, in addition to having no mail or telephones.¹¹⁹ When CEB participants contemplated the “reality” of their colonia together in weekly meetings, they had little difficulty developing a lengthy list of “problems.” For the first several years, for example, the only water came from a few scattered wells on particular residents’ properties. Many people washed dishes and clothes at two or three o’clock in the morning, when they could finally access small quantities of water. The few households in Santa Cecilia who could afford it installed sewer service, but most people on González’s block had to walk further down toward Oblatos Canyon to relieve themselves. They made arrangements with family members and friends about who would go when, and who would accompany who, before going behind the cover of rocks in the open air.¹²⁰

In the face of material deprivation and myriad challenges, *El Alipuz* emphasized the capacity of citizens to intervene and change the situation. “If we are okay with all of this then we don’t have to do anything,” the street newspaper editorialized. “But if we’re interested in getting what we don’t have and what they are taking from us, then it

¹¹⁸ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, 1970-, Revistas, *El Alipuz* 3, August 26, 1973, p. 1.

¹¹⁹ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, 1970-, Revistas, *El Alipuz* 23, enero de 1975, p. 1ff.

¹²⁰ Author interview with Cecilia González, September 27, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

depends on our unity and our work.”¹²¹ In a 1977 interview, CEB participant Lupe Gómez summarized the pressure campaign that eventually forced the municipal government to provide water service to all of Santa Cecilia. “No, we’re not going to stand here with our arms crossed,” she insisted.

It’s not something where you just say, “Well, whenever they want to put in the water. Whenever God wants it to happen.” No, it’s a right that we have to demand. So we went to protest at the mayor’s office. We went there when it was Mr. Delgado Navarro. And well, it was just a bunch of lies, total lies, like, “Yes, yes, they’ll fix it. Just two months and then you’ll have water.” Two months passed and nothing. So we went back to tell the man, “Remember what you promised us.” Another promise and nothing. Then he said, “In July for sure.” But there’s no water here unless it falls from the sky, because there’s never been any water in the faucets.¹²²

Citizens engaged in public processes constantly on this insurgent model put forward by base communities and popular movements in Guadalajara during the 1970s, as they forever faced uphill battles against entrenched forces. In the March 1974 edition of *El Alipuz*, artist Cancho Ayala represented a recent protest in front of the mayor’s office in cartoon form. Protesting residents declared the occasion “The Festival of ‘There’s No Water.’” The initial scene depicts the multitude of Santa Cecilia protestors with arms waving and chanting, “Water, Water, Water!” The next scene has protestors holding a large sign reading, “We want the water they waste watering plants for the people.” After the rally outside the municipal government building in the principal plaza downtown, protestors advanced inside to speak with top officials. Arriving at the desk marked “Public Services,” with a sign saying, “Be brief,” a Santa Cecilia resident pleads,

¹²¹ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, 1970-, Revistas, *El Alipuz* 23, enero de 1975, pp. 2-5. Italics are mine.

¹²² Orozco, “Los fraccionadores,” *Lo que pasa en mi barrio*, Track 5.

“We’re paying for water that we don’t have.” The indifferent bald character with sunglasses and a cigarette responds, “And what’s the problem?”¹²³

During the region’s annual dry season in April 1974, Santa Cecilia residents endured the last fifteen days of the month with no water. Inadequate and irregular service was the norm, but the total lack of water produced a crisis. The Unión de Colonos (Residents’ Union), the central coordinating committee of the colonia’s CEB movement at the time, nominated a commission of representatives to negotiate with local government officials on the issue. They immediately hand-delivered multiple statements of the problem to the utility SIAPA (Intermunicipal System of Potable Water and Sewer Services) and the mayor’s office but received no response. Then about thirty residents went to SIAPA’s offices, where they met with officials. The utility failed to act in the meeting’s aftermath. The commission of Santa Cecilia residents then mailed letters to the municipal Public Works department head, receiving no response again. The Unión de Colonos dispatched a different delegation of four residents to SIAPA offices, but officials refused to meet with them.¹²⁴

With the ongoing water crisis and authorities now denying them an audience, the Unión de Colonos decided to protest outside the Municipal Palace downtown in order to force a meeting with the mayor. They planned and prepared the action for two weeks, and on Monday, May 20, 1974, more than three hundred Santa Cecilia residents—the vast

¹²³ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, 1970-, Revistas, *El Alipuz* 14, 30 de marzo de 1974, pp. 7-8.

¹²⁴ AHRSCJ-MX, Período Graciela Volpe, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, Sta. Cecilia Evaluación, Comunidad de Santa Cecilia, “Evaluación del Proyecto Sta. Cecilia,” 5 de septiembre de 1979, 10-11: “Acciones Reivindicativas,” p. 2.

majority women—rallied outside the government building demanding water. Officials finally emerged and offered the band-aid solution of installing several large containers of water around the neighborhood and promising to build an aqueduct to deliver water in the coming weeks. Those measures proved inadequate for the urgency and scope of the problem in Santa Cecilia. The water receptacles filled with dirt and trash easily, while the aqueduct took over a year to construct. All the while, SIAPA billed residents for inexistent service and levied exorbitant fines for overdue bills.¹²⁵

In May 1974, an *El Alipuz* headline urged, “The water is on the way, but we have to make it arrive.”¹²⁶ Movement participants acquired a healthy distrust of the government following through. They emphasized the necessity of remaining aware and consistently applying collective pressure. Victories often required long waits, which led to high levels of frustration. Months later, in a December 1974 edition of *El Alipuz*, two characters lament seven months had passed since they petitioned for water. They just got word from the municipal government that the public works project would be complete in twenty days. “Well, we have to stay alert so that those twenty days don’t turn into months,” observed the older woman character.¹²⁷

Months later during the protracted struggle for water, Santa Cecilia residents went by the busloads to the mayor’s office downtown. Hundreds of protestors blocked traffic on September 16th Avenue between the main cathedral and the mayor’s office. Dozens of

¹²⁵ Ibid, pp. 2-3.

¹²⁶ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, 1970-, Revistas, *El Alipuz* 15, 10 de mayo de 1974, p. 1.

¹²⁷ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, 1970-, Revistas, *El Alipuz* 22, diciembre de 1974, p. 8.

the colonia's children began bathing in Guadalajara's iconic downtown fountains.¹²⁸ After the children finished, a contingent of mothers washed loads of dirty cloth diapers in the fountains.¹²⁹ The large crowd of poor people and the scene they created downtown forced Mayor Juan Delgado Navarro to emerge, after he attempted to run interference with spokespeople. Protestors conveyed to officials that they needed water and some men soon brought them water in cups. "No, thank you. We don't want that water," the outspoken Cecilia González told the functionaries. "We want water to wash the dishes we ate breakfast on. Go ahead and drink that water yourself." Officials then requested only a couple of representatives from the Santa Cecilia contingent continue the discussion inside. But the group of citizens refused to separate, and dozens proceeded inside together, "because the problem was not just for one or two people but for all of us living in the colonia," González argues.¹³⁰ Such episodes convinced them of the importance of going in large groups to make demands on the state. González knew showing up alone to complain would not yield results. "No, that crazy old woman, what's her problem?" Instead, as she puts it in terms of a constant refrain in *El Alipuz*, "As they say, there is strength in unity."¹³¹

With the collective actions Santa Cecilia CEB participants carried out in the mid-1970s, the movement advanced to taking political action and claiming their rights to the city together "as a people" in its most high-profile public spaces. They forced the state to

¹²⁸ Author interview with Consuelo Lucio, March 16, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

¹²⁹ Author interview with Elena Lupercio, November 4, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

¹³⁰ Author interview with Cecilia González, September 27, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

improve water infrastructure through years of negotiation and direct action. But the service remained deficient in the colonia, even non-existent in some zones. Santa Cecilia residents raised the water issue again when Mayor Guillermo Reyes Robles held a town hall meeting in the colonia in May 1977, with the region deep into its dry season. Under questioning from residents, Reyes Robles “recognized the developer’s greediness, but washed his hands, saying that he couldn’t solve problems from the previous administration.” At the town hall meeting, the mayor pledged to install additional pipes and lower rates. But those measures remained unfulfilled promises in subsequent months.¹³²

In January 1978, Santa Cecilia CEB members staged a large and loud protest at SIAPA offices with more than five hundred participants. This time they demanded a freeze on service charges until water service to their colonia normalized, as rates had recently spiked yet again. After getting the attention of SIAPA officials, they named a committee of five people to negotiate on behalf of the colonia— Margarito Íñiguez (long-time community leader), Agustín Rodríguez (president of the Padres de Familia), Lupe Montoya and Consuelo Lucio (CEB promotoras), and Patricia González (youth group participant).¹³³ SIAPA head Jorge Matute Remus agreed not to increase rates until service

¹³² AHRSCJ-MX, Período Graciela Volpe, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, Sta. Cecilia Evaluación, Comunidad de Santa Cecilia, “Evaluación del Proyecto Sta. Cecilia,” 5 de septiembre de 1979, 10-11: “Acciones Reivindicativas,” p. 3.

¹³³ Ibid.

normalized. “The CEBs, more conscious by then, made him sign the letter; they no longer trusted in his word alone.”¹³⁴

Movement participants narrate patterns of “*puras promesas*” (empty promises) and “*puras mentiritas*” (total lies) in the state’s discourse in negotiations with them during myriad urban services campaigns over time. Matute Remus did not freeze water rates and service to the colonia remained deficient the rest of the year. Hundreds of Santa Cecilia’s children led a 1979 protest downtown at the municipal headquarters, demonstrating for the same access to water as children on the western side of the city. With faulty water infrastructure continuing to plague the colonia in 1980, the CEB-led movement took a new approach to demanding lower bills from SIAPA. Santa Cecilia CEBs dispatched smaller committees of five to ten residents to the water utility’s offices for eighteen straight days, with committee members refusing to leave the office until top officials met with them on each occasion. “The [base] communities worked tirelessly to achieve the [rate] reduction for the whole colonia,” Sagrado Corazón nuns and CEB participants later reflected.¹³⁵ They gave meaning to the many protracted luchas reivindicativas through a reading of the Gospel parable of the persistent widow.¹³⁶ “Six years of the fight for water, something we have a right to,” they wrote in a collective document from 1982, “and little by little we have been learning that fighting for our

¹³⁴ AHCEO, Documentos, CEBs de Santa Cecilia, “Recordando la historia de nuestra colonia II (4),” 25 de enero de 1982, p. 1.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid, p. 2.

rights is not foreign to our Christian faith; instead, our faith gives us the strength to not grow weary.”¹³⁷

“Necessity” drove collective demands and actions in Santa Cecilia during the seventies. These diverse struggles for urban services improved material conditions and quality of life for tens of thousands of low-income citizens. But base community members also believed the luchas reivindicativas were “not an end in themselves but part of a process of the people fighting to defend their rights.”¹³⁸ The first campaign for urban services in Santa Cecilia had been for telephones. In response to repeated visits to their offices by committees of residents in 1974, Teléfonos de México installed the first unit near CEB promotora Consuelo Lucio’s house above Joaquin Amaro Avenue on Manuel M. Ponce Street, then placed five other telephones around the colonia.¹³⁹ Years later in 1980, Santa Cecilia residents met with Teléfonos de México general manager Guillermo Gutiérrez to request additional public telephones to serve a population that ballooned to more than 60,000. They presented Gutiérrez with a list of names and addresses—and map with correspondent locations—of residents “who had accepted the installation of public telephone booths, making themselves responsible for being available to take care of those devices.”¹⁴⁰ Organized citizens in Santa Cecilia had requested telephone service for a decade by then. The colonia’s Junta Cívica sent Ignacio Martinez of Teléfonos de México

¹³⁷ Ibid, pp. 1-2.

¹³⁸ AHRSCJ-MX, Período Graciela Volpe, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, Sta. Cecilia Evaluación, Comunidad de Santa Cecilia, “Evaluación del Proyecto Sta. Cecilia,” 5 de septiembre de 1979, 10-11: “Acciones Reivindicativas,” p. 1.

¹³⁹ Author interview with Consuelo Lucio, March 16, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

¹⁴⁰ AHCEO, Documentos, CEBs de Santa Cecilia, “Recordando la historia de nuestra colonia II (4),” 25 de enero de 1982, pp. 1-2.

a letter in 1971 stressing the “urgent necessity of having one or two telephones” for their one hundred thirty-two *manzanas* and 20,000 residents. “We hope that our petition will be heard this time so that we can be able to communicate with the city’s center.”¹⁴¹

Santa Cecilia movement participants become more militant in tone and demand-making in relations with the state and powerful institutions and individuals in civil society. During the period covered in this case study—roughly 1968 to 1985—residents forced the local government to deliver on the necessary services to finally urbanize the colonia. They got water, electricity, sewer, trash pickup, streetlights, bus service, public telephones, and paved streets. Collective action in the largest numbers of people possible delivered results over time in obtaining each piece of urban infrastructure originally promised by the developer. As CEB promotora Socorro Ramírez summarized,

And if the trash didn’t get picked up, let’s go ask for trash pickup too. There weren’t any telephones, none. Let’s go see if they’ll put a line in. That helped out so much, a lot. I think that if there hadn’t been those groups [CEBs], well, most likely, we wouldn’t have had the colonia that we have.¹⁴²

Residents once organized to stop paying their electric bills, in response to being charged for a service they were not actually receiving. Later, after years without regular garbage collection service, residents gathered trash and hauled it to the nearest municipal government office. A contingent of twenty Santa Cecilia residents crammed inside and registered their complaint with a secretary in the front room, who responded dismissively. “Send the trash trucks by or we will bring it all here and empty it out,” they threatened functionaries. “We’ll fill up some trucks and bring it here to dump out, with the maggots

¹⁴¹ AMG, Obras Publicas, Colonias Populares, Caja 217, Santa Cecilia 2, Junta Cívica para el Desarrollo de la Comunidad- Santa Cecilia al Sr. Ignacio Martínez de Teléfonos de México, 11 de octubre 1971, p. 1.

¹⁴² Author interview with Socorro Ramírez, February 11, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

and everything.” After continued pressure at the municipal government building, officials dispatched sanitation trucks to Santa Cecilia. González emphasizes the insistent tone and militancy in their approach to officials in direct actions, as opposed to understanding the task as requesting a favor. “We solved all of our problems that way,” she maintains.¹⁴³

When we contrast oral histories from Santa Cecilia with the dominant public discourse produced by newspapers and the state, we find in the former elements of the epistemology and hermeneutics associated with subaltern studies in the academy. In the face of the constant elite discourse about Santa Cecilia and other colonias populares as ugly and dangerous, fundamentally separated from their constructions of the “ideal city” and *tapatío* identity, popular movement participants describe how residents “resolved all our problems” and “achieved all our goals.”¹⁴⁴ The most “epic” aspect of these narratives is their conclusion about the success of the movement.¹⁴⁵ Movement leaders such as González and Íñiguez posit with confidence that “in each case” they got what they wanted and that the organized citizens of Santa Cecilia “never lost against the state.”¹⁴⁶

Movement Peaks and Declines, Conflict and Departure

Base communities and the urban popular movement continued to thrive in Santa Cecilia into the mid-1980s. But a series of developments beginning in 1977 slowed the momentum of popular organizing and fostered recurrent conflict and growing division,

¹⁴³ Author interview with Cecilia González, September 27, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Alessandro Portelli discusses the often “epic” qualities of “rank-and-file activists” oral narratives in Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991), 45-58.

¹⁴⁶ *El Proyecto de Santa Cecilia*, p. 5; and Author interview with Cecilia González, September 27, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

leading to CEB activity tapering off after 1985. Correspondence between Guadalajara's archbishop and auxiliary bishops shows the Church hierarchy sought to undermine Sagrado Corazón nuns and the Jesuits in Santa Cecilia even earlier. In an archdiocesan visit to the parish for a formal review on November 29, 1975, auxiliary bishop Adolfo Hernández Hurtado urged the Catholic Action women's group to be wary of the nuns and Jesuits.¹⁴⁷ The Vatican and the Mexican Church hierarchy preferred to channel lay mobilization through Catholic Action. The secular orders and the CEB movement remained outside the Church hierarchy's control.

Prior to becoming archbishop of Guadalajara in 1970, José Salazar López delivered a key speech to Catholic Action leaders in the wake of Vatican II, published in the November-December 1966 edition of Mexican Catholic Action's widely distributed *Boletín de la Junta Central*. Then an auxiliary bishop in Zamora, Michoacán, Salazar López argued for Catholic Action as the appropriate lay movement for implementing Vatican II's teachings and decrees in Mexico. At the level of local parishes, Catholic Action would shape the process of modernizing and "updating" the Church. Salazar López praised traditional hierarchical models and defended a top-down orientation in his address. The way forward for Mexican Catholic Action involved both continuities and changes in organizational forms, ethos, and discourse.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, 1970-, Visita Pastoral a la Parroquia de Santa Cecilia, Obispo Auxiliar D. Adolfo Hernández Hurtado, pp. 1-4.

¹⁴⁸ AHAG, Folletería, Acción Católica Mexicana, *ACM-Boletín de la Junta Central*, no. 11, vol. 30, "Documentación Episcopal: Discurso del Excmo. Sr. José Salazar López, Obispo Auxiliar de Zamora y Atte. Ecco. Dioc.," pp. 10-11.

When the Second Vatican Council convened in Rome (1962-1965), a split was already evident between traditional and proto-liberationist factions within the Church in Latin America. Their disagreements were theological and liturgical, but also deeply political. The methodological starting place of liberation theology—the *experience* of the poor—led necessarily to the explosion of religion-politics dichotomies, while also chipping away at other dualisms that hamstrung theological analyses. The changes that shook the Catholic Church across Latin America during this period of stiff social, political, and theological challenges in the 1960s and 1970s included a pronounced shift in religious and theological discourse, away from the *más allá* (the beyond, or afterlife) toward the intricacies and concreteness of everyday life.

Within the flow of debate produced by Vatican II and Medellín, even the perennially conservative Mexican Church hierarchy recognized shifts in ways of being Catholic. In their September 1971 preparatory document for the upcoming World Synod of Bishops in Rome, Mexican bishops wrote the “Word of God” would now be read to “interpret the calls of God in History,” anticipating what would be the “evangelical activities of the followers of Christ in the face of the problematic of oppression that suffocates the so-called ‘Third World.’”¹⁴⁹ They built on existing radical momentum, as Medellín raised the expectations of Catholic lay people—already invigorated by the post-Vatican II development of hearing mass in a language they could understand—by

¹⁴⁹ Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano, “La justicia en México,” in Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, *Los obispos latinoamericanos entre Medellín y Puebla: Documentos episcopales 1968-1978* (San Salvador: UCA Editores, 1978), 128.

locating the Latin American Church on the cusp of a “new historical epoch in our continent... of total emancipation, of liberation from every servitude.”¹⁵⁰

The Mexican bishops’ Synod preparatory document, “Justice in Mexico,” captures a fleeting moment of relatively radical thought emanating from the institutional Church. But the Mexican Episcopal Conference (CEM) disavowed the document as unofficial shortly after its contents went public, because it generated controversy and criticism from many powerful circles as being too radical. Based in surveys of the “base” of believers,¹⁵¹ “Justice in Mexico” stated that liberation meant “putting individuals and peoples in conditions of being agents of their own destiny,” “making history a process of the liberation of man,” and “going to the root of every oppression: sin.”¹⁵² They called for liberation from “external hegemonic domination,” “oppressive and repressive internal dependencies,” from “apolitical and naïve consciousness,” “apoliticism, absence, or angelism,” and from “individualism... and collective egoism.”¹⁵³ Within this paradigm, parish priests and the faithful would inevitably become politicized, as Vatican II and Medellín signaled the “de-privatization of the Christian faith.”¹⁵⁴

Amidst soaring rhetoric of sweeping change, centrists in the Mexican Church solidified their hold on the hierarchy and institutional line on issues by the mid-1970s. Guadalajara’s archbishop José Salazar López ascended to the head of the CEM parallel to

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 131, quoting 1968 Medellín documents— Introducción, no. 4.

¹⁵¹ Miguel Concha Malo, et al., *La participación de los cristianos en el proceso popular de liberación en México, 1968-1983*. (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno, 1986), 100-101.

¹⁵² Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano, “La justicia en México,” 128-129.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 135.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 133.

John Paul II's rise to the papacy. Guadalajara and its archdiocese provide a good venue to track what Jesuit priest Miguel Concha Malo called the "consolidation of the centrist, hegemonic sector of the Episcopate," by profiling its archbishops and their part in local developments and larger national processes.¹⁵⁵ José Garibi y Rivera was CEM president from 1942 to 1953, and again from 1958 to 1963, while archbishop of Guadalajara. Salazar López headed the CEM from 1977 to 1979, consolidating power under the "presidential council" he created.

In 1973, Salazar López became the third cardinal in Mexican history (his predecessor Garibi had been the first). He imbibed deeply of Social Catholicism's ethical teachings in the Catholic seminary and university orbit for more than two decades. Involved in the founding of the Conciliar Seminary of Guadalajara, he was a faculty member there and rose in the administrative ranks to become rector, a post he held from 1950-1961. Salazar López contributed to the production of knowledge about proper relations between the Church and society, and faith and politics. He took part in Vatican II in Rome, represented Mexico at the 1971 World Synod of Bishops, and held the Mexican Church's top position when he welcomed John Paul II to the Puebla Conference and to Guadalajara in 1979.

Liberationist Christianity in Mexico faced a massive counter-offensive from right-wing forces both internal and external to the Catholic Church. Yet the center, represented by Salazar López and Guadalajara's archdiocese, consistently prevailed in the late-1960s and the 1970s between Medellín and the Third Latin American Bishops Conference

¹⁵⁵ Concha Malo, et al., 187. For more on the Guadalajara archdiocese and its place on the national and continental landscape of the Catholic Church, see De la Torre, *Ecclesia nostra*, 89-122.

(CELAM III) in 1979 in Puebla, Mexico. Ultimately, the Mexican Church hierarchy acted to preserve the status quo by doubling down on traditional and devotional emphases and marginalizing “foreign” liberationist elements.

Nationally, liberationist priests lived under threat of physical attack and death in many cases. The assassinations of Rodolfo Aguilar in Chihuahua on March 21, 1977, and Rodolfo Escamilla on April 27 in Mexico City had a terrorizing effect on radical, and even mildly progressive, priests in the Mexican Church. Liberationists also made powerful enemies in the well-organized big-business Right. Guadalajara was one important base for the far right, nurtured by the networks and resources of the hyper-conservative Autonomous University of Guadalajara (UAG).¹⁵⁶ The Corporate Coordinating Council (Consejo Coordinadora Empresarial, CCE), also known as “*Atalaya*,” held its annual conference in Guadalajara in 1982. The anti-communist Tecos journal *Replica* was edited at the UAG and published monthly. The city earned a reputation as inhospitable to challenges to traditionalist Catholicism, and reactionary tendencies often surfaced. “It is well known, for example, that Cardinal [José] Garibi prohibited *tapatío* clergy from going to Cuernavaca,” wrote Tomás Allaz in his 1971 book *Hunger or Revolution? The Church against the Wall*. “[A]nd on the fences and on

¹⁵⁶ For more on the anti-communism of the UAG and the Tecos, see Mónica Naymich López Macedonio, “Historia de una colaboración anticomunista transnacional: Los Tecos de la Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara y el gobierno de Chiang Kai-Shek a principios de los años setenta,” *Contemporánea: Historia y problemas del siglo XX* 1 (2010): 133-158; Laura Romero, “El movimiento fascista en Guadalajara,” in *Perspectivas de los movimientos sociales en la región Centro-Occidente*, ed. Jaime Tamayo, 31-102 (Mexico City: Editorial Línea, 1986); and María Guadalupe Moreno González, “El movimiento anticomunista en Jalisco durante los años setenta.” *Espiral* 24, no. 68 (2017): 113-153.

the asphalt of the highways of Jalisco and the Bajío, there was no shortage of the inscriptions ‘Death to Méndez Arceo.’”¹⁵⁷

Though generally remembered as relatively progressive and supportive of base communities in the region, archbishop José Salazar López (1970-1987) moved to institutionalize the base community movement and neutralize many liberationist priests. In 1977, he moved Salvador Sánchez, parish priest in Santa Cecilia since the beginning, and replaced him with a series of traditionalists who worked to discredit CEBs and their participants. This meant the demise of the pastoral team that included Sagrado Corazón nuns, Jesuits, and parish priests, and signaled a withdrawal of crucial institutional support for the colonia’s network of base communities. Yet the hierarchy claimed Santa Cecilia as a model for the Church’s engagement with the poor post-Vatican II, and Pope John Paul II even visited the colonia while in Mexico for the 1979 CELAM conference.

Surveying archdiocese documents, public statements, and his various relations on the ground, we find Salazar López spanned the ideological and political spectrum, from supporting the independent radical projects of base communities in Guadalajara to denouncing liberation theology and “socialist” conspiracies at the national level during his tenure as CEM head.¹⁵⁸ At a bishops’ meeting in Merida, Yucatán in April 1978, Salazar López gave a speech condemning liberation theology, the “Popular Church,” and Christians for Socialism as component parts of an international conspiracy targeting the

¹⁵⁷ Tomas G. Allaz, *¿Hambre o revolución?: La Iglesia contra la pared* (Mexico City: Editorial Nuestro Tiempo, 1971), 184, note 5. Cuernavaca was an important base for liberation theology and liberationist education in Mexico and its bishop Sergio Mendez Arceo was Mexico’s most well-known leftist priest at the time.

¹⁵⁸ BPEJ, Hemeroteca histórica, La Redacción, “Temores del Cardenal Salazar: Nueva ofensiva de la ultraderecha en la Iglesia,” *Proceso*, 15 de julio de 1978.

pope and attempting merely to generate conflict.¹⁵⁹ Yet, at a gathering of business leaders in Guadalajara on April 3, Salazar López cautioned regional elites that private property is “a right limited by social demands.”¹⁶⁰

In Santa Cecilia, the archdiocese replaced the liberationist Sánchez with conservative Guillermo Gómez Preciado. CEB participants went from trust to distrust in their relationship with the parish and its powerful lead-priest figure. Gómez Preciado refused to recognize base communities as valid articulations of Catholic faith and practice, and he established antagonistic relationships with the RSCJ, Jesuits, and CEB promotores, especially with women leaders. According to recent interviews with residents, “the problems started” with the departure of Sánchez and arrival of Gómez Preciado. The newly appointed parish priest quickly centralized catechism teachings in the parish structure and space. Traditionalist parish priests appointed to Santa Cecilia after Sanchez “put a stop to the *misas de barrio*” and “they called it a victory,” María de Jesús Ledesma points out.¹⁶¹ The CEB movement decentered the spaces of the parish temple in Santa Cecilia, as it held base community meetings, *misas de barrio*, and catechism courses at other locations around the colonia. Each parish priest after Salvador Sánchez departure in 1977 tried to reconquer parish space and consolidate ‘religious’ activities on church property.

¹⁵⁹ Concha Malo, et al., 170.

¹⁶⁰ *Unomásuno*, “La propiedad privada es ‘un derecho limitado por exigencias sociales’: Cardenal Salazar López. Demandó honradez a los empresarios,” 4 de abril 1978, p. 3.

¹⁶¹ Author interview with María de Jesús Ledesma, February 9, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

A film showing of the anti-capitalist parable *Tigres y Gatos* (Tigers and Cats) in Santa Cecilia in 1975 ignited a period of sustained controversy and stress.¹⁶² Jesuit priest Guillermo Silva created this didactic narrative of a society composed of tigers and cats for use in a “popular education workshop,” and the prodigious working-class artist Cancho Ayala provided the illustrations later adapted to video form by IMDEC’s audiovisual specialists.¹⁶³ In the story’s beginning, a harmonious and relatively equal society is made up of cats only. Then “one cat grows up and starts to eat other cats, and he becomes a tiger,” Ledesma summarizes. The tigers represented the rich and the cats were the poor. At the end of the parable, the priest character gives his blessing to a congregation of tigers, which legitimates their continuing destruction of the less powerful cats. Archbishop José Salazar López received word of the *Tigres y gatos* film presentation in Santa Cecilia and paid a special visit to the parish to meet with Salvador Sánchez. The archdiocese interpreted the film’s message as an attack on the Church, given the hierarchy’s advocacy of class harmony. “There are always enemies in this struggle,” Ledesma argues. “So, you know, the Church didn’t want to have any enemies. But it preferred that poor people were suffering without water, for example.”¹⁶⁴ Indeed, Guadalajara’s archdiocese continued defending “conservative ideology, frequently allied with local political and economic power.” In the feverish anti-communist climate of the

¹⁶² IMDEC [Guillermo Silva, S.J.], *La historia de los tigres y los gatos*, DVD-ROM [audiovisual], (Guadalajara: IMDEC, 2015 [1975]).

¹⁶³ For a copy of Silva’s manuscript, see Archivo Histórico Comunidades Eclesiales de Base, México (AHCEB-MX), Acervo General, G. Silva, *Tigres y gatos: taller de educación popular por el cambio social*, México, 1988.

¹⁶⁴ Author interview with María de Jesús Ledesma, February 9, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

1970s, the local Catholic hierarchy demonstrated a “growing distrust toward ideological movements of renovation and change within and outside of the Church,” according to RSCJ nuns.¹⁶⁵

Margarito Íñiguez understood 1977 as a pivotal year in this history. Fleeing growing repression and threats from fascist groups, Íñiguez elected to leave his job as an organizer with IMDEC that year. He retreated from participation in the popular movement and found work in a factory. Reflecting on the Santa Cecilia project during the late 1980s, Íñiguez saw the movement in a downward spiral since the late 1970s. The 1977 political reform at the national level in Mexico divided the local movement and diverted the attention and loyalties of many to nascent Left political parties. The grassroots CEB movement in Santa Cecilia rejected involvement in political parties and Íñiguez thought everyone was committed to that.¹⁶⁶ As Noemí Gómez and colleagues point out about Lomas de Polanco CEBs on the south side of Guadalajara, “Fear and division are ingredients that remain present throughout the length of the struggle.”¹⁶⁷ In Santa Cecilia, community activist Rogelio Padilla located the movement’s downturn in the fracturing of working relations between participating institutions in 1978 and 1979.¹⁶⁸

From the perspective of Sagrado Corazón nuns, who arrived to live and work in the colonia before other institutional representatives and galvanized the popular base of

¹⁶⁵ AHRSCJ-MX, Período Graciela Volpe, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, Sta. Cecilia Evaluación, Comunidad de Santa Cecilia, “Evaluación del Proyecto Sta. Cecilia,” 5 de septiembre de 1979, 10-11: “Contexto.”

¹⁶⁶ *El Proyecto de Santa Cecilia*, p. 8.

¹⁶⁷ Gómez, Penilla, Vaca, and Pérez, “Lomas de Polanco,” 73.

¹⁶⁸ *El Proyecto de Santa Cecilia*, p. 16.

CEBs, disagreements with IMDEC's Carlos Núñez and the broader political program he and other middle-class activists and intellectuals proposed generated tensions beginning in 1973. Sagrado Corazón nuns presented internal critiques of their own work on the Santa Cecilia project, and each institution and group involved in Santa Cecilia regularly engaged in critical evaluation of their projects. In addition to a clash of personalities and styles with Núñez, the RSCJ believed the root problem was IMDEC's lack of a base among the popular classes. Paradoxically, Núñez provided perhaps the clearest published treatment of popular education theory in Mexico, but the RSCJ consistently described him as incapable of conceptual clarity in the context of the Santa Cecilia project.¹⁶⁹

Jesuits priests, particularly Zenteno, Estrada, and Zepeda, collaborated with and mediated between the RSCJ and IMDEC in Santa Cecilia.¹⁷⁰ By 1978, Santa Cecilia's CEBs achieved greater autonomy from IMDEC, the Grupo Miércoles, and the parish, in carrying out the movement's functions. They forged increasingly strong connections to regional and national CEB groups and structures.¹⁷¹ Sagrado Corazón nuns set the goal that year of making their own project in Santa Cecilia disappear, aiming for a future when people would be so conscientized and independent of institutions and external forces that the RSCJ would become irrelevant.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ See Carlos Núñez H., *Educación para transformar, transformar para educar: Una perspectiva dialéctica y liberadora de educación y comunicación popular*, Tenth Edition (Guadalajara: IMDEC, 1996); and Carlos Núñez, *La revolución ética* (Guadalajara: IMDEC, 1998).

¹⁷⁰ AHRSCJ-MX, Período Graciela Volpe, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, Sta. Cecilia Evaluación, Comunidad de Santa Cecilia, "Evaluación del Proyecto Sta. Cecilia," 5 de septiembre de 1979, 3: "Roles Institucionales," "Compañía de Jesús."

¹⁷¹ AHRSCJ-MX, Período Graciela Volpe, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, Sta. Cecilia Evaluación, Comunidad de Santa Cecilia, "Evaluación del Proyecto Sta. Cecilia," 5 de septiembre de 1979, 8: "Comunidades Cristianas de Base."

In 1978, relations between the RSCJ and IMDEC in Santa Cecilia deteriorated further. According to Sagrado Corazón nuns, “as a result of [IMDEC’s] approach, of their lack of pedagogy with the people, and for their lack of clarity in orientation and coordination in different actions carried out in the colonia, such as: massive festivals, popular newspaper, consumer cooperative, political formation group, actions that the CEBs participate in, in one way or another.” Though smoother relations and closer collaboration between nuns and IMDEC prevailed since roughly 1975, division and tension surfaced in unproductive ways and fundamental differences remained. Shouting matches erupted at meetings and CEB participants noticed the adversarial dynamics. But most laypeople did not grasp the deeper issues stoking animosities between institutional representatives.¹⁷³ “The tensions progressively worsened until the people of the colonia split with IMDEC,” the RSCJ reported. “In the political education group Carlos Núñez coordinated, after many conflicts between him and the people, they asked him to leave that group and leave them alone.”¹⁷⁴ As Aranguren recalls about this heightened moment of internal conflict in the movement, Santa Cecilia base community leaders intervened and told Núñez in a tense meeting, “We appreciate all you have done here. Thanks, but get out.”¹⁷⁵ With IMDEC’s departure in 1978, the second of the four original institutions working in the colonia abandoned the “Santa Cecilia Project.”

¹⁷² AHRSCJ-MX, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, “I.I.E. Santa Cecilia,” octubre de 1983, p. 10.

¹⁷³ Author interview with Consuelo Lucio, March 16, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

¹⁷⁴ AHRSCJ-MX, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, “Interrelaciones institucionales,” 20 de octubre 1978, p. 4.

¹⁷⁵ Author interview with Isabel Aranguren, December 19, 2017, Zapopan, Mexico.

In the midst of the movement's internal strife, one of the early national gatherings of CEBs took place in Guadalajara in April and May 1978, and Santa Cecilia hosted the event. Delegates from eighteen states and twenty-three dioceses attended, with the stated goal of "reviving and pushing forward the process of the Christian Base Communities" in the year before the 1979 CELAM conference in Puebla, Mexico.¹⁷⁶ The national CEB gathering in Santa Cecilia got the full blessing of Guadalajara's archdiocese, with auxiliary bishops present throughout and Salazar López closing the assembly with a homily affirming CEBs as being in the spirit of Vatican II.¹⁷⁷ The May 1978 national meeting energized the colonia's base communities and increased participation in the short-term.¹⁷⁸

1979 proved to be the most impactful year yet for "international horizons" in the trajectory of Santa Cecilia's base community movement. The RSCJ held their international Provincial Assembly in Guadalajara throughout the month of January, and Santa Cecilia residents hosted Sagrado Corazón nuns from around the world.¹⁷⁹ People who lived and worked in the colonia have understood Santa Cecilia as chosen or special in some way. Pope John Paul II's visit in January 1979 gave mythic dimensions to this sense of chosen-ness. Preparations for the papal visit began months in advance across the city. Daily newspapers ran wall-to-wall coverage the whole month of January. The pope stopped in Guadalajara on January 30 and 31, where he blessed throngs of the faithful at

¹⁷⁶ <http://www.cebmex.org/index.php/quienes-somos/historia>, (accessed on April 2, 2015).

¹⁷⁷ Concha Malo, et al., 243-244.

¹⁷⁸ AHRSCJ-MX, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, "Interrelaciones institucionales," 20 de octubre 1978, p. 4.

¹⁷⁹ AHRSCJ-MX, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, "Santa Cecilia, 1970-1980," p. 4.

the iconic downtown Cathedral and officiated mass at the Basilica of Zapopan. Then he arrived in the peripheral colonia of Santa Cecilia, and María Martínez remembers “when the helicopter flew over, it was so exciting.” The zone pulsed with activity, as a major youth gathering with participants from all over Latin America took place parallel to the pope’s visit.¹⁸⁰ A crowd of more than 250,000 people greeted the pope in Santa Cecilia.¹⁸¹ “That day all the base communities went to stay there where the Pope was going to arrive,” Socorro Ramírez recalls. “We didn’t sleep. We were just singing nice songs. And when the pope arrived, well, we received him there, all the [CEB] groups. And we were up at the front.”¹⁸²

Weeks earlier, frontpage articles in *El Informador* on January 5 telegraphed John Paul II’s message to the faithful. In one article with a Rome dateline—“Liberation of Man without Violence”—the local paper regurgitated, “During the CELAM Conference in Mexico, Pope John Paul II will condemn the use of violence to obtain the liberation of man, and will put an end to the revolutionary experiment of one sector of the Latin American Church, Vatican sources anticipated today.”¹⁸³ Yet, a well-worn qualification on that hardline stance followed, “The Holy Father, however, will act with the utmost prudence in order not to appear as a man of the right nor as an ally of the theology of liberation that the most radical sectors propagate.”¹⁸⁴ The new pope came to Mexico in

¹⁸⁰ Author interview with María Martínez, March 16, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

¹⁸¹ AHRSCJ-MX, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, Proy. Apostólico Sta. Cecilia Sept. 1970, “Santa Cecilia,” p. 5.

¹⁸² Author interview with Socorro Ramírez, February 11, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

¹⁸³ BPEJ, Hemeroteca histórica, *El Informador*, Jan. 5, 1979, p. 1. Lead headline in large print, “The Pope will be in Guadalajara 30th and 31st.”

the context of the 1979 CELAM conference at Puebla to both castigate liberation theology and lift up Catholic Action, the latter being the institutional standby for mobilizing the laity. John Paul II found hospitable territory in Mexico for this move, describing Mexican Catholic Action as “the vertebral column of the organized laity in the country.”¹⁸⁵

CEB participants and Santa Cecilia residents did not seem to notice the pope’s statements on liberation theology and armed revolution in Latin America. His setting foot on their territory and conducting a mass there reaffirmed in dramatic fashion their sense of accomplishment in building up the colonia and the movement over the years. “The Pope decided to come here to Santa Cecilia,” says Socorro Ramírez, “because there were more communities and the people were hardworking.”¹⁸⁶ Sagrado Corazón nuns reported the pope “had wanted to visit a colonia popular and speak directly to them about the preference of Jesus and his Church for the poor. It’s an event that is remembered with cariño year after year in the colonia.”¹⁸⁷ In the years since, the principal avenue running from near downtown Guadalajara to Santa Cecilia was renamed Juan Pablo II. Monuments to the pope and his 1979 visit were erected in front of the parish temple and at the Monument to Mexican Workers on the edge of the colonia. Tortilla shops and other businesses along Joaquin Amaro Avenue also took the name of Juan Pablo II. Meanwhile, the Vatican and the Mexican hierarchy moved systematically to stifle

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 2.

¹⁸⁵ AHAG, Folletería, *Boletín Eclesiástico de Guadalajara*, julio de 1979, pp. 398-399.

¹⁸⁶ Author interview with Socorro Ramírez, February 11, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

¹⁸⁷ AHRSCJ-MX, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, “Santa Cecilia, 1970-1980,” p. 4.

grassroots activism. A shifting of liberationist priests out of Guadalajara's colonias populares to affluent or remote parishes weakened base communities.

Conflict continued between the nuns and conservative parish priests into the 1980s, revolving around control over key spaces in the colonia. Aranguren confronted the parish priest over property titles to their community center and other RSCJ buildings near the church. Under pressure, another nun had turned over the titles to the priest. Aranguren retrieved the papers "because they were ours for the Oblatos Education Center." She recounts, "That day [the priest] had been really nasty to Chuy Ledesma, who was on the microphone inviting the whole community to an action to improve the water, the electricity, and the pavement— all the demands they had to help the colonia move forward." The parish priest interrupted and began mocking Ledesma and activist women generally, depicting them as hysterical and recommending they stay out of important public issues. "The next meeting we had with him," says Aranguren, "I got there and told him that he had been wrong, and that it had nothing to do with women specifically. That stuff was from the last century, and he didn't want the church to keep moving forward. I was extremely angry. And in that anger, I told him, 'And please give me the Centros Educativos Oblatos property titles right now.'" The priest walked upstairs, got the documents, and gave them to the nun. Aranguren left the building proclaiming, "We have the Centros Educativos Oblatos titles!"¹⁸⁸

The economic crisis of 1982 in Mexico delivered a blow to RSCJ efforts in Santa Cecilia. For nonprofit organizations, it severely limited funding sources in Mexico, and

¹⁸⁸ Author interview with Isabel Aranguren, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

many had to scramble for resources in the United States and Europe.¹⁸⁹ The community of Sagrado Corazón nuns began to consider their departure for colonias further out on the next layer of the city's ever-expanding periphery. Meanwhile, traditionalist parish priests continued sewing discord. The lead priest tried to pressure the nuns to give school facilities to the parish "for more rooms for the church." Aranguren rejected the priest's attempts, saying to him, "This school will never be given to you. Besides, the school is the people's. It belongs to the parents and the teachers."¹⁹⁰

In 1982, the RSCJ began offering educational services and programs at the Oblatos Education Center building across from the parish temple. The community center facilities housed a library, conference and meeting rooms, the dressmaking cooperative's workshop, and a weaving workshop. The "popular library" at Oblatos Education Center in Santa Cecilia was the colonia's first library, modest though it may have been. It served "students and other people in the colonia by providing access to books and guidance... in order to help implement research and reflection habits that enable them to continue learning."¹⁹¹ The *biblioteca popular* remains a fixture of the community center today, slowly growing and adapting to organizational, social, and cultural changes since the 1980s.

By 1983, nuns divided Santa Cecilia's CEB groups into three levels— groups in formation, active groups with a promotora, and advanced groups with years of experience. The nuns reported twenty-two base community groups met the criteria of the

¹⁸⁹ Author interview with Isabel Aranguren, December 19, 2017, Zapopan, Mexico.

¹⁹⁰ Author interview with Isabel Aranguren, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

¹⁹¹ AHRSCJ-MX, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, "I.I.E. Santa Cecilia," octubre de 1983, p. 2.

second and third levels, and five in the initial stage of development. The number of participants in each CEB group had dropped to ten people in most instances. Much like the original reflection groups of the late 1960s, women comprised ninety-five percent of the two hundred fifty adults involved in Santa Cecilia's CEBs in 1983.¹⁹²

Santa Cecilia base community groups independently coordinated the movement's popular communication functions after IMDEC's departure in the late 1970s. Popular festivals on Sundays continued featuring educational goals and elements like they had since 1972, serving as "a recreational-educational forum of the people." CEBs organized festivals every other Sunday during the 1980s at the intersection of Joaquin Amaro and Manuel M. Ponce, with presenters on a truck bed and people seated on the stairs leading from the church patio to the street. Some 2,000 people continued to attend regularly.¹⁹³ CEB leaders launched a revamped version of the street newspaper *El Alipuz*, minus the illustrations of Cancho Ayala, who opted to work for IMDEC providing drawings for popular education resources distributed across the Americas in the 1980s and 1990s. A committee of twelve base community members reorganized and produced *El Alipuz* from 1981 to 1983. In this second phase, the colonia's longtime alternative information source focused less on active campaigns in Santa Cecilia and more on solidarity with movements in other colonias populares and other national and international contexts. The editorial committee distributed copies at festivales populares and went door-to-door delivering around 1,100 of each edition.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Ibid, p. 1.

¹⁹³ Ibid, p. 4.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, pp. 1-10.

In 1985, the RSCJ community moved out of Santa Cecilia after seventeen years. They continued having a presence through the Oblatos Education Center, but Sagrado Corazón sisters no longer lived there. Aranguren remembers residents giving the nuns their blessing to leave and wishing them success with similar work in another colonia in even more dire economic conditions. She argues Santa Cecilia CEB participants had demonstrated significant conscientization and proved capable of continuing the movement they initiated together.¹⁹⁵ But many former participants narrate the collapse of the CEB movement after the nuns moved out. Highlighting the weight of the relationship's affective bonds, Gloria Díaz says, "They loved us a lot and we loved them. And they protected us a lot. They gave us unconditional support."¹⁹⁶ With the guidance of Sagrado Corazón nuns and the leadership of experienced members, base communities continued to be strong in Santa Cecilia into the mid-1980s.

That organizing gave rise to other projects spearheaded by local women. Aranguren recalls meeting with a CEB group one evening when "a bunch of drug addicts showed up, and on the street corner across from us, they picked up a young guy and slammed his head against the sidewalk and flipped him over." She and other group members were paralyzed by what they saw. One of them, long-time CEB participant and promotora María de Jesús Ledesma, said, "I'm going to work with those guys." She began a residential rehabilitation program for addicts in the neighborhood that still

¹⁹⁵ Author interview with Isabel Aranguren, December 19, 2017, Zapopan, Mexico.

¹⁹⁶ Author interview with Gloria Díaz, March 15, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

operates today as Casa Santa Cecilia, A.C., located just across from the church. The Oblatos Education Center loaned the program one of their two buildings.¹⁹⁷

Base communities and other popular organizing slowly dissipated in the years after the nuns' departure. With CEBs experiencing low participation during 1986, long-time promotora Ledesma "gave it a little lift." She contacted "the people who had fallen off," and a contingent of residents began meeting regularly under the name Educational Social Action. The core group analyzed problems in the colonia they believed they could realistically address and chose to start with drug addiction. Ledesma and other CEB leaders "started going out to the barrios" and "went to evangelize the narcos." CEBs began to host gatherings of young men involved in the drug trade in Santa Cecilia. But Ledesma and base communities were not welcome in parish facilities, forcing them to seek meeting space in nearby Barrio del Perdón, where liberationist diocesan priest Jesús Madrid led Casa Nazaret rehabilitation center. Santa Cecilia's parish priest Camilo Hernández continued Gómez Preciado's antagonistic relationship with remaining base communities and their participants. "He was an enemy of the base communities too," says Ledesma, "so he was my enemy too, you see." With no institutional support now, she took up coordinating work long done by the nuns, attending various groups' weekly meetings.¹⁹⁸

With the residential rehabilitation program, CEBs tackled what they perceived to be one of the colonia's most pressing problems— drug addiction. Participants also viewed it strategically as taking back street corner spaces from occasionally violent

¹⁹⁷ Author interview with Isabel Aranguren, May 29, 2018, Zapopan, Mexico.

¹⁹⁸ Author interview with María de Jesús Ledesma, February 9, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

groups of young men. They identified and confronted the problem on many of the colonia's street corners. CEB promotor Jesús Osorio facilitated a youth group they called “*sendero juvenil*” (youth path) during the 1980s. Despite the generational difference, Osorio used sports as the primary activity around which the group was structured.¹⁹⁹

Base community participants from around the colonia met in special sessions during 1985 for guided group discussions designed to reconstruct the history of Santa Cecilia and its CEB movement. Sagrado Corazón nuns facilitated meetings where residents remembered and narrated the movement's achievements and ups-and-downs over seventeen years. In a composite narrative published anonymously in 1986 as “CEBs from a suburban colonia” in the progressive Catholic journal *Christus*, Santa Cecilia CEBs summarized the collective experience,

In spite of everything, we were happy in the midst of our poverty. We felt free and had hope for progress and that our children would have something better than what we had... We experienced growth as a result of great sacrifice. The more restless among us wanted to do something in the face of so many necessities. We started to meet, to look at the problems. We learned to organize, and in that way—organized and increasingly aware—we went to the authorities, we protested, we did demonstrations... Through years of struggle, we went about obtaining water, electricity, public transportation, telephones, trash pickup, schools, teachers... These achievements are owed to God, first and foremost, but they were also the fruits of the unity and collaboration of our communities, together with the people and with the enthusiasm, support, and guidance of our assessors. Despite the difficulties, we did not get discouraged and we were able to keep going until we got what we proposed in each case.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹ Author interview with Jesús Osorio, March 16, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

²⁰⁰ AHCEO, Documentos, CEBs de una colonia suburbana 1970-1985, “Historia de nuestra comunidad 1970-1985,” *Christus* (March 1986), p. 2.

Conclusion

Archival sources hint at women's leadership in liberationist movements in Guadalajara post-Vatican II, and literature on Christian base communities and the urban popular movement tells us women comprised the majority of participants.²⁰¹ But women appear mostly anonymous and remain silent in conventional documentary source bases. Listening to former participants and longtime residents of Santa Cecilia and drawing on their memories of experiences compels us to recast the narrative. In this colonia sloping down to Oblatos Canyon, women founded the base community movement, sustained it for more than twenty years, and decided when it had run its course and individual and collective energies should be directed elsewhere.

What remains most deeply imprinted in the memories of women who played active roles in the CEB movement in Santa Cecilia are the “flea versus elephant” battles they waged against powerful institutions in order to secure the necessities of a dignified life and rights to the city. Many also remember and narrate with particular satisfaction the times they confronted men who abused their power. Sometimes it was husbands and fathers at home, while occasionally it was bosses, politicians, and bishops. Each woman interviewed relates a story of redemption and transformation in recollecting their experiences from this early period in Santa Cecilia. Like Lucha in the story of the Chintavoz family, neighborhood women and Catholic nuns determined not to be pushed around or confined anymore, and they left the house and the convent to confront the powerful and redirect historical trajectories.

²⁰¹ See, for example, Jorge Regalado, “El movimiento popular independiente en Guadalajara,” in *Perspectivas de los movimientos sociales de la región Centro-Occidente*, ed. Jaime Tamayo, 121-158 (Mexico City: Editorial Línea, 1986).

At the intersection of popular movements and Left ideologies that generated significant social and political changes in Mexico during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, this local urban history from Guadalajara shows the conflictive construction of a democratic political culture influenced heavily by a liberationist Catholicism that sided with the poor. In this context, citizenship developed through practice and experience in social movements, infused with long-term commitment to learning through active civic participation and permanent processes of political education.

Remembering and reconstructing histories of colonias and popular struggles has been a central strategy for keeping the social movement alive and perpetuating its legacy since the decline of grassroots organizing in Santa Cecilia during the late 1980s. In “Remembering the History of Our Colonia,” CEB participants contended simply, “We remember what we have done so that it’s not forgotten, and it gives us greater motivation.”²⁰² Recollecting and retelling became the final project of the movement, even if a superficial analysis sees its disappearance in the 1980s with the departure of the nuns and Jesuits. On November 1, 2018, Santa Cecilia residents celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the colonia’s founding in 1968. Jesuit priest David Velasco gave the homily at the opening mass. Velasco lived in Santa Cecilia for one year in 1971, during his novitiate period. The homily focused on the importance of memory and the necessity of telling stories as a practice of resistance. He pointed to Brazil as a current example of forgetting, with the recent election of neo-fascist Jair Bolsonaro, a supporter of the

²⁰² AHCEO, Documentos, CEBs de Santa Cecilia, “Recordando la historia de nuestra colonia,” no. 3, 18 de enero de 1982.

former dictatorship there. Velasco emphasized the storytelling capacities older people have, and grandchildren's ability to be fascinated by stories.²⁰³

In her study of Lomas de Oblatos, near Santa Cecilia on the eastern edge of Guadalajara, Noemí Gómez links people's identity to the colonia— its spaces, materiality, and diverse imaginaries. “The colonia is inscribed on the subject's history like a tattoo of indelible belonging,” she contends. In Lomas de Oblatos and other colonias populares, collective memory was territorialized.²⁰⁴ Commenting on the popular culture expressions and shared experiences that gave shape to collective memory in Santa Cecilia, Carlos Núñez noted the significance of November's annual fiestas patronales. Through public ritual in the streets, infused with popular Catholicism, “the recently migrated campesinos rediscover their cultural identity,” he wrote, “creating a sense of belonging to their new place: the barrio.”²⁰⁵ In Santa Cecilia during the period covered here, organized citizens achieved “the conquest of this space,” as Sagrado Corazón nun Ana Elena Estrada described the movement's achievements over time in Santa Cecilia.²⁰⁶ Thousands of diverse people in precarious economic circumstances joined together to exercise such power, if but momentarily, appealing to territorial identity tied to their particular space of the city: the colonia.

²⁰³ David Velasco, homily, 50 Aniversario de Santa Cecilia, November 1, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

²⁰⁴ Elba Noemí Gómez Gómez, *Habitar el lugar imaginado: Formas de construir la ciudad desde un proyecto educativo político* (Guadalajara: ITESO, 2011), 100.

²⁰⁵ Núñez, *Educación para transformar*, 226.

²⁰⁶ Estrada gave this assessment during remarks at a fiftieth-anniversary celebration of Santa Cecilia's founding at Centros Educativos Oblatos in May 2018, in Guadalajara. Gómez similarly characterizes citizens' historical collective achievements in nearby Lomas de Oblatos as “the conquest of public and private space.” See Gómez, *Habitar el lugar imaginado*, 24.

CHAPTER IV: BASE COMMUNITIES AND POPULAR POLITICS IN GUADALAJARA, LONG 1970s

*“En un mundo de dos colores, color de ricos y color de pobres
En una gran ciudad de dos sabores, de oprimidos y opresores
Hay un barrio como ahí millones, campo de traficas de explotadores
Hay un barrio como ahí millones, campo de traficas de explotadores”
-Efrén Orozco¹*

Having explored the case of Santa Cecilia in Chapter Three, this chapter examines early CEBs and the urban popular movement’s emergence in other colonias populares in Guadalajara from the late 1960s to the early 1980s. Major centers of movement activity included Barrio del Perdón, Santa Margarita, and Lomas de Polanco. In attempting to interpret a history of social movements and everyday life in those colonias populares, I put archival documentation and movement ephemera in conversation with interviews of key historical actors Madre Lucha, Efrén Orozco, Guillermo Hernández, Martha Arias, and Arturo Martín del Campo.² I argue that residents of urban peripheries, principally through the vehicle of CEBs in Guadalajara, achieved the democratization of urban spaces, institutions, and the culture of collective action and decision-making in their colonias.

Residents of colonias populares organized to bring crucial urban services to tens of thousands of people in pioneering projects in El Perdón, Santa Margarita, and Lomas

¹ Efrén Orozco, “Lo que pasa en mi barrio,” *Lo que pasa en mi barrio* (Guadalajara: IMDEC, 1982), Audiocassette, Track 12. My English translation of these verses is “In a world of two colors, color of the rich and color of the poor; in a great city of two flavors, of oppressed and oppressors; there’s a barrio there like millions of others, playground of deals for exploiters; there’s a barrio there like millions of others, playground of deals for exploiters.”

² By request of the interviewee, I use “Madre Lucha,” the Carmelita nun’s nickname, rather than her full given name, in this publication.

de Polanco. CEBs then formed alliances across the city's peripheries and moved beyond the colonia as sole focus to city-wide solidarity in conflicts as they arose. Participants connected to national and international struggles, especially in Central America with Nicaragua and El Salvador. Cooperatives were a central component of CEBs in each colonia surveyed in this study. *Cajas populares* and mutual aid traditions in popular Catholicism enjoyed nominal institutional support since at least the 1950s in Mexico, and there is continuity with cooperatives in lower-class barrios of El Perdón and Lomas de Polanco in Guadalajara today.

This chapter consists of three sections, each a roughly chronological sketch of developments in the long 1970s. The first section on Barrio del Perdón (or El Perdón) shows the underappreciated but crucial role of Catholic Worker Youth (JOC) small-group formations and practices in poor barrios. Priests there identified ways “society made people stupid” and sought to counter dominant cultural tendencies with the “good news” of poor people’s capacities to affect change. Nuns in the parish seize on memories of learning from the lives of residents in colonias populares such as Santa Rosa. In El Perdón, regular partaking of the Eucharist sacrament entailed commitment to collective reflection, action, and solidarity. The second section looks at CEBs in colonia Santa Margarita, where right-wing paramilitary groups, political violence, and repression loomed large. We see the fundamental role of *convivencia* in creating the relationships and cohesiveness that made movements effective. The Liga de Amistad soccer leagues in Santa Margarita functioned similarly in forging affective bonds. The third section provides a brief portrait of liberationist priest Arturo Martín del Campo and the Social

Pastorate commission he led for two decades in Guadalajara, illuminating the Church's contribution to the urban popular movement locally.

Deliberately, over time, movement participants created broader networks around the urban peripheries, which became the organizational loci of the urban popular movement in the 1980s and 1990s. Here I explore strategies and tactics residents of urban peripheries and their clergy and activist allies employed in contesting power and collectively entering the public sphere during processes of building movement infrastructure as the 1970s progressed.

Barrio del Perdón

Among the colonias and parishes surveyed here, Barrio del Perdón and Lomas de Polanco had the longest lasting CEBs and most durable tradition of independent popular organizing. Remnants of the urban popular movement remain active today in El Perdón, even as organizing in Santa Rosa and colonias around the Panteón Guadalajara cemetery relies heavily on the initiative of a generation of participants now in their late-sixties and seventies. Like nearby Santa Cecilia, the base community project in Barrio del Perdón displaced the parish temple space as exclusive venue of Catholic devotion and religious life. Distinct from Santa Cecilia, El Perdón CEBs benefited from the support and leadership of parish priests throughout. Francisco Ortiz Zúñiga served as lead priest from 1970 to 1987. Nayarit native Jesús Madrid, a diocesan priest, arrived in the early 1970s and never left the barrio. Liberationist nuns proved a major force in the El Perdón project as well. A team of Carmelitas del Sagrado Corazón moved to Santa Rosa in 1969 and continue in the barrio today. CEBs in Barrio del Perdón produced activists still organizing and mobilizing in their colonias and around the city. Most participated in both

the parish and the political and did not understand those as separate spheres except at the level of abstraction. Residents of El Perdón colonias on the northeastern urban periphery built and sustained base communities and the urban popular movement independently of outside organizations.

In the 1910s, the Mexican Catholic Church addressed the struggles of workers via social welfare initiatives with the larger aim of preempting the spread of socialism. Catholicism had what Michael Löwy terms a “negative affinity” for capitalism as well.³ The Church created the Mexican Social Secretariat (SSM) in 1920 to help coordinate its third-way project. Stephen Andes maintains the SSM “anticipated the liberationist movement of the 1970s and beyond.”⁴ The SSM did some “promotional” work organizing laity to create savings and other cooperatives at the parish level, and it supported Catholic unions. At the same time, the Church established new lay organizations for women, youth, and workers.⁵ Counterrevolutionary projects proliferated in Mexico during the 1910s and 1920s, and the Church mobilized significant sectors of the laity to carry forward an alternative program to that of the secular revolutionary state. Catholic associational life developed a robust tradition of mass organizing in the postrevolutionary period.

Social Catholicism’s overarching goals through much of the twentieth century were the fervent defense of the Catholic faith and projecting the Church as rightful

³ Michael Löwy, *The War of Gods: Religion and Politics in Latin America* (London: Verso, 1996).

⁴ Stephen J.C. Andes, “A Catholic Alternative to Revolution: The Survival of Social Catholicism in Postrevolutionary Mexico,” *The Americas* 68, no. 4 (April 2012), 532.

⁵ Hugo Armando Escontrilla Valdez, “El catolicismo social en la Iglesia mexicana,” *Política y Cultura* 31 (2009), 144-147.

hegemon in the modern world. After Vatican II and the 1968 bishops' conference in Medellín, Colombia, liberation theology emerged from pastoral practices that set about defending the poor majorities in Latin America, independently of the institutional Church and mainstream Catholicism if necessary. In addressing the perennial "social question," Catholic Action declared its agenda apolitical, though in practice it tended to advance conservative politics and social policy in Mexico. Liberationist Christianity called for clear "social commitment" in the face of society's injustices. That is, the liberationist movement took sides in social and political conflicts, not by backing political parties, but through dogmatic solidarity with an array of struggles of the poor majorities.

Liberationists sided *against* a much more powerful class of elites, which accounts for the degrees of repression and marginalization they faced. Notions of social harmony—specifically class harmony—dominated the discourse of social Catholicism, anti-communist groups, and Catholic Action at mid-century in Mexico.

One of the subterranean continuities from Social Catholicism to Liberationist Christianity, from Catholic Action groups to Christian base communities, is attention to building the capacities of large numbers of laypeople to lead organizations and associations. Student associations under Catholic Action—the Corporation of Mexican Students (CEM), the Female Union of Catholic Students (UFEC), and the Professional Student Movement (MEP)—developed "abilities to take minutes of activities, organize those activities, point out objectives and priorities, establish goals, [and] create

programs.” In short, Catholic lay associations and student groups cultivated “prepared leaders” in civil society in Mexico.⁶

Founded in Belgium in 1925, the Catholic Worker Youth (JOC) is an important grassroots precursor to the liberationist current in Guadalajara. SSM representatives established Catholic Worker Youth in Mexico in 1959.⁷ Original JOC chapters in Guadalajara took root in lower-class colonias on the city’s northeast side in 1963. Early JOC groups became the “seeds” of “future local experiences of Christian Base Communities.”⁸ Longtime resident and organizer Roberto Gómez argued in the late 1980s that the independent popular organizing that eventually evolved into the urban popular movement of the 1970s and 1980s began with JOC organizing in El Perdón colonias during the early 1960s.⁹

The SSM spearheaded a *cajas populares* movement across Mexico during the 1950s, which laypeople in the state of Jalisco participated in with significant strength via the Confederation of Cajas Populares of Jalisco. Arturo Martín del Campo, a diocesan priest and long-time head of the archdiocese’s Social Pastorate commission, stressed the educational aspects of participating in cajas populares. He argues that establishing,

⁶ María Alicia Puente Lutteroth, “De la Acción Católica a las Comunidades Eclesiales de Base: Algunas experiencias laicales en los últimos cincuenta años en México,” in *Innovaciones y tensiones en los procesos socio-elesiales: De la Acción Católica a las comunidades eclesiales de base*, ed. María Alicia Puente Lutteroth (Cuernavaca, México: Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos, 2002), 191-192. See also Jaime Pensado, “El Movimiento Estudiantil Profesional (MEP): Una mirada a la radicalización a la juventud católica mexicana durante la Guerra Fría,” *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 31, no. 1 (Winter 2015): 156-192.

⁷ For more on the JOC, see José Aparecido Gomes Moreira, “Para una historia de la Juventud Obrera Católica (1959-1985),” *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 49, no. 3 (July-Sept. 1987): 205-220.

⁸ Renée De la Torre, *La Ecclesia nostra: El catolicismo desde la perspectiva de los laicos: El caso de Guadalajara* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2006), 65.

⁹ Biblioteca ITESO, Acervo General, *El Proyecto de Santa Cecilia*, “Proyecto Parroquial del Perdón.”

operating, and sustaining the cooperatives “inculcated solidarity and consciousness in the people” and proved to be learning experiences in “getting organized.” Then the 1960s brought a “whole process of a change in focus,” a thoroughgoing questioning of prevailing *asistencialista* and *desarrollista* approaches and taking “liberating action” instead. In the late 1960s, the SSM followed the liberationist line and broke with the Church hierarchy to become an independent organization that provided educational and communication resources to progressive parishes and grassroots projects around the country.¹⁰

The JOC remained in perpetual conflict with the Church hierarchy. Mexican Catholic Action (ACM) and the SSM had parted ways in 1942, and the JOC cultivated close ties and a collaborative relationship with the SSM in the 1960s under the latter’s progressive leader Pedro Velázquez.¹¹ The Church hierarchy sought to absorb the militant youth organization into the loyal Mexican Catholic Action Youth (ACJM), which would have depoliticized and softened the class conflict ethos of JOC groups in urban settings like Guadalajara. Nationally, the Catholic Worker Youth’s approach resonated with youth and young workers seeking independent, democratic organizing outside the confines of Mexico’s corporatist system. JOC members helped form the ambitious Authentic Workers’ Front (FAT) coalition in 1965.¹² Locally in Guadalajara, JOC members met in small groups outside of parish facilities. They focused on poor people’s concrete

¹⁰ Interview with Arturo Martín del Campo, in *El Proyecto de Santa Cecilia*, “Pastoral Social, P. Arturo Martín del Campo,” p. 1.

¹¹ Escontrilla Valdez, 151.

¹² Gomes Moreira, 209.

problems using the steps of *ver-pensar-actuar* (see-think-act) in group sessions. Francisco Ortiz, other diocesan priests, and seminary students acted as facilitators, concentrating on building the capacities of group members.¹³ El Perdón's parish was the "daughter of the JOC," as Jesús Madrid described it.¹⁴

Pastoral work in the colonias of El Perdón parish began in 1969 when Ortiz and a group of seminary students made regular visits to "strengthen and expand the work of the JOC." Ortiz and seminarian Ezequiel Ávila belonged to the JOC. José Luis Llamas, Gregorio de Anda, and Humberto de Anda joined them in getting acquainted with residents and forming small groups of fifteen to twenty participants.¹⁵ Nuns from the Carmelitas del Sagrado Corazón order began living and working in colonias Vicente Guerrero, Santa Rosa, and others in parish territory that same year. Madre Lucha, coordinator of the nuns' team, remembers theology professor Federico Jiménez recognizing the cadre of women's eagerness to "commit ourselves to the poor." "Out there in that barrio beside the cemetery," Jiménez advised Lucha and colleagues, "there are some priests who are half crazy like you who want some nuns like that to join them."¹⁶ The Carmelitas seized the opportunity and moved into colonia Santa Rosa, near the parish temple under construction at the corner of San Patricio and Mesa del Norte streets.

¹³ Escontrilla Valdez, 145.

¹⁴ "Proyecto Parroquial del Perdón."

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Author interview with Madre Lucha, April 24, 2019, Tlajomulco de Zúñiga, Mexico.

The local Catholic Church hierarchy did not support radical or progressive pastoral projects during the 1960s. Carmelita nun Madre Lucha remembers Guadalajara's conservative archbishop Jose Garibi y Rivera—Mexico's first cardinal, and close ally of the PRI-state and big business—forbidding priests and religious workers from reading and disseminating Vatican II documents in Guadalajara during the late 1960s. In an especially authoritarian, and gendered regulation, nuns had to ask permission of the archdiocese to be outside their Santa Rosa residence after seven p.m. “How were we supposed to do the *comunidades eclesiales de base* (CEBs) if the men got home at seven at night from working as *albañiles* or gardeners?” Madre Lucha wonders. “That's the time when we were meeting up to reflect on the word of God. Impossible for us to ask the bishop's permission. Since I was the *superiora* [lead nun], I said, ‘What are we going to ask permission for? We are going to meet up to hear the word of God with them. They [laypeople in the CEBs] are more tired than us.’” The local hierarchy strapped women religious with the further restriction that nobody from outside could visit nuns in their house, another obstacle to day-to-day ministries. In the project's early years, the Carmelitas communicated nearly exclusively with the people in the colonias of El Perdón.¹⁷

Newly appointed archbishop José Salazar López named Francisco Ortiz lead priest of El Señor del Perdón parish in 1970. Diocesan priest Jesús Madrid Torres and the group of liberationist seminarians that included Efrén Orozco and Pedro Solórzano formally incorporated into the pastoral project in 1973. El Perdón was the “pioneering”

¹⁷ Ibid.

project of its kind in the city. Differentiating it from other local cases in this study where the base community movement thrived, Roberto Gómez stressed “there were no supporting institutions or Jesuit priests.”¹⁸ Yet independent popular organizing in the form of CEBs enjoyed full institutional backing from parish priests and nuns based in the barrio.

The transformations set in motion were cultural ones, according to recent oral history narratives by nuns and laypeople involved in base communities and popular organizing in Guadalajara during the 1970s. Cultural shifts occurred in the realm of social practice and reconfigured hegemonic arrangements. On a belief in human equality, Lucha and other liberationist nuns deconstructed and rejected many of the Church’s hierarchical traditions. The superiora who began the Carmelita’s work in El Perdón required subordinate sisters to kneel when addressing her. “And every day we had to ask for money,” Lucha recalls, “and nothing more than enough for the roundtrip bus fare.” Upon being appointed the community’s superiora in 1970, she determined to transform the culture. “I said, ‘I’m not going to be like that.’ Why was I going to act like I’m God there and have them coming to ask me for stuff on their knees? I didn’t understand those things that were so weird, coming from such weird convents.” Cultural revolutions shook the Carmelitas del Sagrado Corazón order across Latin America after Vatican II and Medellín.¹⁹

Lucha and others attended a continental meeting in Ecuador for five weeks in 1971. Latin American nuns of the Carmelitas del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús congregation

¹⁸ “Proyecto Parroquial del Perdón.”

¹⁹ Author interview with Madre Lucha, April 24, 2019, Tlajomulco de Zúñiga, Mexico.

debated the traditional culture of hierarchy and deference in their order. The hundreds of sisters in attendance wrestled with questions of why they got on their knees to supplicate for things from superioras and whether such practices should continue. A clear majority at the Ecuador meeting expressed disdain for the culture of subordination and social hierarchy. “Because we’re not gods, not the superiora, not her, not anybody,” Lucha contends. In local parishes and communities, nuns’ language shifted to, “She is coordinating the group but is not a superior. They gave her the opportunity to coordinate the activities of the group, but no more.”²⁰ The liberationist current after Medellín sought horizontality in social relations.

Madre Lucha and other liberationist nuns rejected the prevailing culture of hazing in their order. They were accustomed to kissing the feet of superiors before meals, a degrading practice often accompanied by kicks to the faces of subordinate nuns. Previously, the superiora jealously guarded the sole key to the women’s common house. Lucha, on the other hand, made everyone a key because “we are not little girls.” The team in El Perdón consisted of six nuns, four of whom followed the liberationist current. Two sisters remained more traditionalist but participated fully in the project.²¹

Nuns and priests in colonias populares where CEBs took hold transformed the culture of relations between clergy and laity. Living in modest homes in the barrio alongside other residents, El Perdón parish priests made strides in taking hierarchy and deference out of interactions with laypeople. “Since our priests Francisco, Toño, and Jorge arrived,” a young woman member of El Perdón’s weaving cooperative explained in

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

1973, “we’ve gotten in our minds not to kiss their hand; with that act we felt like they were our own, working people that are concerned about helping us. Now we don’t think about ourselves any more, now we are conscious that we form part of the Mystical Body of Christ.”²² Another young working woman active in the parish and CEBs summarized changes within the Church and her own Catholicism in the early 1970s by suggesting, “When the padres arrived it was different because the first and best thing was the reflections through the Gospel, that was where we discovered what we needed and what we could do. Knowing that yes we are ourselves capable of doing a lot for others.”²³ With nuns and priests living alongside them on the urban peripheries and interacting with them in the streets as social equals, women in the parish noted and cultivated their capacity for agency as individuals and as a collective through CEBs. They became assured of their own valuable partaking of the “Mystical Body of Christ” in powerful and emotive ways collectively within the Eucharist-centered parish ritual life. Furthermore, women in CEBs assumed important responsibilities in pastoral and promotional work backed by the trust and confidence of clergy.

In June 1970, the team of five priests at newly created El Señor del Perdón parish sent a statement of their approach, goals, plans, and to José Salazar López, Guadalajara’s new archbishop. In their “pastoral work” section, Ortiz and colleagues attached an article by liberationist priest Phillip Berryman, who worked in a thriving base communities

²² AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Expediente 20, Caja 1, El Señor del Perdón, 1960-2000, Sr. del Perdón, 1973-81, *Informe de la actividad pastoral de la parroquia de El Señor del Perdón, Agosto de 1970 – Agosto de 1973*, “Testimonios,” p. 23.

²³ Ibid.

movement in poor barrios of Panama City.²⁴ Ortiz and his team wanted to apply the basic principles to their parish in Guadalajara, adjusting for the context of local urban peripheries. In “Evangelization in a Popular Context: Theory and Practice,” Berryman emphasized dialogue, the use of small groups, communicating in ways that laypeople understand, and total commitment to a way of life. Personal conversion and fulfillment constituted important elements in the pastoral project as well, seen as inseparable from the process of community formation.²⁵

Diocesan priests assigned to El Perdón believed they should focus evangelizing efforts on the poor majorities and offer them “good news” about their own abilities and agency, which countered hegemonic portrayals of colonias populares and their residents in the city’s elite-driven public discourse. “The intention was to be with the mistreated people,” recalled Jesús Madrid. “It also went with that mystique of the JOC. And I think it’s important to remember— the mystique of the JOC is [to] begin from the necessities of the people themselves... getting workers to return to their own reality and manage their own reality, and that they speak from their working-class reality.” Ortiz, Madrid, and other priests and nuns in El Perdón stressed god’s love for the people, especially the poor and mistreated, as opposed to divine punishment and blame. “It was also responding to a conviction,” Madrid suggested, “in the society in which we live, the marginalized

²⁴ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Expediente 20, Caja 1, El Señor del Perdón, 1960-2000, Fco. Ortiz Z., et al. al Excmo. Sr. Dr. D. José Salazar López, 29 de junio de 1970, anexo 1, pp. 1-3. The North American ex-priest Berryman mentions his years in Panama in his important early book on liberation theology in Latin America, Phillip Berryman, *Liberation Theology: Essential Facts About the Revolutionary Movement in Latin America and Beyond* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1987).

²⁵ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Expediente 20, Caja 1, El Señor del Perdón, 1960-2000, Fco. Ortiz Z., et al. al Excmo. Sr. Dr. D. José Salazar López, 29 de junio de 1970, anexo 1, p. 2.

groups are always made to feel—in an infinite number of ways—that they cannot organize anything, that they cannot say anything.... And the important thing was that they were capable of doing many things.” In the development of small groups, priest-as-facilitators continued the JOC approach of “giving [the people] certain simple elements, so that they’re waking up, until they respond instinctively.” The ever-present JOC methods with groups included “small actions,” providing “little pushes” in hopes of starting something, and “waiting until some [participants] see more clearly.” Madrid emphasizes the parish team’s adoption of what he calls the “*línea de desapendamiento*,” or “program of de-dumbass-ing.” De-dumbass-ing appeared plainly necessary because “we are made stupid by the society, the culture, by religion also,” the priest reflected.²⁶

Though Madrid stressed a process of unlearning, nuns placed greater emphasis in narratives of their experiences in El Perdón on what they learned from laypeople than their male priest counterparts did, a pattern echoing narratives of Sagrado Corazón nuns from Santa Cecilia. Reporting to the archdiocese in late 1973, the Carmelitas related that “direct contact with the people has sensitized us and made us discover great human and Christian values that we were not capable of grasping before.” They wrote that “convivencia with the people, together with the Word, has stimulated among us a partial overcoming of egoism and obligated us to share.”²⁷ In reflection groups, visits to residents’ homes, and catechisms, nuns “tried to discover together how and in what ways

²⁶ “Proyecto Parroquial del Perdón.”

²⁷ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Expediente 20, Caja 1, El Señor del Perdón, 1960-2000, Sr. del Perdón, 1973-81, *Informe de la actividad pastoral de la parroquia de El Señor del Perdón, Agosto de 1970 – Agosto de 1973*, “Vida y Acción de las Religiosas,” p. 7.

[participants] are oppressed and exploited; trying to raise awareness of their dignity and rights as human beings.” More concretely, through medical and pharmaceutical services at their community clinic, “many lives of those affected with illnesses have been saved (an average of 400 monthly), and many extreme necessities have been addressed.” Nuns received consistent feedback from residents that the Church now seemed “closer” to the people and “interested in their problems.” After two years in El Perdón, their work had “sparked the interest of other nuns who are now mobilizing to establish, in different zones, similar communities.”²⁸

Liberationist priests and nuns after Vatican II and Medellín endeavored to create and model “community” within their own common homes in colonias populares. In El Perdón, parish priests and Carmelitas nuns chose houses indistinguishable from others on their streets, with both residences situated near the parish temple in the center of the barrio. “It really disturbed [the diocesan priests] that we were living in community, and how we lived in community,” Madre Lucha maintains in retrospect, “because they lived together but they didn’t live in community.” During her tenure in El Perdón in the first half of the 1970s, “living in community” meant the women shared their money, “life,” and knew each other’s stories and backgrounds intimately. “We shared the Word of God. The difference is really big between the community and just living together.”²⁹ El Perdón’s team of diocesan priests in 1970 included Ortiz, Antonio Jiménez, Jorge Mora,

²⁸ Ibid, p. 8.

²⁹ Author interview with Madre Lucha, April 24, 2019, Tlajomulco de Zúñiga, Mexico.

Jesús Garibay, and J. Guadalupe Becerra.³⁰ When the archdiocese asked his thoughts on candidates for appointment to his parish in 1972, Ortiz wrote to archbishop Salazar López that “it’s our desire that the priestly team is integrated into a community life. It seems to me that P. Luna would live with his brother Antonio. Moreover, the salary we priests earn [in El Perdón] is only \$1,200 [pesos] monthly, counting the offerings from Mass. And maybe P. Luna would need to earn more.”³¹ Priests and nuns in El Perdón made political decisions about lifestyle and living conditions. The austerity they chose in sharing the material conditions of residents of the urban peripheries was simply not suited for many diocesan priests.

Three seminary students began on-the-ground training in El Perdón parish in early 1972. On weekends, they focused “evangelization” work on the “most religiously, morally, culturally, and economically abandoned” parts of parish territory. “Their job was to listen to people, be interested in their lives, discover values, offer services, get to know their realities of misery,” according to Ortiz. Seminary students and novitiates played integral roles in base communities and promotional projects around Guadalajara’s peripheries. In El Perdón, Ezequiel Ávila, Gregorio de Anda and colleagues organized additional clusters of residents in areas of the colonias the full-time parish team had not reached. After all, parish territory contained upwards of 20,000 people by 1973. Ávila

³⁰ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Expediente 20, Caja 1, El Señor del Perdón, 1960-2000, Fco. Ortiz Z., et al. al Excmo. Sr. Dr. D. José Salazar López, 29 de junio de 1970, pp. 2-3.

³¹ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Expediente 20, Caja 1, El Señor del Perdón, 1960-2000, Pbro. Francisco Ortiz al Arzobispo de Guadalajara, 6 de marzo de 1972, p. 1.

and the other seminary students helped establish “stable reflection groups, committed to tackle the problems of the Community.”³²

At age fourteen, Efrén Orozco moved to Guadalajara with six other boys from Atotonilco, a town in the Los Altos region of Jalisco. They spent the 1960s in seminary studying philosophy and theology, and receiving “humanistic formation, above all,” Orozco says. But fourteen years of Catholic seminary education from a “Scholastica” perspective “was the opposite of the thesis we are now proposing,” he reflected recently. The seminary in Guadalajara provided an education infused with anti-communist politics, with faculty regularly delineating Marxism’s violations of “holy doctrine.” As he experienced the Catholic Church and its educational institutions constructing communism as the “common enemy,” Orozco cultivated a radical critique via conversations with others in his cohort who shared heterodox understandings and “social conscience.” With the encyclicals of Vatican II serving as inspiration and institutional legitimation after 1965, the tightknit group of six seminary students “started to think differently.” Most importantly in Orozco’s mind, direct work with diverse people living in extreme poverty around the city proved transformative.³³

Orozco and other students in Guadalajara’s seminary left campus once a week to visit the poorest *vecindades* in the city, most located near to the downtown area during the 1960s. Experiences in the *vecindades* impacted the young Orozco intellectually and spiritually. “You see how these people are living and you’re coming there to talk to them

³² AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Expediente 20, Caja 1, El Señor del Perdón, 1960-2000, Sr. del Perdón, 1973-81, *Informe de la actividad pastoral de la parroquia de El Señor del Perdón, Agosto de 1970 – Agosto de 1973*, p. 9.

³³ Author interview with Efrén Orozco, December 6, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

about something that has nothing to do with their daily lives,” he says. The cadre of friends wondered “what sense it made to be a priest in a world with so much misery, so much injustice.” In seminary training, “Even though it was a bubble,” Orozco recalls, “we were able to make note of the authoritarianism of the Church hierarchy.” Initially, questioning and critical views remained internal to their cohort.³⁴ But soon, Orozco determined he could not continue in the priesthood. The seminary’s rector reacted angrily when Orozco informed him of his decision to forego ordination and take another vocational path. The twenty-something Orozco then got hired at a local agricultural product manufacturing plant and lived in Santa Rosa, feeling he more effectively put his liberationist Christianity in practice in that context during the early 1970s.³⁵

In El Perdón parish, “Padre Panchito” Ortiz provided Orozco and his activist colleagues ample space for radical work, first when Orozco was a seminary student and subsequently as popular educator and organizer for IMDEC in the northeastern zone of the city. Ortiz avoided the buzzwords of liberation theology in public discourse as a strategic move to ensure the continuation of the processual and deliberate grassroots organizing projects in a deeply anti-communist political culture in Cold War Mexico.³⁶ Ortiz also cultivated a close relationship with archbishop Salazar López. He became a trusted advisor to the local hierarchy on pastoral work and appointments in colonias populares, factors which likely accounted for his unusually lengthy tenure in the parish, stretching from 1970 to 1988.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Author interview with Efrén Orozco, July 18, 2017, Guadalajara, Mexico.

³⁶ Ibid.

Diocesan priests in El Perdón put extraordinary time and energy into preaching. They delivered homilies in spaces around the barrio, not only from the pulpit in the parish temple. They turned to the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, Old Testament prophets, and the book of Exodus to preach about struggles for “the liberation of the oppressed.” In one particularly impactful and well-documented June 1972 sermon during a special “week of reflection” in the parish, Francisco Ortiz cited several passages from chapters five and six of Exodus concerning the outcast Hebrews’ “miserable” conditions under Egyptian rule and addressed the context of early-1970s Guadalajara.

The great struggle of Moses to instill confidence in his people is one we have to undertake today. [T]he difficult conditions of humiliation and oppression, the systems of terror put in place by those who have the power and the money, don’t allow our simple people to open themselves to hope. [T]hey’re discouraged by the promises that so many have made and never fulfilled. [The people] have lost confidence in their own capacities, as much as it’s been repeated that they can’t do it themselves, that “leverage” and money are needed to do everything, and the people know they don’t have those. [I]t’s a difficult struggle for those who commit to the liberation of the oppressed today.³⁷

Building on the gathering momentum after two years of constructing a network of small groups across parish colonias, more than two hundred reflection group participants convened on that occasion in mid-1972. At this early juncture while still defining a collective vision, they “studied” questions and visions of “a real Christian community.” They examined “our commitment as a Christian community in this Parish that has the problems” they outlined. Coming out of a second reflection and study week, Ortiz and the diocesan priests reported the groups “became more consistent and refined their action

³⁷ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Expediente 20, Caja 1, El Señor del Perdón, 1960-2000, P. Francisco Ortiz, “Búsqueda del Plan de Dios ante la situación,” junio 1972.

through revisions of what they were doing.” But progress was uneven, as “some of the less consistent groups disintegrated.”³⁸

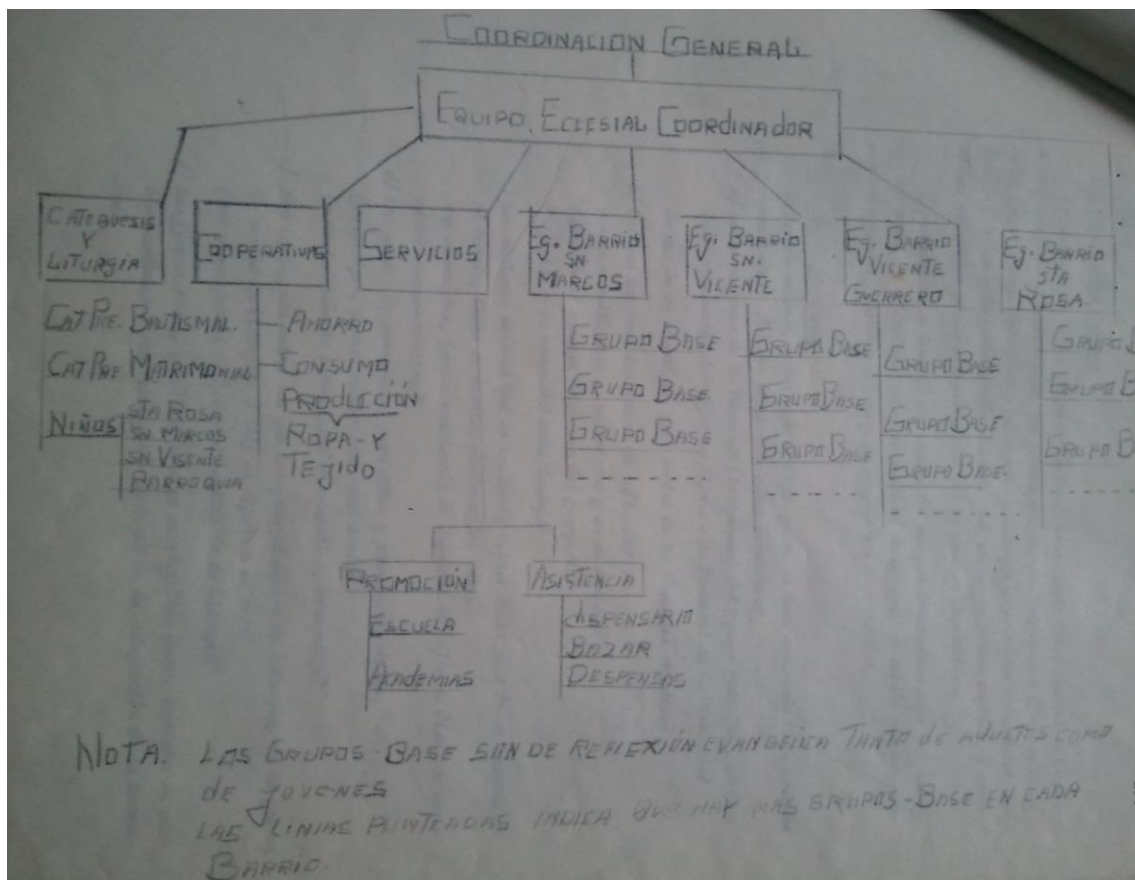


Figure 4.1. Organizational diagram for El Perdón parish, 1970s. Courtesy of the Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Guadalajara.

In the middle-class imaginary in Guadalajara, “poor people were very dangerous.”

Madre Lucha narrates El Perdón’s historical developments and processes via memories of meaningful conversations and anecdotes from the period.

When we went to live [in Santa Rosa], my dad and brothers gave us money to build the fence in front of the house. My dad loaned me a gun, because I’ve

³⁸ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Expediente 20, Caja 1, El Señor del Perdón, 1960-2000, Sr. del Perdón, 1973-81, *Informe de la actividad pastoral de la parroquia de El Señor del Perdón, Agosto de 1970 – Agosto de 1973*, p. 10.

known how to shoot since I was little. They gave me a gun so that we could defend ourselves against the poor. Better think of it in reverse, [the poor] have to defend themselves from us. That's something else. I understood the Gospel there. I learned it with them. They are infinitely generous. They took care of us— on the contrary, they took care of us instead. Incredible.³⁹

Many men from colonias populares worked as albañiles and trash collectors in other parts of the city. Trash collectors frequently returned home in the evenings with hands bloodied by glass and other sharp objects from handling garbage. Working men comprised a more significant portion of CEB participants in El Perdón than in Santa Cecilia, with the latter's overwhelming ratio of women members. El Perdón residents formed groups around "interests" originally, such as preparing children for first communion or helping care for sick people on their block. In the opening years of the 1970s, participants called them "bible reflection groups." Small groups functioned as "cells," which the parish team then organized by geographic zone and colonia. Over time, some zones in the original El Perdón territory became their own parishes, such as Santa Rosa de Lima Oriente parish in colonia Santa Rosa during the 1990s.⁴⁰

Reflecting on the essential components of base communities, Madre Lucha says, "The foundation is the Word of God and the life of the poor. That is the basis of the community." Participants in El Perdón base communities cared for sick, elderly, and disabled people on their particular neighborhood block. Residents rotated responsibilities and made myriad arrangements to care for one another. Lucha believes that network of care illustrates the spirit of the base community, a collective she likens to an extended

³⁹ Author interview with Madre Lucha, April 24, 2019, Tlajomulco de Zúñiga, Mexico.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

family. “The Word of God does that,” the nun maintains, locating divine presence and action in such instances of “real love between everyone.”⁴¹

Women from middle-class upbringings who became nuns in this period learned by living in colonias populares that “[the poor] share everything.” One day early in her tenure on the northeastern periphery of Guadalajara, in an experience typical of everyday social relations in the colonia given Catholic laypeople’s orientation toward priests and nuns, Claudia, a resident of colonia Santa Rosa, invited Madre Lucha to stay for dinner when the nun stopped in to visit her family’s home. “No, because you don’t have much,” Lucha replied. Pointing out the obvious while declining a heartfelt invitation elicited a pointed remark from Claudia. “You all don’t know what it’s like to be hungry and we know what it means,” she told the nun. As Madre Lucha recollects and re-signifies Claudia’s lesson to her in dialogue with me in 2019, “It’s like if I said to [North] Americans, you don’t know about being hungry. We the poor, we do know what it means to be hungry.”⁴²

Madre Lucha does not romanticize the people or setting either. “Problems” characterized El Perdón parish in the 1970s as well. Nuns and priests also functioned as emergency responders doing social triage around the clock to deal with a range of issues. “Every night there were problems—drunks or sick people—there was always problems during the nights,” Lucha recalls. The nuns needed to be available at nights to help priests “solve problems.” The history of these practices is etched into the spaces of the parish temple and surrounding streets, where the Church building’s garage on the San Patricio

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

Street side still features the sign advising passers-by, “Continuous Urgent Exits by the Priests.” The urgent problems varied widely in this densely populated and diverse zone of the city lacking key infrastructure and social services. Nuns frequently opened their doors to women and girls escaping violence from husbands and other men. Lucha illustrates the phenomenon of pervasive violence against women with the story of Sandra knocking on their door one night at two a.m. ““Could you hide my daughters? Because their stepfather wants to rape them.”” Far removed from clausura in the convent, the nuns pulled together beds and the two girls of twelve and thirteen years of age sheltered there.⁴³

The Carmelitas del Sagrado Corazón’s provincial director and another high-ranking nun from the leadership council occasionally visited the El Perdón community in Guadalajara to evaluate the project. The more traditionalist nuns heading the order’s hierarchy in Mexico consistently disapproved of various aspects of Lucha’s and her team’s work. Backlash against their liberationist approach became broad-based within the order, though not majoritarian. In one General Chapter gathering in the early 1970s, thirty-five letters from colleagues within the congregation petitioned to close the project in El Perdón, claiming “everything was being done wrong.” With a sizeable, vocal faction within the Carmelitas congregation working against them, Madre Hilda, a nun in the El Perdón community, visited Lucha one day crying inconsolably. But Madre Lucha ultimately encouraged her, “Don’t cry. God wants this. It’s never going to close down. You’ll see that it won’t.”⁴⁴

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Seeking allies and support within the order, Lucha invited the General Vicar from the United States to visit them in the colonias populares of Guadalajara and witness their work firsthand. Nuns in El Perdón received the high-ranking nun from the U.S. and gave her a tour of vecindades and incomplete houses around the colonias. Madre Susan expressed shock and sadness at the material conditions, seeming especially impacted by the numbers of people living in small spaces. By the colonias tour's conclusion, the North American nun was crying and donating dollars. "I don't want them to shut this house [El Perdón community] down," Madre Susan told her Mexican sisters. "I want them to establish ten houses like this one." Lucha, Hilda, and the team gained a powerful advocate within the congregation. Lucha narrates that pivotal episode as another instance of "the Gospel" illuminating truths— with the lives of the poor as privileged terrain of knowledge creation.⁴⁵

El Perdón CEBs' religious quest for justice crystallized around a number of community organizing campaigns they termed "concrete actions of liberating promotion." During the first half of the 1970s, parish CEB groups waged a complicated and lengthy battle for a school to extend education access to more of the barrio's thousands of children. They pressured Guadalajara's municipal government to provide sewer infrastructure to rid the neighborhood of the wastewater running through the streets and successfully petitioned for mail service in San Vicente and Santa Rosa. The Carmelita nuns started a night school for women and a literacy program for adults on weekdays. With occasional mentoring from Santa Cecilia's CEBs, Barrio del Perdón

⁴⁵ Ibid.

residents established multiple cooperatives— savings, consumer, and the production of clothes and fabric.⁴⁶ Citizens on the city’s northeastern periphery created essential community institutions where none existed, capitalizing in part on the resources and support of the Church and religious orders.

In the midst of snowballing participation in reflection groups and community organizing on a range of fronts around parish territory, El Perdón residents decided to launch a campaign to get drainage and sewer infrastructure installed in colonias Vicente Guerrero and Santa Rosa. During a *misa de barrio* in May 1972, “by the light of the Word of God, they considered it unworthy of children of God to have sewage running through the streets, where kids played.”⁴⁷ Out of the commitment to action inspired by sacramental moments in the streets, a contingent of residents coordinated organizing and strategy in the colonia’s engagement with government entities. The coordinating committee held meetings at several locations around the affected colonias that summer. They went door-to-door visiting neighbors to provide information and secure mass participation in actions and myriad organizational tasks. Groups of residents traveled to municipal government offices in the city’s center several times over the next few months to state their case and plead for action. The mayor’s office and SIAPA utilities now faced large organized groups of residents from colonias populares demanding urban services in an increasingly chaotic expanding periphery in the northeastern quadrant of the city. El

⁴⁶ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Expediente 20, Caja 1, El Señor del Perdón, 1960-2000, Sr. del Perdón, 1973-81, *Informe de la actividad pastoral de la parroquia de El Señor del Perdón, agosto de 1970—agosto de 1973*, pp. 12-29.

⁴⁷ Ibid, “Principales acciones concretas de promoción liberadora,” p. 12.

Perdón residents prevailed in the 1972 campaign for drainage and sewer services in Santa Rosa and Vicente Guerrero, and the city began installation in November.

It was a hard struggle, considering people from the Colonos Union of Santa Rosa tried to discourage the people and the authorities put up a lot of obstacles. The people's motivations were always evangelical ones, like with the school, and both actions [were] carried out entirely by laypeople, with priestly support and encouragement.⁴⁸

The PRI-controlled neighborhood committee, the Colonos Union of Santa Rosa, acted to discourage independent organizing in the colonia. It would be three more years before CEB participants dislodged the *cacicazgo* and took control of the Colonos Union of Santa Rosa, turning it independent of political parties and democratically run from 1976 forward.⁴⁹

In the process of identifying common problems in base community groups in colonias Vicente Guerrero and Santa Rosa, parents and youth pointed to a lack of educational opportunities for children. Children and youth ages eighteen and under constituted more than half the population in most colonias populares. In 1971, a group of parents backed by El Perdón parish and CEB groups petitioned the municipal government for land to construct a school building in a location central to families in both neighborhoods, near the Panteón Guadalajara and adjacent Unidad Deportivo San Luis. Guadalajara's municipal government eventually ceded the 4,000 square-meter plot to the parents' group, space enough for a forty-room school. But the Jalisco State Department of Education, developers, and the same municipal government proceeded to block the school's construction at every turn. Members of the Committee for the Construction of

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ A *cacicazgo* refers to a political machine with a *cacique* at the head.

Vicente Guerrero School pressured officials and negotiated for more than a year to compel the state to provide the necessary teachers. One day in November 1972, they caravanned to the Department of Education building with more than six-hundred people to protest the state's inaction. Mounting public pressure from the determined parents' committee forced the state to place teachers in the school.⁵⁰

Like many peripheral areas settled in rapidly expanding Mexican cities like Guadalajara after the 1960s, Vicente Guerrero and Santa Rosa were constructed on *ejidal* lands. *Ejidatarios* entered the school construction equation by legally demonstrating their ownership of the land shortly after work on the school building began in February 1973. The parents committee urged state education officials to intervene via the commission on *ejidos*, and the school moved forward confined to the 1,500 square meters where cement foundation had already been laid. This allowed for a building of only fourteen rooms, inadequate space for the 4,000 children the school proposed to serve. A widening circle of residents and activists joined the organizing campaign for public education in the colonia. PRI officials in Jalisco responded with exhortations to "patience" and by shuffling the parents' group on to another department or level of government in hopes they would relent in the bureaucratic labyrinth.⁵¹

The Committee for the Construction of Vicente Guerrero School managed a hearing with Guadalajara mayor Guillermo Cosío Vidaurri on April 7, 1973. When they arrived at the mayor's office building, Cosío Vidaurri's secretary Enrique Romero

⁵⁰ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Expediente 20, Caja 1, El Señor del Perdón, 1960-2000, Sr. del Perdón, 1973-81, *Informe de la actividad pastoral de la parroquia de El Señor del Perdón, agosto 1970—agosto 1973*, Anexo 2, p. 1.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

González intercepted the citizens' group and told them the problem was solved. In other words, the school's construction could supposedly proceed without regard for ejidal claims. The mayor's office made the additional promise of protection from municipal police for the duration of the project. However, ejidatarios had already begun other construction on the contested plot. Parents estimated the conflict was on the verge of "bloodshed."⁵² The following week, the parents' committee proposed to the mayor that they annex adjacent municipal lands designated for soccer fields. They argued alternatives existed for sports fields in surrounding spaces in the Panteón area and the elementary school should be prioritized. They again transited across the city to Cosío Vidaurri's office on April 21, but the mayor denied the group a meeting. Committee members responded by taking to local radio and newspapers to publicly expose the situation, the many broken promises, and the government's handling of it at multiple levels.⁵³

A few weeks later, the parents' committee from Santa Rosa and Vicente Guerrero took advantage of a high-profile teacher's ceremony at the iconic Teatro Degollado downtown on May 15 to lodge their complaint with Mexican president Luis Echeverría, in attendance alongside Jalisco governor Alberto Orozco Romero and Cosío Vidaurri. The emboldened committee members cornered Echeverría at the event, explained the school predicament to him and provided documentation. Echeverría asked Orozco Romero about the matter and the governor denied knowledge of it, despite having sent official correspondence to the parents' group in April. Orozco Romero told the president

⁵² Ibid, p. 2.

⁵³ Ibid.

the issue had been passed to Cosío Vidaurri's office, and the mayor then had to explain his version of the story to Echeverría. The parents from Vicente Guerrero and Santa Rosa informed the president that the mayor refused to meet with them, despite the clear urgency. "We will solve the problem today in the [Government] Palace in the time we have left," Echeverría told the parents at the PRI teachers' event, adding, "considering it serious." Cosío Vidaurri then requested the parents' group meet him at the municipal government building the following day for next steps toward the issue's resolution.⁵⁴

When the parents' group arrived to meet with Cosío Vidaurri on May 16, the mayor initially pretended not to remember the problem. He then informed the committee that ejidatarios refused to part with the land and his hands were therefore tied. Cosío Vidaurri also rejected their proposal of annexing soccer fields because "he didn't want to have problems with the youth, who need fields to play." The mayor told the Vicente Guerrero school committee that recreational opportunities for youth took priority over the primary school, in the name of keeping youth out of gangs. He then suggested the citizens' group "should be content with the fourteen-room school that's already there." Committee members sent a telegram to Echeverría days later, reminding the Mexican president of his promise in Guadalajara and informing him of "the highly absurd response of the mayor." They requested the president's immediate intervention to definitively resolve the matter, "given the urgency of the children not losing another school year." Additionally, the parents' group appealed to archbishop Salazar López in a June 3 letter, soliciting any help the local Church hierarchy might provide.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

After an extended fight, the parents' committee and CEB groups achieved their goal of finishing the primary school in the heart of parish territory where Vicente Guerrero and Santa Rosa colonias converge. They pushed for a building with forty classrooms, given the growing numbers of children needing the service. They completed a school with twenty classrooms in early 1975. Though some activists would later argue that the movement in El Perdón engaged in fewer *luchas reivindicativas* than the other three major centers of CEB and MUP organizing in the 1970s—Santa Cecilia, Santa Margarita, and Lomas de Polanco,⁵⁶ parish archives record a string of successful organizing campaigns “promoting the improvement of the conditions of our *barriadas*.” The construction of Vicente Guerrero school stood as the signature achievement at this juncture in 1975. CEB groups negotiated with SIAPA to normalize and “increase the quality” of running water service across their colonias by then. In 1976 and 1977, organized residents from El Perdón CEBs pressured Teléfonos de México to install public telephones in various zones of parish territory, and CEB members successfully petitioned the municipal government to open a daycare.⁵⁷

In Santa Rosa, like many other colonias populares on Guadalajara's peripheries in this period, residents tried for years to legalize their terrenos, with varying degrees of success. CEB groups spearheaded “a block-by-block study” on the issue of terreno status

⁵⁶ Roberto Gómez put forth this analysis in the 1988-1989 discussion sessions among a group of veteran *promotores suburbanos* and priests, published in typewritten manuscripts in a very limited number of copies. See Biblioteca ITESO, Acervo General, *El Proyecto de Santa Cecilia* (Guadalajara, 1989). Gómez's argument cited here appears in the section “Proyecto Parroquial del Perdón.”

⁵⁷ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Expediente 20, Caja 1, El Señor del Perdón, 1960-2000, El Perdón, 1973-81, Pbro. Francisco Ortiz al Emmo. Sr. Dr. D. José Salazar López, 25 de febrero de 1975, p. 4.

to compile accurate information on each case and gauge the extent of the problem, “in order to avoid injustices being committed” in the process of regularization. Parish priest Francisco Ortiz commended the movement in a 1975 letter to archbishop Salazar López. He described the struggles to obtain services, improve material conditions, and contest power in the colonia’s institutions as “work of a civic nature.” Ortiz stressed that “laypeople are acting from their own responsibility, and we only help them to reflect.” He perceived a coming together of the “evangelical” and the “promotional” in the parish community’s life and praxis at this stage in the mid-1970s.⁵⁸

But residents of colonias populares on the urban peripheries faced harassment and abuse by local police, with teenage boys and young men becoming particular targets under the guise of rooting out drugs, gangs, or terrorism. Participants in independent popular organizing, especially in zones like El Perdón who were associated with “red” priests like the long-haired Jesús Madrid, reported an inordinate amount of arrests, stops, and surveillance. Residents of urban peripheries in Guadalajara during the 1960s and 1970s worried about security in their neighborhoods and complained to authorities regularly about the lack of police patrols when needed. Interviewed in the late 1970s, CEB participants Irma Martínez and Martha Ramírez described the police arriving to their barrio and declaring, “It’s full of *marihuanos* here.” But the women maintained the police were the real source of problems in the barrio, frequently arresting groups of young men and teenage boys congregated in the streets.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 4.

⁵⁹ Orozco, “Policías y ladrones,” *Lo que pasa en mi barrio*, Track 8. These are pseudonyms, in this case because original documentation does not exist for the interview excerpts on the *Lo que pasa en mi barrio* recordings.

Martínez narrated one such occasion when she went to the police department inquiring whether her son was detained there. Police directed her to the state judiciary building, where she announced to the official, “I am a responsible mother and I want to know what my son is being accused of.” After authorities insisted the youth was not there, an exasperated Martínez returned to find her son at their house. He had been beaten up and his clothes ripped. The boy did not know why police arrested him, only that they insisted he had marijuana and searched the house. “Really weird things happen in the most screwed barrios,” Efrén Orozco sang with his local band at performances around the city during that decade. “The police become bandits without taking off their uniforms. No interrogation or procedures, just punches and ‘how much money you carrying?’” In colonias populares around the Panteón Guadalajara, Orozco’s corrido chorus appropriately questioned, “on this blessed ground, who watches the watchmen?”⁶⁰ During 1976 and 1977, police arrested a number of barrio youth who participated in “reflection groups” facilitated by Madrid. Authorities labeled the youth, who often hung out together in the streets of their colonias, gang members. Police also used the pretext of “terrorism” to stop, search, and detain young men in working-class barrios in Guadalajara in the 1970s, given that the city became an epicenter for urban guerrilla movements in Mexico.⁶¹ Some organizers recall knowing the state surveilled them, and many leftists of the generation had friends in armed movements.⁶²

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Biblioteca Pública del Estado de Jalisco (BPEJ), Hemeroteca histórica, Felipe Cobián, “Persiguen a promotores de obras sociales,” *Proceso*, 12 noviembre 1977.

⁶² Author interview with Efrén Orozco, July 18, 2017, Guadalajara, Mexico.

“A leader should lead by example, as testimony of the struggle”⁶³

A lifelong resident of Guadalajara, Guillermo Hernández Hernández moved to Santa Rosa colonia in 1978, when the streets were still dirt. “We started to organize,” Hernández says, “and we started putting urban services here in this colonia.” He says the northeastern zones of the urban periphery “have the mystique of struggling for the poor” through Christian base communities.⁶⁴ Hernández, a taxi driver, presents a case of a CEB member in this period whose leftism predates his devout religiosity. His father belonged to the Communist Party in Jalisco, and Hernández remembers spreading propaganda with the older men when he was a boy in the late 1950s and early 1960s. They disseminated communist messaging by painting on walls and distributing flyers.⁶⁵

Though it is difficult to trace an intellectual lineage directly from CEBs in Guadalajara to earlier leftist organizing traditions in Latin American cities, communists and other Left political groups have a twentieth-century history of solidarity with the struggles of the city’s poorest sectors— tenants, squatters, street vendors, and workers. Scholars have connected the urban popular movement of the 1970s and 1980s to earlier tenant mobilizations of the 1910s and 1920s in Guadalajara (part of a national movement centered in the state of Veracruz).⁶⁶ If nothing else, the example of Hernández’s communist party activity with his father locally in the 1950s and 1960s reminds us that

⁶³ Author interview with Guillermo Hernández Hernández, April 12, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Author interview with Guillermo Hernández Hernández, April 25, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁶⁶ Jorge Durand, “Huelga nacional de inquilinos: los antecedentes del movimiento urbano popular en México,” *Estudios Sociológicos* 7, no. 19 (1989): 61-78.

not everything in Catholicism and its engagement with the political in Guadalajara flowed from Cristeros or conservative movements.

Hernández began participating in El Perdón CEBs in 1984. He conceptualized CEBs as “the parish in small communities.” Hernández emphasizes the importance of not having groups that were too large, “because we reflect together better in smaller ones.” Within base community groups, participants “reflected on the three steps— see, think, and act; always in the light of the Word.” Francisco Ortiz still supported and worked with CEBs in the mid-1980s in El Perdón parish. When Ortiz departed the parish in 1988, after eighteen years, many CEB groups continued meeting and working.⁶⁷

Hernández argues the “principal objective” of CEBs was to organize the colonia to demand urban services. While participating in El Perdón base communities, he served as president of the Colonos Committee twice during the 1980s and 1990s. “A leader of the communities should lead by example,” he reasons. During Hernández’s first stint in formal leadership, residents organized to get the streets in Santa Rosa repaired and cobblestoned. Another factor that proved just as crucial to durable popular organizing was that the Colonos Committee remained independent of the municipal government after wresting control from the PRI-aligned *cacicazgo* in 1976. Over time, the PRI municipal government occasionally attempted to form parallel neighborhood committees there or regain control of the primary one. But the Colonos Committee remains independent and active, now organized around block leaders responsible for agitating, informing, and mobilizing residents on their streets.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Author interview with Guillermo Hernández Hernández, April 12, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

Hernández later served as CEBs animador at the diocesan level in Guadalajara beginning in 1999, a position he held for several years into the 2000s. CEBs had been weakened significantly across the city by then. A series of conservative archbishops succeeded Salazar López and changed the climate after 1987. Hernández remembers asking one of the auxiliary bishops, Rafael Martínez, “Why don’t you all like the Christian base communities?” Bishop Martínez told him the problem was some laypeople participating in CEBs had “advanced” beyond the priests, presumably in their capacities to mobilize and influence communities of laypeople.⁶⁹ The Church hierarchy dismissed or put up obstacles to the base community movement in order to consolidate conservative hegemony. Their vision and practice stood in stark contrast to that of Madre Lucha and liberationists pushing against hierarchical, patriarchal structures and culture across the board. Responding to longtime CEB leader Hernández, Martínez added, however, “But, at the same time, yes, it is in the documents of the Church. We are in agreement about that, no doubt.” CEBs found support in statements issued by the Latin American Conference of Bishops (CELAM) at high-profile conferences in Medellín (1968), Puebla (1979), and Santo Domingo (1992). Hernández responded to the bishop with a logic he found very straightforward. If Church documents have the authority the hierarchy claims, and thoroughgoing affirmation of CEBs is articulated there, the fact that the local hierarchy “[did] not show up and support us,” as Hernández puts it, constituted hypocrisy and betrayal.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Author interview with Guillermo Hernández Hernández, April 25, 2019, Guadalajara, Mexico.



Figure 4.2. El Señor del Perdón parish temple, from Calle Mesa del Norte side. Photo by author, 2019.

Santa Margarita

In the far northwestern corner of Guadalajara's metropolitan area, the recently established colonia Santa Margarita became a strong base for CEBs and popular organizing in the mid-1970s. Fraccionadora San Pablo began selling lots with what residents described as "minimal services" in 1966, contrary to the Zapopan municipal government's later narrative of a fully urbanized colonia from the outset.⁷¹ A ravine bordering the southwestern side of Santa Margarita separated the lower-class colonia from the "luxury residential zones of Guadalajara."⁷² In 1974, priests in nearby San Isidro parish recommended the archdiocese create a new Santa Margarita Reina parish in the expanding colonia popular of 18,000 people that straddled the Periférico highway. The diocesan priests argued in favor of the new parish based on the post-Vatican II context in which the formation of base communities became one normative model for the Church, and one which archbishop Salazar López affirmed locally.⁷³

Jesuit priests played important catalyzing roles in Santa Margarita. Miguel García Guzmán, José Camarena and colleagues worked closely with parish priest Arturo Mendoza Hernández and IMDEC staff and volunteers on the "promotional" aspects of the project. The Jesuits and IMDEC conducted social science research on the area beginning in 1972 and drew inspiration from Santa Cecilia's already thriving CEBs,

⁷¹ Biblioteca ITESO, Acervo General, Víctor M. Quintana, *Educación popular y movimientos reivindicativos urbanos: El caso de Santa Margarita* (Guadalajara: Servicios Educativos de Occidente, 1980), 64; and Archivo Municipal de Zapopan (AMZ), Colonias, Santa Margarita, Información Integral por Colonias, "Col. Santa Margarita 1ª secc., ZPN 4/09," julio 2002, p. 2.

⁷² Quintana, 63.

⁷³ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, San Isidro parish to José Salazar López, August 26, 1974.

where IMDEC and other Jesuit priests collaborated. The Santa Margarita Promotional Team and base community participants undertook micro-level economic development projects, operated savings cooperatives, and created neighborhood sources for essential goods residents previously travelled to other parts of the metropolitan zone to obtain.⁷⁴ Access to public transportation in the form of buses remained irregular in colonias populares for most of the 1970s and very few residents had automobiles.

CEB members founded a cooperative workshop that produced clothing in the colonia, which was then sold there in shops and stands—for reduced prices—and in markets elsewhere in the city. With neighborhood women spearheading the clothing workshop efforts, hundreds of participating households gained the capacity to make their own clothes. IMDEC organizers helped launch a consumer cooperative to address food needs, which included the manufacture of soy-based cookies as another community income generator.⁷⁵ Reflecting common concerns in Latin America’s urban peripheries in the 1970s, Santa Margarita CEBs also implemented programs for “employment training, combating drug trafficking and addiction, and public security.” And they gathered regularly to celebrate festivals and fiestas on local school grounds.⁷⁶

Jesuit priests initiated the “promotional project” in Santa Margarita in 1972. Working under the auspices of the Cultural Extension Center of the Instituto de Ciencias, a local Jesuit high school, they began by offering various forms of free community

⁷⁴ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, September 24, 1974, Miguel García Guzmán, S.J. to Franz Hengsbach.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Elsa Guzmán and Christopher Martin, “Back to Basics Mexican Style: Radical Catholicism and Survival on the Margins,” *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 16, no. 3 (1997), 359-360.

education, food and medicine dispensaries, and pastoral services in colonias populares in the northwestern peripheral zone of the metropolitan area. In 1973, with two Jesuits, twelve nuns, and five laypeople, the Santa Margarita Promotional Team project dedicated itself territorially to the colonias populares of San Francisco, Tuzanía, Santa Margarita, San José and San Isidro. They negotiated “pastoral agreements” with diocesan priests in each zone and continued their research. Jesuits formed small groups of “culture circles” and “communities of Christian life” with students and residents, and those educational and pastoral elements of the project later merged into Christian base communities by 1976.⁷⁷ CEB groups organized by street, rotating weekly meeting locations to different members’ homes.⁷⁸ Santa Margarita was the geographical center of the promotional project’s operations, with the Services Center located on Calle Santa Lucrecia. In 1974, the building housed the savings cooperative, construction cooperative, dispensary, and dental services.⁷⁹

The Santa Margarita Promotional Team’s project received a modest but essential grant of eight thousand U.S. dollars in 1975 from the Adveniat Society—a program of the German Episcopate—to extend its popular economy initiatives in the northwestern urban peripheries of Guadalajara.⁸⁰ Nuns from the orders of the Hermanas del Corazón de Jesús Sacramentado (HCJS) and the Religiosas Filipenses (RF) played crucial roles in the

⁷⁷ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, Comunidad Clavijero, “Equipo Promocional Santa Margarita: Principales momentos del Proyecto,” 19 de octubre 1981.

⁷⁸ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, P. José Luis Gómez G., SJ al Sr. Cura Ascensión Aguirre, 24 de diciembre de 1981, pp. 1-3.

⁷⁹ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, Comunidad Clavijero, “Equipo Promocional Santa Margarita: Principales momentos del Proyecto,” 19 de octubre 1981.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

project. HCJS nuns Rosario García, Rosa María Mares, Carmen Maciel, and Carmen Duran joined Filipenses nuns Ana Rosa Inda and Cruz Mañana in Santa Margarita. The head of the Social Pastorate in Guadalajara’s archdiocese, Arturo Martín del Campo, Jesuits José Camarena and Miguel García Guzmán, along with diocesan priests Jaime Parga, the aforementioned Mendoza Hernández, Guillermo Santos, and Raymundo Navarro filled out the religious personnel in the mid-1970s.⁸¹ The promotional team chose particular initiatives based on their findings in a series of studies— surveys, censuses, and “dialogical research” with residents. Writing to Franz Hengsbach of the Adveniat Society in September 1974, Miguel García noted, “We have been inspired from the beginning by the experience and the theory of development of suburban colonias of the team working in ‘Sta. Cecilia’ and we have maintained close contact with IMDEC.”⁸² Organizers, CEB participants, popular educators, priests, and nuns originally began coordinating efforts across peripheral colonias through the IMDEC-sponsored “Methodology Workshop” (*Taller de Metodología*). Steeped in Freirian popular education praxis, the Methodology Workshop schools and the independent leftist networks built around them represent an important early attempt to coordinate efforts and offer a template for promotional work in colonias populares.⁸³

⁸¹ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, Folleto, Equipo Promocional de Santa Margarita, 1975.

⁸² AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, Miguel García Guzmán to Franz Hengsbach, 24 de septiembre de 1974, Anexo-II, p. 1.

⁸³ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, Miguel García Guzmán to Franz Hengsbach, 24 de septiembre de 1974, p. 1.

The Santa Margarita Promotional Team divided the project into five areas of activity by mid-1975— the youth pastorate, base communities, “economic promotion,” assistance-based (or service) efforts, and educational programs. Miguel García charted the process of organizing base communities in Santa Margarita as four steps we might view as advancing outward through concentric circles of social relations. The first moment was the “individual conversion” of group members in terms of “their family responsibilities,” stressing values of “mutual help” and “brotherhood.” The second transformative moment was “community conversion” anchored in “living” celebration of the Eucharist and “commitment to solve the problems of the group itself.” Thirdly, CEBs “project the experiences of faith and Gospel commitments lived in the group toward actions of brotherhood and solidarity with neighbors.” The fourth transformative moment in the process was “conscientizing the groups about their social-political-economic and religious commitment and responsibility to the Colonia.” Results were hard to measure in the ethical revolution being attempted at the barrio level. In a July 1975 letter to archbishop Salazar López, García acknowledged “progress has been very irregular.” Some CEB groups dissolved while others continued to mature and engage in a range of activities. CEBs and youth groups constituted the base of participants in both popular religious celebrations—Christmas, Lent, and Santa Margarita’s fiesta patronal—and community organizing campaigns.⁸⁴

The “economic promotion” pillar of the Santa Margarita project responded to the colonia’s “acute shortages and [residents’] low existing capacity for overcoming those

⁸⁴ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, Miguel García Guzmán, S.J. to Emmo. Sr. Cardenal José Salazar López, 5 de Julio de 1975, pp. 1-5.

conditions.” Distinct from the socio-spatial arrangement of Santa Cecilia and El Perdón on the opposite side of the Calzada Independencia, Santa Margarita sits on the western side in Zapopan, adjacent to a dramatically more affluent zone with gated communities and a country club just up Santa Margarita Avenue to the west. With this juxtaposition etched on the cityscape around them, the promotional team acknowledged their “limited ability” and “auxiliary role” in confronting impoverished conditions resulting from structural issues. Nuns and priests focused early efforts on building capacity for organized residents to carry forward and expand colonia-based popular economic initiatives. In the mid-1970s, hundreds of women received training in sewing and dressmaking. Participating women organized a fabric consumer cooperative, with operation centers in both Santa Margarita and San José colonias. The savings and credit cooperative emerged from the same group, and it represents a continuation of longstanding *cajas populares* traditions which endure today.⁸⁵

Laypeople attended daily operations in the Santa Margarita project’s clothes manufacturing workshop. In addition to production, nuns and experienced neighborhood women offered training in weaving, cooking and baking, “beauty culture,” and handcrafts.⁸⁶ From the promotional team’s perspective, the goals of economic promotion initiatives there were to “get more out of the scarce resources available” to residents and

⁸⁵ Ibid, pp. 3-4.

⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 4.

to provide training and other so that residents of Santa Margarita could “produce some products or services that they currently receive outside of the colonia.”⁸⁷

The philosophy and activities fell under the rubric of what contemporaries called “popular promotion.” Activists in Santa Margarita especially used the language of promotion—in the project name, for example. In addition to cooperatives and capacity-building, the social assistance component of the Santa Margarita project aided low-income residents with a range of services. In 1974 and 1975, the Santa Margarita Promotional Team regularly opened a medical dispensary. They distributed baby-bottles for three hundred fifty infants. And they operated the Services Center providing job listings, legal assistance, food pantry, and professional medical care once a week.⁸⁸

The fifth pillar of the Santa Margarita project was education. Jesuits and nuns focused their efforts on adults, with an “accelerated primary” school and basic literacy courses. Eighty-five residents completed the accelerated primary school during the 1974-1975 cycle. The project attempted a “business academy” that never got traction, though they successfully ran a school for nurse’s assistants that trained thirty people that year.⁸⁹ Santa Margarita CEBs peaked when the “promotional” and pastoral projects came together for a brief period during 1976 and 1977, before the appointment of priest Asunción Aguirre and the subsequent sustained conflict.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, Miguel García Guzmán to Franz Hengsbach, 24 de septiembre de 1974, Anexo-II, p. 1.

⁸⁸ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, Miguel García Guzmán, S.J. to Emmo. Sr. Cardenal José Salazar López, 5 de Julio de 1975, p. 4.

⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 5.

⁹⁰ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, Comunidad Clavijero, “Equipo Promocional Santa Margarita: Principales momentos del Proyecto,” 19 de octubre 1981.

NUESTRO OBJETIVO

PROMOCION HUMANO—EVANGELIZADORA QUE LLEVE A UNA ACCION LIDERADORA EN CRISTO.

Es nuestra convicción que únicamente los valores evangélicos prácticamente vividos, y en especial Cristo como inspiración y apoyo, pueden dar a esta acción la base y el dinamismo indispensable para su eficaz realización.

PROCESO PREVISTO EN LA REALIZACION DE ESTE OBJETIVO:

1. Inspiración y guía a los habitantes de estas Colonias en la **toma de conciencia**: —de su dignidad como seres humanos, —de sus carencias y limitaciones, —de las sujeciones y explotaciones que sufren, —de sus posibilidades de superación y liberación.
2. Asesoría para una organización progresiva a diversos niveles que les haga posible la solución colectiva de sus problemas en espíritu de cooperación y servicio.
3. Apoyo en los aspectos técnico y económico indispensables para la puesta en marcha de los anteriores procesos.
4. Profundización en la experiencia y en la práctica religiosa que los lleve a vivir su fe a la vez en forma más personal y comprometida y al mismo tiempo más auténticamente comunitaria.

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graph TD
    CG[Coordinador General] --- I[Investigación]
    CG --- RP[Relac. Publ.]
    CG --- A[Administración]
    I --- CR[Coordinador Religión]
    I --- PSE[Promotor Socio-Econ.]
    RP --- PCP[Promotor Cívico-Polit.]
    A --- PCP
    A --- CAS[Coordinador Asist. Social]
  
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ESTILO DE TRABAJO: La realidad concreta de estas Colonias nos ha impuesto la exigencia de llevar a la práctica el anterior organigrama en **ÁREAS** de trabajo: JOVENES, ADULTOS, EDUCATIVA, ASISTENCIAL, ECONOMICA.

De estas, unas van orientadas a ciertas categorías de personas, otras a funciones más generales. En ambas se realizan simultáneamente varias de las actividades que aparecen separadas en el organigrama. Solo progresivamente iremos llegando a una estructuración desde arriba que corresponda a la señalada en el organigrama.

Damos a continuación un breve informe de las actividades de cada área

AREA ASISTENCIAL

1. **CARACTERÍSTICAS:** Emergencias frecuentes en los siguientes campos: —salud, —empleo, —nutrición infantil, —alimentación, —crédito, —defensa jurídica.
2. **POSIBILIDADES DE ACCION:** "Central de Servicios Asistenciales" que responda a estas emergencias en forma organizada y estable.
3. **REALIZACIONES:** Se ha iniciado recientemente dicha "Central", que es atendida por dos religiosas, una trabajadora social y un pasante de medicina que a tiempos parciales realizan las siguientes **FUNCIONES**: 1. **Canalización:** poner en contacto las necesidades con las agencias ya establecidas en el medio para resolverlas. 2. **Promoción:** de nuevos servicios cuando no bastan los ya existentes: despensas familiares, nutrición infantil, etc. 3. **Educación:** de los que reciben los servicios y de aquellos elementos de la colonia que asumirán posteriormente la dirección del "Centro". 4. **Investigación:** de las carencias y sus causas. **CAMPOS QUE SE ATIENDEN:** —salud e higiene, —despensas familiares, —nutrición infantil, —bolsa de trabajo, —asesoría jurídica.
4. **PROYECTOS:** 1. Ampliación de la "promoción" para obtener más despensas familiares, servicios médicos y hospitalarios especializados, etc. 2. Realización de campañas de: higiene, nutrición, etc.

AREA EDUCATIVA

Nuestra meta no es dar respuesta a todo lo que sean problemas educativos sino sólo atender a las emergencias de los adultos en este campo. SE REALIZAN LAS SIGUIENTES ACTIVIDADES.

1. **PREPARATORIA NOCTURNA PARA TRABAJADORES:** —mixta, —con sede en el Colegio Unión, —con varias de las características de "Preparatoria Abierta", —matrícula: 70 alumnos.
2. **PRIMARIA ACELERADA PARA ADULTOS:** —mixta, —con sede en la Colonia San José del Bajío, —matrícula: 120 alumnos.
3. **CENTROS DE ALFABETIZACION DE ADULTOS:** —tres, —matrículas: 110 alumnos.

Figure 4.3. Brochure for the Equipo Promocional de Santa Margarita, 1975. Courtesy of the Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Guadalajara.

To complicate the movement's development, "subversive priests" in peripheral urban barrios became targets of rightwing groups that increasingly worked parallel to, if not in concert with, the Mexican state on anticommunist repression during the 1970s and 1980s. Colonia Santa Margarita is situated near the Autonomous University of Guadalajara (UAG) on the northwestern periphery, a spatial arrangement that made CEBs and popular organizations especially vulnerable to attacks from the Tecos, a secret-society, neofascist student group at the UAG. Mostly sons of the middle and upper classes, the Tecos began targeting Santa Margarita and Santa Cecilia with intimidation tactics during the height of CEB organizing in the 1970s. They spread "rumors, painted the walls, passed out flyers, published false accusations in their newspapers, and used 'shock troops.'" ⁹¹ Community organizer Víctor Quintana and other activists understood the Tecos as an arm of the UAG locally, FEMACO (Anticommunist Mexican Student Front) nationally, and the Liga Anticomunista Latinoamericana (Latin American Anticommunist League) and Liga Mundial Anticomunista (World Anticommunist League) internationally. ⁹² Different groups and formations perpetrated the acts at distinct moments, but armed thuggery and political violence by the far-right in the name of fighting "communism" persisted throughout the 1970s and 1980s in Jalisco. ⁹³

⁹¹ Quintana, 72.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Jorge Regalado Santillán, "El movimiento popular independiente en Guadalajara," in *Perspectivas de los movimientos sociales en la región Centro-Occidente*, ed. Jaime Tamayo (Mexico City: Editorial Línea, 1986), 128. For more on the Tecos see Laura Patricia Romero, "El movimiento fascista en Guadalajara," in *Perspectivas de los movimientos sociales en la región Centro-Occidente*, ed. Jaime Tamayo (Mexico City: Editorial Línea, 1986), 29-102; Mónica Naymich López Macedonio, "Historia de una colaboración anticomunista transnacional: Los Tecos de la Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara y el gobierno de Chiang Kai-Shek a principios de los años setenta," *Contemporánea: Historia y problemas del siglo XX* 1

Paramilitary groups escalated threats and harassment in Santa Margarita during the latter years of the 1970s. The Tecos and associated far-right factions stepped up political violence toward key figures in the colonia's popular organizing project in 1977, parallel to the appointment of traditionalist priest J. Asunción Aguirre to Santa Margarita Reina parish in February that year. Jesuit José Camarena left the project and moved out of the region in July, fleeing the growing intensity of attacks and threats against him.⁹⁴

Zapopan's municipal police joined in the anticommunist persecution. They detained twenty-two-year-old Daniel Rosas Aréchiga later in 1977 for his participation in the movement alongside Camarena in Santa Margarita. Police interrogated Rosas Aréchiga about his connections to the Jesuit priest and "about the philosophy of Marx and Lenin." While in the local jail, police stripped his clothes and applied electric shocks and other torture techniques. They then transported Rosas Aréchiga "to a site where they simulated his death by firing squad." Jesuit priests Miguel García and Isaac Romero Malpica eventually discovered the detention and successfully negotiated his release before further harm was done.⁹⁵ Into the 1980s, three forces sustained repression against liberationist Christianity and independent popular organizing in Santa Margarita and surrounding colonias populares— the Tecos and right-wing political violence, municipal police, and "Padre Chon" Aguirre and the parish's traditionalist, anticommunist faction.

(2010): 133-58; and Craig Pyes, "Neo-Nazi U.: the Mystery of a Mexican Med School," *The New Republic*, January 19, 1987.

⁹⁴ BPEJ, Hemeroteca histórica, Felipe Cobián, "Persiguen a promotores de obras sociales," *Proceso*, 12 noviembre 1977.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

Both the Jesuits and the Filipenses nuns in Santa Margarita suffered repression and faced myriad pressures that impeded their work. Like Sagrado Corazón nuns in Santa Cecilia, Filipenses sisters in Santa Margarita deeply embedded themselves in the colonia and their presence became a mainstay in the lives of hundreds of residents. Laypeople aligned with conservative parish priest Aguirre consistently complained to the archdiocese about the nuns' activities. At the same time, neofascist intimidation surged in the zone. The Filipenses order pulled out of the Santa Margarita project in 1978. CEB participants and most residents expressed outrage that the nuns, and the base communities more broadly, had been victims of such consistent harassment culminating in the sisters exiting the project.⁹⁶

Leaders of Liga de Amistad groups and base communities wrote archbishop Salazar López to defend the Filipenses' work in the barrio. Santa Margarita residents delineated the repression CEBs faced there, while arguing they were doing as the Gospels and Church documents instructed them. They annexed forty-two pages displaying more than nine hundred signatures and addresses of "people who agree with and support the work the Filipenses nuns have come to perform in our colonia."⁹⁷ The Representative Commission authoring the appeal to the archbishop included six men and seven women, among them Ramón Figueroa Ortiz, Marina Rivera de Gómez, Yolanda Miramontes Rosales, and Rogelio Ascencio Sosa.⁹⁸ On the first page, they cited a 1968 Pastoral Letter

⁹⁶ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, Comisión de Representantes de la Liga de Fútbol de la Amistad y demás grupos de cristianos comprometidos de la colonia Santa Margarita al Señor don José Salazar, arzobispo de Guadalajara, 5 de abril de 1978, pp. 1-3.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 3.

from the Mexican Episcopate (CEM) that connected “religious” formation and the development of “social conscience.”⁹⁹ To conclude their plea, CEB members wrote,

What we know is that Christ was born, lived, and died poor, and he was always concerned for the poor... Look, Cardinal sir, we are accused of being communists. But we want to clarify one thing: communists don't receive communion and pray to God, and we do these things... Cardinal don José Salazar sir, we had already anticipated the attacks that we have received, this is the same thing that happened to Christ, and He himself said, “Remember this word I say to you: the servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” John 15.20... We take this as one more proof that our work is good. This is now four attacks that we have received...How many more do you think we can resist patiently?¹⁰⁰

In April 1978, a time of transition and conflict in the longer trajectory of the movement in Santa Margarita, the colonia’s “committed Christians,” supported by Filipenses nuns and Jesuits, organized themselves into an extensive list of groups that carried out diverse functions in the community’s collective life. The Liga de Amistad soccer league had more than seventy-five teams for children and youth. Eight base community groups composed primarily of married couples met for “biblical reflection, study of different topics of interest, convivencias, and looking for solutions to the colonia’s problems.” The CEBs’ “Social Communication Group” coordinated festivals, distributed flyers, created the street newspaper *El Amigo*, and performed teatro popular. A cadre of base community participants led “Children’s Circles” and “Youth Circles,” which focused on religious formation and social and communication skills. The CEBs had groups devoted specifically to prayer. And CEBs in Santa Margarita now managed a shoemaking cooperative and continued the autoconstruction cooperative in which

⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 1.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 2.

residents worked on homes together in brigades each Sunday. All groups and committees had a representative on the Coordinating Committee, the leadership entity that “deal[t] with problems of general interest and look[ed] for solutions for the common good of the whole Colonia.”¹⁰¹

CEBs framed organizing campaigns for urban services as “part of the Christian and social commitment of Community members.” Though the parish shifted from ally to enemy, CEBs worked with the Neighborhood Improvement Committee after 1976 to coordinate petitions, actions, and interface with government officials on behalf of the colonia.¹⁰² In 1980, Santa Margarita residents achieved a major victory after a year-long campaign calling on the municipal government to pave the colonia’s streets. Roads were previously cobblestoned and in serious disrepair.¹⁰³

In 1981, nine active CEB groups met weekly in Santa Margarita with an average attendance of twelve people. Those base community meetings began with “spiritual inspiration” from a biblical passage, followed by a “formation topic” dealing with biblical understandings, “some aspect of family life,” or social issues. Gatherings concluded with one of the participants leading a “community prayer.”¹⁰⁴ Santa Margarita CEBs held a retreat on the first Monday of each month. As a network, they reflected on

¹⁰¹ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, Comisión de Representantes de la Liga de Fútbol de la Amistad y demás grupos de cristianos comprometidos de la colonia Santa Margarita al Señor don José Salazar, arzobispo de Guadalajara, 5 de abril de 1978, anexo 1, “Lista de grupos de la Colonia Santa Margarita.”

¹⁰² AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, P. José Luis Gómez G., SJ al Sr. Cura Ascensión Aguirre, 24 de diciembre de 1981, p. 3.

¹⁰³ Interview with Gabriel Uribe, in *El Proyecto de Santa Cecilia*, “El Proyecto de Santa Margarita.”

¹⁰⁴ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, P. José Luis Gómez G., SJ al Sr. Cura Ascensión Aguirre, 24 de diciembre de 1981, p. 1.

and discussed a common theme and closed by celebrating the Eucharist. Guadalajara archdiocese auxiliary bishop Adolfo Hernández Hurtado attended the December 1981 gathering, illustrating a modicum of continued support for Santa Margarita CEBs from the local hierarchy, even if strictly symbolic. Once every two months, base community families had convivencias in the nearby countryside and spent the day “sharing games, food, and a time of prayer.”¹⁰⁵ Base communities in Santa Margarita engaged in mutual aid among community members, with efforts coordinated by a committee that raised and distributed funds for “urgent necessities that come up, like the death of a family member, the unemployment of the head of the family, some accident or illness.”¹⁰⁶

Santa Margarita CEBs convened with base communities from colonias populares around Guadalajara two or three times a year. On Sunday, December 13, 1981, they gathered at the Instituto de Ciencias, where they celebrated the 450-year anniversary of the Virgin of Guadalupe’s appearance and the seventh anniversary of the founding of Lomas de Polanco’s CEBs.¹⁰⁷ Santa Margarita CEBs also met on the first Sunday of each month with other parish groups in the city-wide “Barrios Pastorate.” Arturo Martín del Campo led the archdiocese’s Social Pastorate’s efforts supporting progressive projects in colonias populares. He and archbishop Salazar Lopez invited José Marins from Brazil for a series of workshops on base communities in 1981.¹⁰⁸ Santa Margarita CEBs met

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, pp. 1-2.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 2.

¹⁰⁷ AHAG, Gobierno, Pastoral, Social, CEBs, 1978-1985, Expediente 8, Caja 1, Comisión Diocesana de Pastoral Social- Sección “Barrios,” “Reflexiones sobre la Santísima Virgen de Guadalupe: En el 450 Aniversario de sus Apariciones. Para grupos Cristianos y Comunidades Eclesiales de Base,” Septiembre de 1981, pp. 1-9.

monthly at the Social Pastorate House with fifteen other colonias to “study what Base Communities are and how we can support each other in our work.” Barrios Pastorate participants celebrated the Eucharist and ate a meal together at each gathering.¹⁰⁹ And Santa Margarita members attended CEB National Gatherings, including the most recent 1981 meeting in Tehuantepec.¹¹⁰

Santa Margarita CEB members took part in a “political formation course” in 1981, where in a weekend retreat format they reflected on and discussed the question, “What is politics?” They evaluated the politics of different groups by who—which social groups—benefitted from them. After the slight electoral opening of the late 1970s, left political parties tended to work “for” the people but not “with” the people.¹¹¹ Echoing a common refrain in Santa Cecilia residents’ analysis of their own organizing, Gabriel Uribe argues “necessity” fueled the most active periods of mass participation and mobilization in Santa Margarita CEBs and popular organizing initiatives. Moreover, Uribe noted the most robust engagement from residents and impactful organizing emerged from occasions when people “feel it.” Over the long term, however, the movement displayed a dependence on Jesuits in the role of “spiritual guide.” García,

¹⁰⁸ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, P. José Luis Gómez G., SJ al Sr. Cura Ascensión Aguirre, 24 de diciembre de 1981, p. 2. CELAM dispatched Marins and another priest around Latin America for base community trainings. Américo Freire mentions this in his illuminating biography of influential Brazilian liberationist priest Frei Betto. See Américo Freire, *Frei Betto: Una biografía* (Habana: Editorial José Martí, 2016).

¹⁰⁹ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, P. José Luis Gómez G., SJ al Sr. Cura Ascensión Aguirre, 24 de diciembre de 1981, p. 2.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Martha Arias Vázquez Personal Collection (MAV), Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, Santa Margarita, “Curso de Formación Política. Colonia Santa Margarita,” pp. 1-5.

Camarena, and the priests themselves did not operate in ways that fostered this dependence, instead acting as facilitators and consultants. But even in contexts where liberationists consciously pushed against entrenched models, the movement confronted dilemmas of hierarchy and lone-male leadership. In Santa Margarita, Uribe contended the introduction of money in the form of financial support by outside organizations and institutions for a couple of organizers yielded problems, discord, and apathy on the part of all unpaid participants. Ultimately, though CEBs were the foundation of the movement, Uribe describes a “conflict” between the religious and political components of the project.¹¹²

There is some impression that the movement in Santa Margarita ended abruptly with the neofascist attacks that sent José Camarena and other Jesuit priests into exile. But movement participants tell a different story of the aftermath and response to repression. Uribe argued political violence perpetrated by the Tecos and other right-wing groups galvanized action and mobilization among Santa Margarita residents and CEB participants, especially in later years of the CEBs project.¹¹³ Public transportation—bus service and price, specifically—water, and a lack of streetlights in the colonia constituted the three major urban services issues still driving participation and mobilization in Santa Margarita during 1980 and 1981.

At this stage of the movement, Santa Margarita CEBs joined broad fronts of organized residents and activists from colonias populares around the peripheries of Guadalajara. The Independent Popular Movement (MPI) was a short-lived but powerful

¹¹² Interview with Gabriel Uribe in *El Proyecto de Santa Cecilia*, “El Proyecto de Santa Margarita.”

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

attempt to unite the struggles and bases of participants from organized independent groups—mostly CEBs—around the urban peripheries. Jesuit priests, IMDEC and SEDOC organizers and popular educators, and CEB leaders began coordinating solidarity networks between colonias in the late 1970s, calling themselves the “Assembly of the 40,” as forty people composed the group.¹¹⁴ The MPI regularly convened “assemblies” in participating colonias to analyze and strategize with residents according to the issues in each context. At the MPI assembly in Santa Margarita on February 7, 1981, “high water bills that are affecting many people” became the central problem to address. Participants decided “all the affected people” would go to the water department offices together the following Monday to “see the director” of SIAPA and “find a solution to this thing that’s happening to us.” With collective analysis and strategizing, and the increased numbers and resources solidified in the MPI network, Santa Margarita CEB members simply heightened the probability of “all together” finding “solutions” to common economic problems like unaffordable water bills.¹¹⁵ The MPI joined the distinct but overlapping periphery-wide Barrios Pastorate and the Periphery CEBs networks in providing solidarity webs locally that became characteristic of the urban popular movement during the 1980s in Mexico nationally.¹¹⁶ Guadalajara’s thoroughgoing religious underpinnings made it distinct.

¹¹⁴ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, Santa Margarita, *El Amigo: Periódico de las CCB*, Col. Sta. Margarita, “El Periodiquito Orienta” febrero 1981, p. 1.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, Santa Margarita, *El Amigo: Periódico de las CCB*, Col. Sta. Margarita, “Vida en Comunidad,” marzo 1981, p. 4.

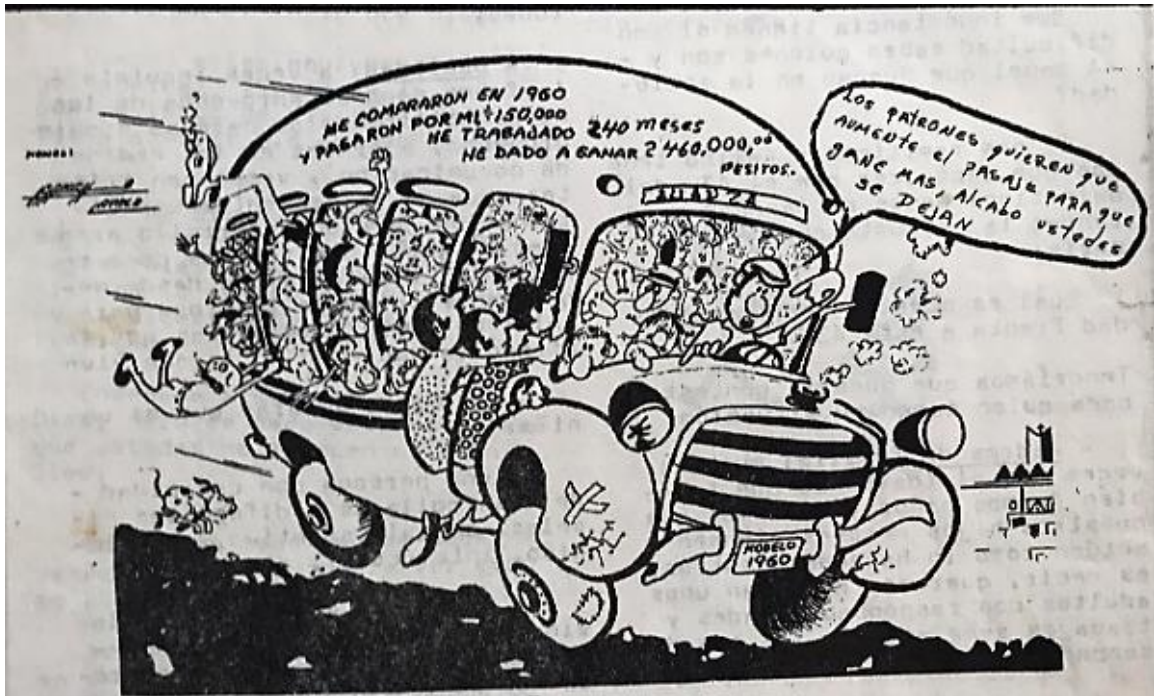


Figure 4.4. A cartoon by Santa Cecilia resident and artist Cancho Ayala for a 1981 edition of the street newspaper *El Alipuz*, depicting conditions on bus rides through colonias populares around Guadalajara. The driver of the 1960 model bus says to readers, “The owners want to increase the fare so they make more money, as much as you’ll let them.” Image used by permission of Martha Arias, personal collection.

Public transportation continued to be a major issue in Santa Margarita and around the periphery of the city, given the high numbers of people living in colonias populares who depended on buses to get to work in zones far from their homes. In February 1981, residents lamented bus service problems in the CEBs’ street newspaper *El Amigo*, in the “Letters to the Periodiquito” section. The latest grievance in colonia Santa Margarita began when buses never arrived on the morning of January 26, ruining the workday for hundreds of people. To add insult to injury, another fare increase loomed after bus drivers went on strike in February. CEB members believed the transportation “monopoly” orchestrated the driver strike from above in order to justify the rate hike they planned to implement. Bus fares had gone up in 1979, but owners “have not fulfilled their promises”

about improved service, which was “worse every day.” CEB members utilized *El Amigo* to encourage other Santa Margarita residents to “get organized and fight!”¹¹⁷ A month later, following an MPI meeting in colonia Lomas de Polanco on the southern periphery, Santa Margarita CEB members reported back to the broader community that every colonia represented in the MPI committed to “struggle against the increase in urban transportation.”¹¹⁸

The organized far-right stepped up political violence in and around Santa Margarita in response to growing popular mobilizations centered principally on transportation issues during the spring and summer months of 1981. Indeed, as the headline in the mainstream daily newspaper *El Informador* phrased it on July 24, “Complaints Coming from All Directions about Urban Transport.”¹¹⁹ Groups around the urban peripheries, including the United Colonos of Santa Margarita, planned a major protest downtown on Thursday, July 23. They hoped to mobilize thousands of people to demand a bus fare freeze and an end to the Alianza de Transporte company’s monopoly in the city. Organized residents blanketed colonias populares with flyers and talk of the upcoming protest. But on Wednesday, about forty members of the right-wing group the Civic Union of Jalisco Youth (UCJJ) “went street by street through the colonia [Santa Margarita] in automobiles” to deter participation in Thursday’s protest and independent

¹¹⁷ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, Santa Margarita, *El Amigo: Periódico de las CCB*, Col. Sta. Margarita, “Cartas al Periodiquito- ¡Alza al Precio de los Camiones!” febrero 1981, p. 2.

¹¹⁸ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, Santa Margarita, *El Amigo: Periódico de las CCB*, Col. Sta. Margarita, “M.P.I.,” marzo 1981, p. 3.

¹¹⁹ BPEJ, Hemeroteca Histórica, *El Informador*, “Por todos rumbos hay quejas del transporte urbano,” 24 de julio de 1981, pp. 1C, 3C.

organizing in general. The young men in cars were outsiders to Santa Margarita and other colonias populares. They showed up right after sundown in the poorly lit zone, at nine p.m., insisting residents take their flyers denouncing CEBs as “communizing and subversive.” The propaganda included wild claims that Jesuit priest José Camarena was “corrupting the youth,” promoting “drug addiction,” and “training guerrilleros in the manufacture of bombs.” Of course, Camarena left Santa Margarita four years earlier. The Tecos and affiliated groups like the UCJJ carried out such actions with regularity since 1976. They increased repression at moments of successful mobilization by independent leftist groups based in lower-class colonias, like their “intense campaign” of threats in 1980 when Santa Margarita residents organized to reject the Zapopan municipal government’s high-cost pavement project.¹²⁰

On Thursday, July 23, 1981, the United Colonos of Santa Margarita took advantage of Zapopan mayor Ricardo Chávez Pérez’s weekly press conference to publicly lodge their complaints about bus prices and service. The group of dozens of residents disrupted the event and forced the PRI’s Chávez Pérez to commit publicly to act on the issue in response to popular citizen demands. Even local news reporters skilled in downplaying protest and dissent around the city took Santa Margarita residents’ side in regard to bus service. “The residents of Santa Margarita expressed how insufferable the situation is because they find it extremely difficult to travel to their places of work or study, or back to their homes,” *El Informador* printed the next morning. Under pressure in a moment of heightened public scrutiny at the press conference, the mayor promised

¹²⁰ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, Santa Margarita, Colonos Unidos de Santa Margarita, Boletín de Prensa, “Grupos de extrema derecha agreden organización independiente de colonos en Zapopan,” julio 1981, p. 1.

the group of poor residents he would push for a solution in negotiation with the bus companies. Committee members also capitalized on the rare opportunity and leverage of the moment to solicit Chávez Pérez's assistance in compelling SIAPA to improve water service to the colonia. The mayor responded by assigning officials to accompany residents to SIAPA offices to advocate on the issue.¹²¹

Later that day, on July 23, around six thirty in the afternoon, neofascist paramilitary groups returned to Santa Margarita with one of their boldest raids to date. More than one hundred young men dressed in the uniform of the Pentatlón Deportivo Militar Universitario organization—black boots, black pants, white sweaters with the group's crest, and green bracelets—“returned to go around the colonia with a threatening attitude.” This time group members distributed copies of a telegram addressed to Mayor Chávez Pérez from the UCJJ. The letter claimed CEB members had assaulted UCJJ members and demanded the mayor of Zapopan ban “subversive” groups. Lies and threats were commonplace in invasions of the colonia before that afternoon, but this time members of the large paramilitary group beat up several Santa Margarita youth who refused their flyers. That “display of force” on the afternoon of July 23 “was much more impressive” than previous incidents.¹²²

The United Colonos of Santa Margarita issued a press release on Friday, July 24 detailing the acts of aggression against them and situating the political violence within

¹²¹ BPEJ, Hemeroteca histórica, *El Informador*, “Por todos rumbos hay quejas del transporte urbano,” 24 de julio de 1981, p. 1C.

¹²² MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, Santa Margarita, Colonos Unidos de Santa Margarita, Boletín de Prensa, “Grupos de extrema derecha agreden organización independiente de colonos en Zapopan,” julio 1981, p. 1.

“the extreme right’s escalation against the efforts of the working class to organize on its own and independently.” In the face of growing repression, organized Santa Margarita residents appealed to “popular democratic groups throughout the country” for solidarity. They requested allies “send telegrams” to Jalisco’s governor, Flavio Romero de Velasco, “demanding that he put an end to the actions of paramilitary groups” in colonia Santa Margarita.¹²³

Here we get a glimpse of fascism and the Cold War in 1970s and 1980s urban Mexico, with Christian base communities the principal targets of anticommunist offensives. Uniformed paramilitary groups could not fathom the mass mobilization of poor people in Guadalajara as anything but directed from above by a charismatic male leader, so they seized on the figure of Jesuit priest José Camarena and carried out a campaign of smears, intimidation, and threats against residents of Santa Margarita. Though the neighborhood invasions “scared” them, organized residents used incidents of repression as mobilization opportunities. More people committed to defending their colonia because they “felt it.” Yet, the colonia remained divided overall, with Santa Margarita Reina parish headed by rabid anti-communist Padre Chon since the departure of Arturo Mendoza Hernández in early 1977. CEBs in Santa Margarita needed allies and solidarity from other colonias and leftist groups across the region.

CEB members in Santa Margarita continued producing their four-to-six-page monthly street newspaper *El Amigo*. 1981 editions featured articles on issues at colonia, citywide, national, and international levels. The Jesuits maintained a strong presence in

¹²³ Ibid, p. 2.

the colonia, despite persistent rightwing harassment. “Santa Esther” and “Santa Clara” CEB groups in colonia Santa Margarita—named according to streets—posted updates about members’ prayer concerns related to deaths and births in their families. Attendance and participation at a January CEBs retreat was unexpectedly robust, especially among the colonia’s youth.¹²⁴ The savings cooperative recently rejuvenated itself with a new executive committee elected at the February 28 meeting of the General Assembly.¹²⁵ And the Open Education School continued offering programs for adults.¹²⁶

Santa Margarita CEB members featured the Independent Popular Movement (MPI) prominently in announcements and lead stories of CEB activity in *El Amigo* in early 1981.¹²⁷ Solidarity with movements outside the colonia and elsewhere in the Americas moved up the agenda for base communities in Santa Margarita into the early 1980s. In the “local news” section in the March 1981 *El Amigo*, CEBs updated readers on the displacement of forty families from the Pozo Arenero section of colonia López Portillo on the southern periphery of the metropolitan zone. The local government was pressuring residents of the informal settlement to move immediately under threat of the destruction of their homes.¹²⁸ Santa Margarita CEB members also attended a January 22,

¹²⁴ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, Santa Margarita, *El Amigo: Periódico de las CCB*, Col. Sta. Margarita, “Vida en comunidad,” febrero 1981, p. 3.

¹²⁵ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, Santa Margarita, *El Amigo: Periódico de las CCB*, Col. Sta. Margarita, “Caja de Ahorro,” marzo 1981, p. 3.

¹²⁶ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Margarita Reina, 1974-1984, P. José Luis Gómez G., SJ al Sr. Cura Ascensión Aguirre, 24 de diciembre de 1981, p. 3.

¹²⁷ MPI announcements are featured prominently in both the February and March 1981 editions of the base communities’ street newspaper *El Amigo*, for instance.

¹²⁸ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, Santa Margarita, *El Amigo: Periódico de las CCB*, Col. Sta. Margarita, “Noticias Locales- Pozo Arenero,” marzo 1981, p. 2.

1981 rally in Mexico City alongside 25,000 other Mexicans, opposing U.S. intervention in El Salvador.¹²⁹

The CEBs movement and most independent popular organizing petered out in Santa Margarita by the mid-1980s. The Jesuits exited the colonia in 1982, after ten years of transformative and controversial work. Though Santa Margarita itself ceased to be a central venue of popular movement activity, CEB participants formed in that milieu moved on to contribute to similar struggles in other settings on Guadalajara's urban peripheries. In Chapter Five, below, I track the subsequent activism of Martha Arias, a member of Santa Margarita's Youth Front in the 1970s who became a leader in the urban popular movement across the city during the 1980s.

Arturo Martín del Campo and the Social Pastorate

The recently ordained Arturo Martín del Campo and five other priests began meeting in 1972 as the local iteration of the Mexican Catholic Church's Episcopal Commission of the Social Pastorate. The Guadalajara archdiocese's Social Pastorate drew from the support and resources of the independent Mexican Social Secretariat (SSM). The collaboration of Jesuit priest Arnaldo Zenteno aided the regional group during its formative years while he served Santa Cecilia's CEBs from 1971 to 1974. According to Martín del Campo, the Social Pastorate aimed at "readapting the social commitment of the Church to the new demands," and it now emphasized the participation of "committed laypeople."¹³⁰ The archdiocesan commission constituted the primary, and

¹²⁹ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, Santa Margarita, *El Amigo: Periódico de las CCB*, Col. Sta. Margarita, "Noticias Nacionales. Manifestación en México," febrero 1981, p. 2.

¹³⁰ Interview with Arturo Martín del Campo, in *El Proyecto de Santa Cecilia*, "Pastoral Social. P. Arturo Martín del Campo," p. 1.

eventually only, institutional source of support base communities and the urban popular movement found in the Catholic Church hierarchy.

Martín del Campo's vision of a revamped Social Pastorate is captured in the 1974 document, "The Social Pastorate Here and Now," representative of the institutional Church's small corner of promotion and articulation of liberationist belief and practice.¹³¹ Martín del Campo began by charting the "conceptual and pragmatic evolution" of the Church's Social Pastorate since the late nineteenth century and Pope Leo's *Rerum Novarum* (1891). The Guadalajara-based diocesan priest saw liberalism and socialism as the ideologies driving thought on the Social Pastorate from 1881 through the mid-1970s, with "diverse focuses" across three historical periods. According to this conceptualization, from 1881 to 1960 the Social Pastorate could be dubbed "Catholic Social Action." Then from 1960 to 1970, it shifted to what Martín del Campo labeled "Integral Development," as theologically and programmatically the Church viewed social issues through a developmentalist (*desarrollista*) lens. Since 1970, "Liberating Evangelization" characterized the Social Pastorate's approach and program.¹³²

The Guadalajara archdiocese's Social Pastorate structured its work around three major objectives. First, in order to "discover the social dimension of sin" and "the signs of the times," they preached and practiced "analysis of reality." This meant modeling and encouraging the use of "research methods" together with liberation theology. Secondly, the commission coordinated evangelization and human promotion "action." This category

¹³¹ AHAG, Gobierno, Pastoral, Social, 1922-1972, Expediente 21, Caja 1, 1970-1974, Arturo Martín del Campo, "La Pastoral Social hoy y aquí," pp. 1-21.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 1.

of activity entailed “evangelically animating, orienting, and transforming the temporal order” and insisting on the “social” implications of “the Gospel” in relation to pastoral work as a whole. Thirdly, the Social Pastorate aimed to foment “Christian commitment” in the political sphere. It fulfilled this educational function by evaluating political parties and their platforms and making “pastoral suggestions” for laypeople. In short, Martín del Campo and the Social Pastorate hoped to “orient and insert the commitment of Christians in political activities” and “promote the change of social structures toward a more just and caring society.”¹³³ They grounded the Social Pastorate’s program in part on a “Christian anthropological vision” that understood humans as “conscious of their history,” “free,” “supportive in brotherhood,” and as created in the “image and likeness of God with an otherworldly destiny.”¹³⁴

Martín del Campo and the Social Pastorate established the Social Pastorate Center in colonia Oblatos on the working-class eastern side of the city, converting a modest house seldomly used by the archdiocese into the commission’s office space. The center became a venue for workshops, study-group meetings, convivencias, and “spiritual reflection retreats.” Since the Social Pastorate commission retained the assistance-based components of its work, they also devoted square footage in the center to housing clothes and medicine collected by the local Caritas charity organization. In October 1976, the local Socialist Party for Workers (PST) utilized one part of the house for “holding the household belongings of more than one hundred ‘squatter’ families who were expelled

¹³³ Ibid, p. 2.

¹³⁴ Ibid, p. 9.

from some lands in the south of the city where they had established homes.”¹³⁵ From Caritas to the PST, across the diverse functions of the Social Pastorate Center house in colonia Oblatos, we can identify a politics and program of opening doors for and diverting resources and capacity to poor people.

With Martín del Campo’s steady, consistent initiative and leadership, the archdiocese’s Social Pastorate conducted courses, convened and facilitated gatherings and meetings, and aided in the creation and support of diverse organizations. During the 1970s and 1980s, they understood the commission’s role as “animadores” of “grassroots organisms.”¹³⁶ Martín del Campo recalled the high point from roughly 1978 to 1984, a time when “we were all united and we supported each other.”¹³⁷ Some internal conflict over “ideologies” festered between participants in the Social Pastorate, including IMDEC organizers and educators and Jesuit priests.¹³⁸

In 1981, the Pastoral de Barrios produced 5,000 copies of a guide to reflections centering on the Virgin of Guadalupe, on the occasion of the four-hundred fiftieth anniversary of her appearance to Juan Diego.¹³⁹ They structured the booklet around three themes— “María Santísima and the poor,” “María Santísima and human promotion,” and

¹³⁵ AHAG, Gobierno, Pastoral, Social, 1922-1972, Expediente 21, Caja 1, 1970-1974, Comisión de Pastoral Social, “Comunicado #4: La Pastoral Social en nuestra diócesis,” enero 1977, p. 6.

¹³⁶ Interview with Arturo Martín del Campo, in *El Proyecto de Santa Cecilia*, “Pastoral Social. P. Arturo Martín del Campo,” p. 2.

¹³⁷ Author interview with Arturo Martín del Campo, April 11, 2019, Tonalá, Mexico.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ AHAG, Gobierno, Pastoral, Social, CEBs, 1978-1985, Expediente 8, Caja 1, Com. Eclesial de Base, 80-81, Comisión Diocesana de Pastoral Social- Sección ‘Barrios,’ “Reflexiones sobre la Santísima Virgen de Guadalupe en el 450 Aniversario de sus Apariciones. Para grupos cristianos y comunidades eclesiales de base,” Diócesis de Guadalajara, México, septiembre de 1981.

“María Santísima in small Christian groups and in the Christian base communities.” Utilizing the guide in their CEB group meetings, participants in colonias populares around the city read how María de Guadalupe chose Juan Diego, “representative of poor people,” as the recipient of her profound “display of affection.” Martín del Campo and Barrios Pastorate collaborators wrote in the guide’s text that the famous episode signified “María Santísima” as “hope for liberation, for love, for justice, for unity, for the poor.” Small-group facilitators then put forward the “questions for seeing our reality” for participants’ reflection. They included the probing, “What are the origins of the poverty our people live in?” Each session concluded with group prayers and singing.¹⁴⁰

On the theme of “human promotion,” the Social Pastorate’s guide for CEB groups said, “María Santísima came to Mexico to help us, keeping in mind the most forgotten and marginalized. She wants our eternal salvation and also our human promotion.” In addition to improved material conditions, Martín del Campo and the commission wrote that human promotion “means that, as citizens, we must be conscious of our responsibilities in order to fulfill them, and of our rights in order to demand them, within the society.”¹⁴¹ The Virgen of Guadalupe appeared in Mexico to “help” Mexicans, especially the “forgotten” and “marginalized,” fulfill responsibilities and demand rights as “citizens.” This articulation of human promotion as citizenship practice signaled another shift in the discourse of independent popular movements, as citizenship had not been central to the thinking of many CEB participants and activists during the 1970s. Into

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, pp. 1-2.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p. 5.

the mid-1980s and 1990s, “human promotion” dropped out of the movement’s discursive repertoire and, like urban popular movements across Latin America, they increasingly appropriated and redefined “citizenship” praxis as political strategy for “operationalizing” their “enlarged view of democracy,” as scholar Evelina Dagnino put it.¹⁴²

Into the 1980s, two dynamics shaped the development of popular struggles in Guadalajara— the formation of broad “popular” fronts anchored in peripheral colonias, and the Church’s withdrawal of support for CEBs and liberationist priests. The hierarchy’s discursive attacks on liberation theology and its exponents began in the early 1970s, then accelerated under Pope John Paul II from 1978 forward. During an interview in the late 1980s, Martín del Campo was asked about “the New Christianity project” in Catholic Church at the time, a movement associated with John Paul’s papacy. “They don’t necessarily have an explicit project,” the diocesan priest responded, “instead it’s more like the common atmosphere is that way.”¹⁴³

By 1988, Martín del Campo could cite positive results from the Social Pastorate’s work since the early 1970s. In recent years, they had witnessed the “numerical multiplication of parishes that tend to the base, not centered just on worship and nothing else; [not] that the people come, but go out instead.” Many priests and parishes had transformed relations to laypeople now considered “co-responsible” and no longer mere

¹⁴² Evelina Dagnino, “Culture, Citizenship, and Democracy: Changing Discourse and Practices of the Latin American Left,” in *Cultures of Politics, Politics of Cultures: Re-visioning Latin American Social Movements*, eds. Sonia E. Álvarez, Evelina Dagnino, and Arturo Escobar (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 33-63.

¹⁴³ Interview with Arturo Martín del Campo, in *El Proyecto de Santa Cecilia*, “Pastoral Social. P. Arturo Martín del Campo,” p. 7.

“helpers of.” Laity became participants in the pastoral work of the Church, and Martín del Campo saw the reverberations of this different orientation and corresponding changes in practice across the diocese. After nearly two decades of the Social Pastorate, he also read an enhanced “sensitivity” toward the “social problematic.” Furthermore, priests and laypeople alike increasingly questioned practices, procedures, and rationales within the Church.¹⁴⁴

Conclusion

Liberationist priests and nuns in El Perdón and Santa Margarita altered relations with laypeople, specifically with residents of urban peripheries, by infusing their multi-layered interactions with respect, dignity, solidarity, trust, and co-responsibility in pastoral and promotional initiatives. During the 1970s, CEBs argued their members had rights as human beings and dignity as children of god. Collectively, building the “reign of God” on earth was the utopian project. Authorities representing the PRI-state and powerful institutions were responsible to god under that rubric.

The CEB movement in this period developed modes of grassroots organizing rooted in local popular culture. In contexts where it thrived, like El Perdón, Santa Margarita, Santa Cecilia, and Lomas de Polanco, convivencias, sports leagues, religious holidays and festivities, and *fiestas patronales* helped weave together the social fabric of the community. City streets in colonias populares served as places of encounter, dialogue, performance, conflict, sacrament, celebration, and revelry. Food and the sharing of meals played a crucial part in nearly every collective gathering and major event. A culture of

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 8.

shared resources in contexts of scarcity got institutionalized, in a sense, in a multitude of cooperatives around the urban peripheries of Guadalajara. With antecedents in regional *cajas populares* traditions, cooperativismo carried over to the urban popular movement of the 1980s and 1990s and other grassroots organizing efforts in the city since.

As Santa Rosa resident and longtime CEB leader Guillermo Hernández contended, CEBs in *colonias populares* prioritized organizing campaigns for urban services. Public transportation—bus services and fares—proved to be a perpetual issue affecting residents of urban peripheries most acutely and mobilizing the city’s largest protests during the 1970s and 1980s. Whether demanding water or sewer infrastructure, schools, or defending their community from neofascist political violence, necessity and emotion (“feeling it”) drove the issues agenda and fueled mass participation. The liberationist movement had a politics of disrupting entrenched patterns of deference based on class and gender, endeavoring to shift social relations toward horizontality. In the context of Jalisco, the urban popular movement that began with CEBs in Guadalajara pioneered the usage of direct-action tactics of confronting powerful figures in the public sphere and forcing unscripted responses in pressurized moments.

Participants in CEBs and the urban popular movement drew from a broader Latin American imaginary, inspired by and referencing contemporary revolutionary struggles in Central America—Nicaragua and El Salvador—from the late 1970s through the early 1990s. Their collectivities evolved from reflection groups to colonia-wide popular organizations to the Independent Popular Movement (MPI) and solidarity with Central American revolutionaries. The most committed people worked to organize broader movement and fronts, while also engaging highly localized struggles. Martha Arias, for

instance, began participating in the Youth Front in Santa Margarita's CEBs at the age of sixteen. She soon organized an all-women's union in the small clothing factory she worked in while still a teenager, before going on to instigate other popular organizing and education initiatives in colonias around the Cerro del Cuatro on the city's southern periphery. Chapter Five will discuss how Arias and the scores of other individual and collective actors comprising the urban popular movement created local change on multiple levels.¹⁴⁵

What do we learn about the social and political history of Guadalajara in this period if we consider the practices of social movements and "ordinary practitioners" of as key sources to be analyzed and interpreted? There are lessons in this history about the processual building of social movements, especially in the creation of movement infrastructure in CEBs and how the MUP then utilizes, expands, and redefines it. Those experiences included successes and failures, and the long-term impacts are difficult to ascertain. Eusebio Velázquez, a middle-aged Santa Rosa resident and movement veteran interviewed in 1977, offered the following early assessment of the movement building process from his vantage point.

When I arrived to this colonia, I mean, the people were really divided. They didn't participate in anything. Then, little by little, the people—thanks also to lots of work by people that did understand what the situation was—achieved such a degree of organization that, I can't say it was the best or the only thing that could have been done, but it did give us lots of results. For me, it became very clear that if the people are unifying, debating, deciding, they are less likely to be ignored, like always happens unfortunately.

That gives me the notion to think in terms of an organization growing little by little—you know, of greater dimensions. If it's starting with one colonia that has certain experiences, then little by little it goes looking to coincide with other organizations that are doing the same thing. They are provoking those kinds of

¹⁴⁵ Author interview with Martha Arias, February 1, 2019, Tlaquepaque, Mexico.

situations, in fact— that same consciousness. And opening space little by little in that way, gaining space and territory, so that the people become more conscious. And little by little, if now it's one colonia, tomorrow it'll be two. Little by little, you go like that, forming more conscious colonias, and in that sense, more conscious people in number. And you can achieve something great.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Eusebio Velázquez (pseudonym), excerpted on Orozco, “Canto de los barrios,” *Lo que pasa en mi barrio*, Track 11.

CHAPTER V: POPULAR EDUCATION AND INDEPENDENT ORGANIZING IN TIMES OF CRISIS, THE 1980s

In Mexican cities during the last three decades of the twentieth century, the urban popular movement—which peaked from roughly 1977 to 1988—was unique for its social base in *colonias populares* and its widened horizons of struggle manifest in coalition building and the creation of broad fronts. Solidarity became the central conceptual and discursive battleground for the movement in contestation with the state and opposing groups in civil society. The frequency and force with which the popular classes entered the public sphere and made demands on powerful figures and institutions changed over time, with numerous struggles waged disparately under the banner of “urban popular movement.” In Guadalajara during the 1980s and early 1990s, independent Left organizations and coalitions became powerful actors the PRI-state and principal media outlets had to take seriously.

In Jalisco’s capital city, independent popular organizing dismantled PRI control and clientelist mechanisms *colonia by colonia*. Neighborhood councils and committees became central venues of contention for power in the city. Residents of the peripheries focused on democratizing existing neighborhood councils or creating parallel bodies outside of PRI control. The PRI recognized mounting losses in political power at the *colonias* level by the mid-1970s and began planting its own neighborhood strongholds on the working-class eastside and heavily populated peripheries. They wanted to “avoid another Santa Cecilia.” Former PRI social workers and municipal staffers attest to the state’s planned low-income developments on the fringes of the metropolitan zone late

1970s and early 1980s.¹ One paradigmatic example is colonia Jalisco, which straddles the Peripheral Ring highway on the eastern fringes near Tonalá. The local PRI-state wanted to preempt more Santa Cecílias because that colonia and its people became emblematic of the government's conflictive relations with the city's popular classes throughout the 1970s. When CEBs comprised the mass base of the MUP in Guadalajara—they overlapped completely in Santa Cecilia—the movement wielded the power to convoke thousands of people across the urban peripheries for disruptive displays of dissent. A central legacy of CEBs is their legitimacy with and capacity to convene and mobilize impressive numbers of people in colonias populares.

Economic crisis, housing and employment informality, and neoliberal governance are major pillars of the structural story of the 1980s. The economic crisis usually cited as arriving in 1981 and 1982 struck sometime in the early 1970s for Mexico's poor majorities, even if the middle and upper classes remained insulated until the early 1980s.² In daily life, residents of the urban peripheries worked long hours for low pay in order to scrape by economically. By 1981, prices on basic consumer goods far outpaced relatively stagnant wages in Mexico. Costs of dietary staples such as tortillas and beans shot up 100% in 1980, while the minimum wage increase of 30% that year made little impact.³

Struggles for housing in Guadalajara's metropolitan area now turned on securing terrenos on ejidal lands increasingly sold by ejidatarios. Irregular settlements of auto-

¹ Author interview with Esther Carrillo, December 12, 2017, Guadalajara, Mexico.

² For an extended discussion of economics and politics during the 1970s and 1980s, see Judith Adler Hellman, *Mexico in Crisis*, 2nd ed. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1988).

³ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, *Prole del 4: Boletín de Información Popular*, "¿Nos alcanza el aumento salarial?" Segunda Época, febrero 1981, no. 2, p. 4.

constructed homes proliferated on the southern periphery's ejidos, forming another spatial layer beyond Lomas de Polanco and colonias established the previous two decades. The prior generation of urban outbuilding consisted of planned but poorly equipped low-income developments. Santa Cecilia, Santa Margarita and the ring of colonias populares auto-urbanized in the 1960s and 1970s largely avoided the added complications of decades-long fights to legalize property titles. People in new settlements on ejidal lands assumed the added the uncertainty and stress accompanying experiences of occasional violent conflict and displacement by authorities.

Throughout the 1980s, organized residents of the urban peripheries collectively made demands on the state and elites for their rights to the city. The movement put the corrupt and anti-democratic machinations of powerful people and institutions on public display through creative direct actions coordinated by new networks such as the Colonias Populares Coordinating Committee (Coordinadora de Colonias Populares, CCP), Intercolonias, and the Popular Committee of the South (Comité Popular del Sur, CPS).⁴ By the late 1980s, movement leaders like Martha Arias sat across negotiating tables with mayors to discuss public policies and expedite the provision of services to colonias populares spanning large spatial swaths of the city.⁵ The PRI-state recognized independent organizations like the CPS, Intercolonias, and the CCP as political actors to

⁴ On the Comité Popular del Sur, see Juan Manuel Ramírez Sáiz, *Los movimientos sociales y la política: El Comité Popular del Sur en Guadalajara* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1995). On Intercolonias, see Outi Hakkarainen, "Intercolonias: Una contribución hacia la vida democrática," in *La democracia de los de abajo en Jalisco*, eds. Jorge Alonso and Juan Manuel Ramírez Sáiz (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1996), 189-221; and Elba Noemí Gómez Gómez, *Habitar el lugar imaginado: Formas de construir la ciudad desde un proyecto educativo político* (Guadalajara: ITESO, 2011).

⁵ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, Periódicos, *El Informador*, "Acuerdo entre colonos del sur y la Comuna tapatía," 12 septiembre 1987, pp. 1B, 3B.

reckon with because of their formidable social base and mass-mobilizing power demonstrated over two decades. MUP groups surprised elite politicians with the preparedness of rank-and-file members, ordinary people's knowledge of the system and deployment of citizenship and rights discourse, and their strategizing and organizational capacities.

In late 1987 and early 1988, community organizers—*promotores suburbanos*—and leaders from the movement's first two decades gathered for a series of workshops designed to sketch the MUP's history up to their current juncture. They recorded, transcribed, and edited group discussions and individual interviews with some of the most active figures, documenting a summary of the 1970s movement in Guadalajara.⁶ They focused on “promotional work” in four paradigmatic movement colonias— El Perdón, Santa Cecilia, Santa Margarita, and Lomas de Polanco. These *promotores* believed the movement bore the responsibility of documenting its own struggles. It seemed unlikely that institutional records would be preserved on such conflictual history. According to participant testimonies from the 1987-1988 workshops, organizers and popular educators offered several critiques of the movement, including the creation of dependencies on “external agents” in each case.⁷

As for the roles *promotores* themselves played, social movements in contexts across the Americas since the 1970s raised critical questions about the implications of the

⁶ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, *Promotores suburbanos*, “Seminario— Movimiento urbano popular en Guadalajara, Jal., junio 13 1988,” pp. 1-10. Out of these workshops, interviews, and working documents, the group published the manuscript in limited number, a copy of which can be found in the ITESO university library in Guadalajara.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

professionalization of social justice organizing. The benefits of having a cadre of activists dedicated full-time to movement activities were frequently cancelled out by negative effects stemming from impositions of middle-class activist agendas, and overreliance on priests, nuns, community organizers, and popular educators employed full-time by non-profit organizations. Such internal consolidations of power led to the dissipation of participation and action. In Guadalajara, the overlapping CEBs and urban popular movement saw their mass bases deteriorate over time. Factors such as leadership styles, personality clashes in decision-making processes, and infighting between intermediaries hastened the movement's decline by the mid-1990s.

The first major rupture of the MUP in Guadalajara occurred during the late 1970s, with the rise and fall of electoral options. Beginning in 1977, a handful of new, ostensibly left-oriented political parties squeezed into the crack in the political system created by federal reforms allowing the previously-banned Communist Party and others independent of the PRI to participate in elections.⁸ Some influential local activists, including a small subsection of liberationist priests, proselytized for the Socialist Party for Workers (PST) in colonias populares. Key figures' open alignment of key figures with the PST caused rifts in MUP alliances and base community projects. One shared commitment of the CEB-based popular movement in Guadalajara had long been to political independence.⁹ The promise and peril of electoral options became a pattern in the story of democratization during the post-1968 period. MUP groups poured hope, energy, and

⁸ For a discussion of mid-1970s political reforms, see Barry Carr, *La izquierda mexicana a través del siglo XX* (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1996), 276-277.

⁹ Author interview with Efrén Orozco, December 6, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico; and author interview with Isabel Aranguren, December 18, 2017, Zapopan, Mexico.

resources into the campaign for center-left Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas in the 1988 presidential election. The 1988 Cardenas campaign was followed by a stage of steep decline in the MUP's trajectory and impact in Guadalajara.¹⁰

1988 represents another rupture in the movement which led to sustained loss of momentum at the grassroots. But the Cárdenas presidential bid also yielded a center-left political party that maintained substantial support in colonias populares for another decade. The Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) fielded a few key figures associated with CEBs and the MUP—all men—in elections for Jalisco's state legislature during the 1990s. IMDEC director Carlos Núñez, longtime organizer and Intercolonias leader Roberto Gómez, and former SEDOC organizer Víctor Quintana each ran as PRD candidates that decade. After successful campaigns, Núñez served in the Jalisco state legislature and Quintana as congressional representative at the federal level. Quintana continued in PRD posts in Mexico's northern state of Chihuahua into the twenty-first century.¹¹ Núñez did not seek re-election after one term, while Gómez ran unsuccessfully. The PRD squandered its grassroots base and independence from the system after a brief period. As for political opposition via elections in Jalisco, the PRI was ousted instead by the conservative National Action Party (PAN) in the 1994 elections.

Accelerated globalization since the 1990s had local political implications, namely “the ripping apart of identity and place” Patricia Fernández-Kelly notes had a “profound

¹⁰ Juan Manuel Ramírez Sáiz, “La internacionalización y las identidades del movimiento urbano popular en el área metropolitana de Guadalajara,” *Espiral: Estudios sobre Estado y Sociedad* 2, no. 5 (enero-abril 1996), 187.

¹¹ Quintana is currently the Secretary of Social Development for the State of Chihuahua.

effect on the very meaning of citizenship, a major dimension of political praxis.”¹² In colonias populares where base communities and the urban popular movement organized, a revolution in popular imaginaries occurred prior to the severing of identity and place effected more definitively in the 1990s. Liberationist Christianity and Freirian popular education introduced utopia as collective project while continuing to engage in a multitude of struggles for survival. Residents of the urban peripheries also used and reshaped spaces and meanings attached to structures imposed by the powerful. In the long arc of this history, participants in CEBs and the urban popular movement in Guadalajara attempted an *ethical revolution* in their colonias and social networks.¹³

Acknowledging the overuse of “revolution” as descriptor of historical processes, it is nevertheless important to emphasize that many participants in popular movements in Guadalajara during this period viewed themselves as revolutionaries in terms of the political imaginaries guiding local fights and their support for revolutionary movements in Central America.¹⁴ Guadalajara-based popular educators Carlos Núñez and Graciela Bustillos, Jesuit priest Arnaldo Zenteno, and many rank-and-file CEB members participated actively in educational and political efforts in Nicaragua, Cuba, and El Salvador from the late 1970s to the early 2000s. With the PRI’s turn to “neoliberal

¹² Patricia Fernández-Kelly, “Introduction,” in *Out of the Shadows: Political Action and the Informal Economy in Latin America*, eds. Patricia Fernández-Kelly and Jon Shefner (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State Press, 2006), 8.

¹³ Carlos Núñez Hurtado, *La revolución ética* (Guadalajara: IMDEC, 1998).

¹⁴ Alan Eladio Gómez, *The Revolutionary Imaginations of Greater Mexico: Chicana/o Radicalism, Solidarity Politics, & Latin American Social Movements* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2016), 1. Gómez explores “revolutionary imaginaries” in a “Greater Mexico” heuristic framework. He uses an analytic of international solidarity in concrete actions and political imaginaries, an international solidarity enacted in local contexts.

populism” during the administration of Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994), competing discourses emerged about the concept of solidarity (*solidaridad*).¹⁵ Salinas created a national social benefits program dubbed Solidaridad (PRONASOL). MUP movement participants in Guadalajara and elsewhere saw this as an emptying out of meaning in language. In January 1988, the Colonias Populares Coordinating Committee (CCP) decried the Mexican government’s December 1987 “Solidarity Pact.” CCP members blasted the PRI initiative as a “pact of solidarity for the rich and starvation for the poor.”¹⁶ Ultimately, the PRI-state under Salinas had some success in coopting select activists and local projects by awarding of government assistance tethered to displays of political loyalty and cessation of independent mobilization. But popular organizations who resisted cooptation demonstrated the importance of a solidarity that connected the heterogeneous struggles waged by residents of colonias populares, promotores suburbanos, and liberationist priests and nuns.

Martha Arias, Political Education, and Movement-Building, Periphery to Periphery

Martha Arias Vázquez grew up in the colonia popular of San José, a “suburb” of the pueblo of Zapopan. Her father’s family (Arias) made a living from agriculture as small property owners in Zapopan, while her mother’s family (Vázquez) lived in a *ranchería* community outside of town.¹⁷ Like other Arias family couples in the late

¹⁵ Randal Sheppard, *A Persistent Revolution: History, Nationalism, and Politics in Mexico since 1968* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2016), 144-147. Sheppard and others use “neoliberal populism” to refer to the PRI’s public politics and Salinas’s style as politician. I am ambivalent about the term and wonder if it is an oxymoron. But it does connect to populism’s penchant for adopting, or coopting, discourse from below.

¹⁶ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, Coordinadora de Colonias Populares, *Boletín de la Coordinadora de Colonias Populares*, “Pacto de solidaridad para los ricos y de hambre para los pobres,” enero de 1988, p. 1.

1950s, her parents built a home in newly-developed colonia San José. Born in 1959, Martha was the first of eleven Arias Vázquez children. They lacked urban services in the colonia initially, but gradually obtained them without needing to mobilize large numbers of residents to demand them. In this wave of peripheral urbanization during the late 1950s and early 1960s, Zapopan's PRI municipal government noted San José's increasing population and moved to gradually install water, electricity, and sewer services.¹⁸

Arias's father trained as a Franciscan priest, though he never got ordained. His religiosity influenced Martha greatly, and priest friends frequented their home. Arias recalls their Franciscan practice as "very individualistic" and lacking "social critique." They emphasized devotional life and individual behavior, and her father had "very formalistic" guidelines for personal conduct. The family of thirteen scrupulously observed Catholic rituals, attended mass regularly, and prayed the rosary daily together. Arias's father especially frowned upon deceitfulness, laziness, and excessive joking, while encouraging charity toward people in desperate need. His code of conduct included punishment of one's body as a means of pious self-sacrifice, valorizing daily habits such as showering with cold water and not sleeping much, for instance. One endured and even welcomed suffering in order to transcend and connect with god somehow. Martha developed her sense of morality and good and bad in that household environment.¹⁹

¹⁷ A *ranchería* is a rural community consisting of a small collection of homes and subsistence farms.

¹⁸ Author interview with Martha Arias, February 1, 2019, Tlaquepaque, Mexico.

¹⁹ Ibid.

As they got older, most Arias Vázquez children broke with previous rituals and questioned the worldview their parents handed down. Martha Arias's father lived "eternally conflicted" that all his children did not follow the path of religious practice he set forth. At the same time, Martha continued adhering to "austerity" of lifestyle as one value and practice modeled by her father. She understood personal austerity as "a political choice" for its rejection of prevailing consumer culture. Her father did purchase books, however. Even with limited resources from his earnings as an industrial worker, family members had a surprising range of literature at home. He bought Martha a small stack of books and manuals on the subject when she became interested in making clothes as a teenager. Though she continued to value reading and limit consumption, Arias developed her own "more autonomous criteria" and worldview anchored in socially and politically engaged Catholic currents. "I started making connections with the Jesuits over there in Santa Margarita," she says, "and participating in the community organizing."²⁰

Arias's parents emphasized hard work as one "value" in their household. Martha took her first job packaging tortillas in colonia San José at age fifteen. The *tortillería*'s owners quickly noted the young Arias's honesty and administrative skills and appointed her business manager of their chain of shops around the city. Just before entering high school at sixteen, she completed a course in clothes-making provided by the Santa Margarita cooperative and got an assembly-line job. The clothing *maquiladora* in colonia San José was one of several around the city owned by the same industrial firm. While working in the *maquiladora*, Arias attended school in the evenings and participated

²⁰ Ibid.

robustly in Santa Margarita's Youth Front and CEBs. She soon began contemplating the process of organizing maquiladoras and how it might unfold in her workplace full of women workers.²¹

Arias and the other thirty women and girls ages sixteen to twenty-one formed a union in the maquiladora. Union members elected Arias president. She felt "very natural" in leadership roles. The oldest of eleven, Martha functioned as a third head of the family growing up— solving problems alongside her parents. In the maquiladora, after weeks of undercover deliberations and strategizing, workers confronted factory management with demands for improved working conditions and social security benefits. The young women's organizational capacities and direct-action tactics caught the bosses off-guard. The maquiladora union went on strike and halted production for several days in 1977. Supervisors responded to the strike by raising wages, allowing workers to adjust schedules around school and family responsibilities, and delivering on social security benefits.²²

In her role as union leader, Arias took advantage of opportunities to connect with other working women's organizations around the city and region. Her involvement in Santa Margarita CEBs likewise opened doors to broader political networks and relationships around Guadalajara that in turn bolstered her union efforts. Education Services of the West (*Servicios Educativos del Occidente*, SEDOC) organizer Víctor Quintana introduced Arias to feminist Sagrado Corazón nun Cristina Padilla, who was doing a master's thesis on women workers in the city's maquiladoras. In the late 1970s,

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

Padilla heard about Arias's leadership and connected the San José-based organizer to women workers around Jalisco she knew from extensive fieldwork.²³

Like many CEB participants, Arias underwent a process of ideological development toward the left. She began participating in community organizing with Santa Margarita's base communities in late 1975, at age sixteen. Revolutions elsewhere in Latin America inspired radicals in Guadalajara, especially the 1959 Cuban revolution and the Nicaraguan revolution of 1979. Arias felt the need to "take sides" during this period of an "effervescence" of revolutionary movements in Latin America. Yet, in her process of political education, she wrestled internally with a Christian ethics that held "killing is a sin," while she and others supported movements "that killed" in Nicaragua and El Salvador. Arias advanced beyond the "rigidity" of her childhood. At age twenty, she found herself confronted with a "scary" moral conflict when a close friend became pregnant and decided to have an abortion. "No, abortion is a mortal sin," Arias responded initially. Her friend reasoned that if a legitimate doctor could not perform the procedure, she would pursue black-market options with their implied health risks. In a transformative moment, Arias helped her friend economically and accompanied her to the clinic.²⁴ A newfound willingness to fight for reproductive rights and a politics of solidarity with revolutionary movements in Central America signaled Arias's leftward development.

Responding to a decade of intense, organized, subversive activity by the Left, the Mexican government instituted federal-level political reforms from 1975 to 1979 that

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

allowed the Communist Party to register for elections. Reforms that opened the José López Portillo presidential administration in 1977 were partially aimed at tamping down the urban popular movement's surging activity in cities across the country. Pressure on the state from the popular classes and political left rose further with the emergence of independent leftist political organizations like the Revolutionary National Civic Association (ACNR) and the Organization of the Revolutionary Left- Line of the Masses (OIR-LM).²⁵ Arias and many activists formed in the urban popular movement interpreted López Portillo's *reforma política* as a mechanism of control and warned of the potential for cooptation.²⁶ IMDEC assumed a lead role in producing literature and propaganda for popular movements and education in Guadalajara in the late 1970s. Their communications team distributed resources on the reforma política in colonias populares, and CEB networks sought to educate residents of their colonias about the reform through street newspaper features and popular theater productions at festivals (see fig. 5.1). Many people remained skeptical the PRI-state intended to move toward democracy, but urban popular movement groups urged residents of the city's peripheries to engage in the political process and monitor the vote.²⁷

²⁵ Juan Manuel Ramírez Sáiz, "Los actores de la innovación política en México," in *Cambio político y participación ciudadana en México: Actores, movimientos y organizaciones*, eds. Juan Manuel Ramírez Sáiz and Jorge Regalado Santillán (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 2000), 49.

²⁶ Author interview with Martha Arias, February 1, 2019, Tlaquepaque, Mexico.

²⁷ AHCEB-MX, Folletos y Publicaciones, IMDEC y TAP, *La Reforma Política*, 1978, pp. 1-12.



Figure 5.1. Popular education publication from IMDEC and the Popular Architecture Workshop (TAP) on the 1977 political reform. The dialogue on page 11 reads, from top-left to bottom-right, “Then we have to organize our colonia in order to learn to resolve our problems in a group, as one community”; “One thing that’s important to do is represent a political party at the ballot box, with the aim of learning the electoral tricks”; “... And what’s more important: making sure the vote is respected”; “We can do all these things while those of us who come from the people organize and establish our own unique and authentic party.”
 Source: AHCEB-MX, Folletos y Publicaciones, IMDEC y TAP, *La Reforma Política*, 1978.

The urban popular movement in Guadalajara launched repeated protests and waged a long, recurring struggle over public transportation issues, with bus services and rate hikes the primary triggers of widespread anger for the city's millions of bus riders. Movement groups described inadequate bus services and rising ticket prices as damaging blows to the "popular economy."²⁸ Few residents of colonias populares on the peripheries owned cars in this period. Millions of residents of the urban peripheries depended on bus rides for daily transport to work downtown or on the affluent westside. Public transportation protests drew the largest crowds at marches, rallies, and direct-action protests in the 1970s and 1980s. Numerous protests by thousands of working-class citizens in prominent public spaces during the 1970s set the pace, including a series of independent mobilizations behind the leadership of the democratic current of electrical workers' union during the "labor insurgency" from 1971 to 1976.²⁹

Social movements created a culture of well-coordinated and consistent mobilizations of important segments of the city's poor majorities during the 1970s and 1980s, and more intermittently since. Citizen demands about quality and cost of public transportation continue to generate massive protests in Latin American cities. In Chile during October 2019, protests over public transit in cities—subway fares in Santiago

²⁸ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, Coordinadora de Colonias Populares, *Boletín de la Coordinadora de Colonias Populares*, "Nuevo golpe a la economía popular," mayo/junio de 1987, p. 1.

²⁹ On workers and labor movements in Jalisco, see Luisa Gabayet, *Obreros somos: Diferenciación social y formación de clase obrera en Jalisco* (Guadalajara: El Colegio de Jalisco, 1988).

initially—quickly swelled in numbers and militancy, evolving into more fundamental challenges to neoliberal rule and authoritarianism.³⁰

The urban popular movement displayed its capacity to mobilize in Jalisco with a monumental protest on public transportation issues attended by 20,000 people in 1978. The Independent Popular Movement (MPI) played a leading role in the 1978 protests, alongside ally organizations in a coalition that expanded rapidly. The march and rally in downtown Guadalajara denounced increased bus fares and demanded improved conditions and new routes. In a rare development, the Student Federation of Guadalajara (*Federación Estudiantil de Guadalajara*, FEG) supported and participated in the 1978 bus protests. Parallel to the anti-communist crusades of the Tecos discussed in chapter four, FEG members used numerous tactics to repress independent popular organizing throughout the 1970s. But MUP groups called a temporary truce with a historical enemy in order to achieve goals on a specific issue. With striking numbers of protestors crowding downtown and disrupting the daily routine, and broad support for their demands across the city, the MPI grabbed and held the attention of local political and business elites. In a decade of steady mobilization and increased public protest, the MPI's organizing strategies and periphery-wide base of citizens threatened the image of the ideal city constructed by politicians and local elites. The movement achieved a freeze on bus rates, negotiated with mayor Robles in a meeting secured by the disruption and pressure of the march.³¹

³⁰ For an analysis of recent events in Chile, see J. Patrice McSherry, "Chile's Struggle to Democratize the State," *NACLA.org*, February 24, 2020, <https://nacla.org/news/2020/02/24/chile-struggle-democratize-state-plebescite>.

³¹ Author interview with Martha Arias, February 1, 2019, Tlaquepaque, Mexico.

A coalitional organization with representation from colonias around the peripheries, the MPI evolved from an original nucleus of forty people consisting of CEB members, organizers, IMDEC's Carlos Núñez and Efrén Orozco, and liberationist priests and nuns. The MPI provided a platform for the decentralized urban popular movement to express a unified voice in the public sphere. Just as crucially, the organization established committees in colonias populares around the urban peripheries and the added support made colonia-based struggles more impactful.

The MPI helped coordinate large, spirited protests of a magnitude and spectacle “that had not been seen before in Jalisco,” Arias recalls. The “struggle for the canal” on the city’s east and southeast sides featured large, sustained mobilizations in a multi-year campaign waged by lower-class residents to force the government to address flooding, stagnant pools, and overflowing wastewater in many colonias populares. Over time, the canal campaign shifted to demanding the government finish the project, as work proved intermittent at best. In popular organizing to improve living conditions on the city’s peripheries, the MPI and successor organizations gave directly-affected residents confidence they could count on the support of others.³² The MPI was deeply grounded in CEBs. Former participants point to a “weakening” of CEBs into the mid-1980s that paralleled the MPI’s decline. Some MPI organizers joined forces with the CPS in the south and others with Intercolonias on the east side.³³

Martha Arias left her job at the maquiladora upon finishing high school in 1977. She never envisioned spending her life in the workshop in colonia San José and opted

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

instead to study history at the University of Guadalajara. Through participation in Santa Margarita base communities, Arias encountered Freirian critical pedagogy and got involved in popular education projects. In 1980, she and a cadre of young colleagues with experience in community organizing secured jobs with the federal government's National Council for Education Development (*Consejo Nacional de Fomento Educativo*, CONAFE) educational program for children residing in colonias populares on the city's southern fringes who had been expelled from or unable to access the public school system. Arias brought to the process her crucial experiences from Santa Margarita and acquaintance with colonias populares across the city. "I had to immerse myself in the everyday realities of life on the Cerro del Cuatro," she emphasizes about going to work in the southern hills. CONAFE's program in colonias populares had the unintended consequences of giving rise to an independent organization that became a key force in the MUP during the early 1980s—the Popular Committee of the South (*Comité Popular del Sur*, CPS). Base communities fed participants into the CPS, but priests and nuns did not position themselves "up front" as "protagonists." Martha Arias made her mark on the northwestern peripheries in Santa Margarita, and then she contributed to bringing together the colonias of the southern peripheries at that moment.³⁴

Arias organized for social change and specific rights-based demands in the distinct but intersecting spheres of workplace, colonia, and city. Her commitment and political maturity stood out before she completed high school. She contributed to the regional development of a class-based feminism in the early 1980s under the banner of

³⁴ Ibid.

the Organization of Independent Proletarian Women (*Organización de Mujeres Independientes Proletarias*, OMIP).³⁵ Arias and three other maquiladora workers served as the organization's leadership. OMIP members gathered regularly to study literature on feminist movements elsewhere in Latin America. In the early 1980s, they poured over materials on women's involvement in revolutionary movements in Nicaragua and El Salvador, in addition to a steady diet of feminist theory. The OMIP espoused no connections to liberation theology or Catholicism, though Arias, Cristina Padilla, and other members had liberationist formation and parallel organizing activity.³⁶

The organization connected women workers outside the city as well, expanding to projects with rural women. When the membership grew, the OMIP organized into "divisions"— industrial, rural, and education workers. The group held two national conventions in Guadalajara during its lifetime from 1980 to 1984. Women from around the country attended multi-day gatherings focused on "analyzing the gender situation."³⁷ But like other feminist groups with socialist visions and working-class bases, the OMIP aimed to address "a situation that had more to do with questions of class."³⁸

Arias also participated in the Revolutionary National Civic Association (ACNR) with its strong contingent of members in the Guadalajara area. Inspired by the armed struggle led by its late founder Genaro Vázquez Rojas, the ACNR had returned to "civic struggle" as one of several independent left organizations that successfully connected to

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

popular sectors in urban areas.³⁹ The OIR-LM also had an active chapter in Guadalajara during the 1980s. Arias participated in both but invested more in the ACNR because of differences in tactics.⁴⁰

Though independent Left organizations like the ACNR, OIR-LM made inroads with the working class and supported the urban popular movement in its trenches during the 1980s, they also contributed to sectarianism on the Left in the context of an asymmetrical power struggle with right-wing forces in Jalisco. Arias parted ways with mentor Victor Quintana when he joined the OIR-LM while she gravitated to the ACNR. Her activism until then included Quintana nearby, from the beginning in Santa Margarita CEBs where the Jesuit-led promotional team hired the veteran organizer from Chihuahua. The seventeen-year-old Arias saw the thirty-year old Quintana as mature, wise, and visionary politically. But distance grew between them following the not untypical split over leftist political formations.

The urban popular movement, anchored in Christian base communities, Freirian popular education projects, and localized concerns about material conditions in colonias populares, was the terrain of struggle where disparate left-wing formations unified and challenged the PRI state, elites, and rightist forces. Despite the fractures and division, Martha Arias felt each struggle formed part of the same underlying movement—participating in the processual creation of “changes in the conditions of life.”⁴¹

³⁹ For more on the ACNR and Vázquez and the deeper history centered in the Mexican state of Guerrero, see Alexander Aviña, *Specters of Revolution: Peasant Guerrillas in the Cold War Mexican Countryside* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁴⁰ Author interview with Martha Arias, February 1, 2019, Tlaquepaque, Mexico.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Lucha Popular in Guadalajara during the Long 1980s

Efforts at creating broad popular fronts to coordinate the many disparate MUP efforts and align them with leftist political currents continued into the 1980s. The Popular Committee of the South (CPS) drew together groups from across the southern peripheries. During four years of activity, the CPS contributed to the formation of dozens of neighborhood committees and independent groups who then publicly directed their demands for concrete improvement to the conditions of their neighborhoods at local authorities. CPS member groups began with the fundamental demand for public services in each colonia and pressed for the regularization of the lands they lived on. They also conducted extensive campaigns to bring public transportation stops to their colonias on the ballooning urban peripheries and to reduce the associated fees. The CPS engaged in coordinated actions against unaffordable charges levied on residents by the municipal government of Guadalajara for urban services and basic infrastructure projects. And the CPS worked to open up the local government's Neighborhood Committees and the school system's Parents' Committees, to broaden citizen participation and wrest those decision-making bodies from PRI control.⁴²

Solidarity with revolutionary movements against US-backed military regimes in Central America became a central theme for the CEB-based urban popular movement in Guadalajara from the late 1970s through the 1980s. CEBs in Santa Cecilia encouraged residents of the urban peripheries to support the Salvadoran insurgency's January 1981

⁴² Juan Manuel Ramírez Sáiz, *Los movimientos sociales y la política: El Comité Popular del Sur en Guadalajara* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1995); and Juan Manuel Ramírez Sáiz and Héctor Nuncio Hermosillo, *Entre la iglesia y la izquierda: El Comité Popular del Sur* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1994).

“popular offensive,” which included both military operations and a general strike in efforts to topple the military junta in El Salvador. The Mexican Committee for Solidarity with the Salvadoran People and groups around the country held a national campaign of actions from January 16 to 24. Locally, the Committee of Colonias Populares of Guadalajara held “The Peso Kilometer” walk along Joaquín Amaro and Artesanos avenues on the city’s eastern periphery to raise funds and awareness in solidarity with revolutionaries in El Salvador. The committee organized popular festivals in colonia Santa Rosa on January 22 and Santa Cecilia on January 25, with Santa Cecilia’s teatro popular group performing at each event in front of thousands of people.⁴³

CEB members expressed alarm at the recent election of former actor Ronald Reagan as president of the United States. *El Alipuz* pondered the implications for Mexico and Latin America of the election of “this man who promises to be extremely violent.” In addition to U.S. military interventions in El Salvador and Nicaragua, CEB members saw dangers for Mexico. They believed Mexico’s vast oil reserves were pivotal to U.S. economic ambitions. With increased pressure on the Mexican government from the U.S. in the early 1980s, “we just hope that our government is not going to hand over our territory to that country which is imperialist by nature.”⁴⁴ *Prole del 4* reasoned, “It is not possible to understand what’s happening in our colonia or city if we don’t know what’s occurring on a global level.” Local events held in solidarity with revolutionary groups in El Salvador included popular festivals by the Colonia Villa Guerrero Pro-Electrification Committee and the Colonia Echeverría Municipal Neighborhood Committee, and a week

⁴³ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, *El Alipuz*, Feb. 1981, pp. 6-7.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

of solidarity in Lomas de Polanco during January. The annual Regional Convention of Campesina Women focused on the issue at its 1981 gathering. Many leftists and anti-imperialists acted in solidarity with revolutionary groups in El Salvador because they believed “the future of Latin America is being decided in Central America.”⁴⁵

⁴⁵ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, *Prole del 4*, no. 2, segunda época, febrero de 1981, pp. 2, 5.

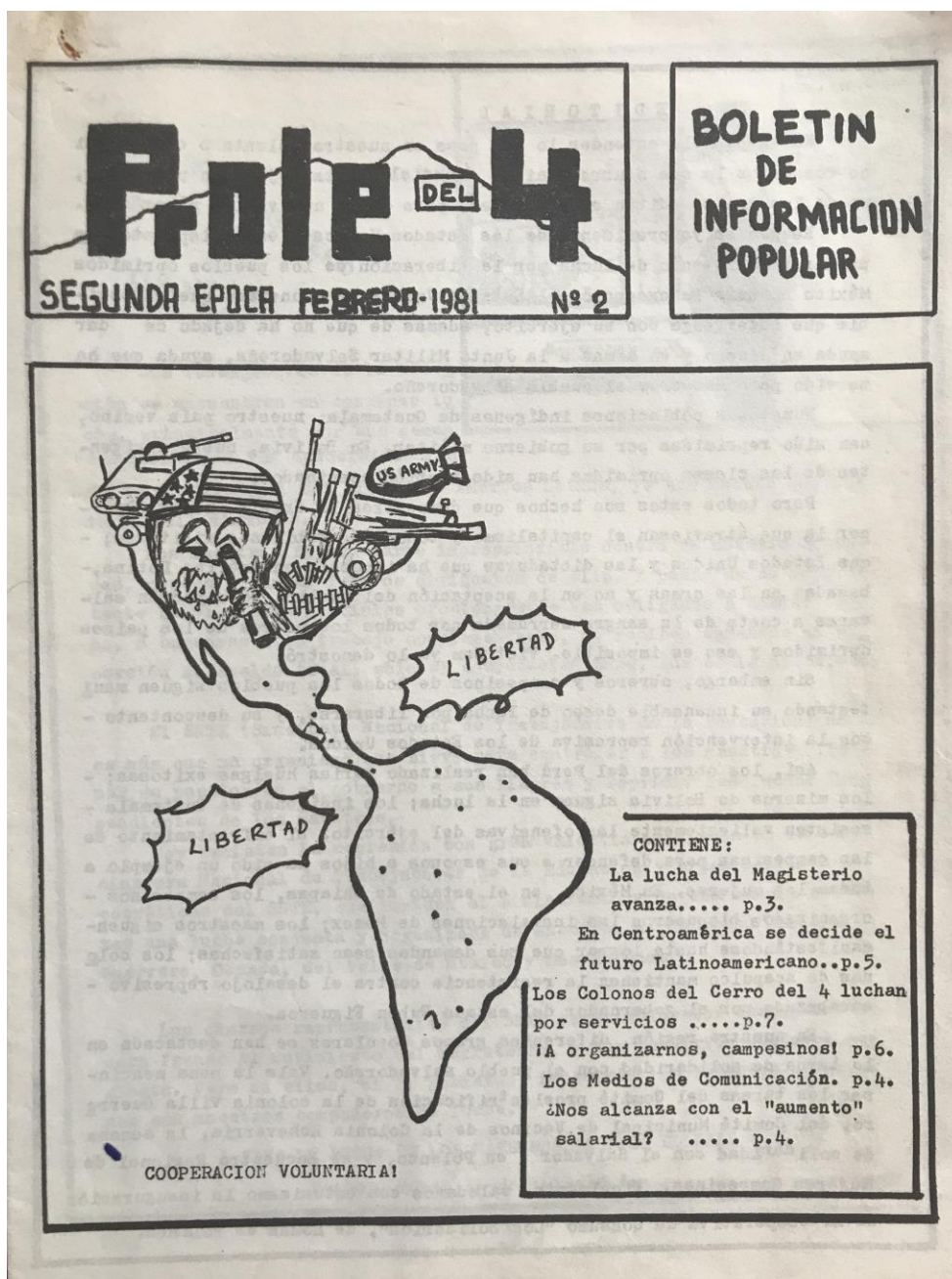


Figure 5.2. Frontpage of the February 1981 edition of *Prole del 4*, a “popular information bulletin” based in the colonias of the southern peripheries in the vicinity of the Cerro del Cuatro. *Source:* MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, *Prole del 4*, no. 2, segunda época, febrero de 1981

Movement communication strategies, which IMDEC supported within their limited staff capacity, included alternative newspapers aimed at providing “a panoramic vision” for readers. The community-based newspapers stood in stark contrast to the

misdirection of “the ones edited in the city.”⁴⁶ Based in colonias populares around the Cerro del Cuatro on the southern peripheries, *Prole del 4* urged readers to think critically about mass media. In the 1980s, city dwellers consumed radio, TV, movies, newspapers, and magazines, which the street newspaper argued distracted from “reality” and inculcated “consumerism.” The advertisements pervading dominant media convinced “the majority of us to buy unnecessary things.” According to *Prole del 4*, as a result of watching soap operas daily, “housewives” imitated unattainable lifestyles foreign to working people. Roughly eighty percent of Mexican children watched television regularly by the early 1980s. CEB members linked television’s influence to increased violence, “vagrancy,” alcoholism, and drug addiction among working-class youth. *Prole del 4* editors further warned inordinate TV viewing “destroys knowledge development” in children.⁴⁷

Residents of colonias on the Cerro del Cuatro criticized the 30-peso minimum wage increase of 1981—up to 190 pesos daily—as “insufficient to satisfy our needs.” Prices of basic foodstuffs like milk and tortillas had spiked long ago. Furthermore, for residents on the city’s southern periphery, “many of us were fired from our jobs without receiving year-end bonuses or benefits” at the close of 1980. What’s more, the many workers without fixed, permanent jobs “fell into alcoholism or drug addiction in order to escape from their despair.”⁴⁸ Movements set up community institutions to deal with

⁴⁶ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, *Prole del 4*, no. 2, segunda época, febrero de 1981, p. 2.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴⁸ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, *Prole del 4*, “¿Nos alcanza con el ‘aumento’ salarial?” no. 2, segunda época, febrero de 1981, p. 4.

social problems the PRI-state and the Catholic Church failed to address. CEB members in Lomas de Polanco founded Los Solidarios consumer cooperative in January 1981.⁴⁹

Santa Cecilia and El Perdón CEB members created rehab centers and services for addicts that aimed to address the violence and addiction growing more acute in their colonias during the 1980s. In September 1982, *El Alipuz* described the violence afflicting Santa Cecilia residents by noting several recent murders of teenagers around sixteen years of age. CEB members who worked with youth groups in the colonia reported hearing the deadly violence grew out of “gang turf wars.”⁵⁰

Residents of colonias populares link expanded recreational and educational opportunities to reductions in violence in their neighborhoods.⁵¹ In 1982, CEB members and Sagrado Corazón nuns opened the Education Services Center across from the parish temple on Manuel M. Ponce Street in Santa Cecilia. The center opened Mondays through Saturdays each week, offering a community library and a range of social and educational services. Two evenings per week, a social worker took cases and helped connect residents to citywide resources. The center provided tutoring in English, Spanish, math, social sciences, and natural sciences for learners of all ages. Nuns and women CEB members operated a clothing-production workshop in the building, where they made dresses and other clothes. Workshop leaders offered courses training women and girls on sewing machines from household to industrial sizes.⁵² The Education Services Center

⁴⁹ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, *Prole del 4*, no. 2, segunda época, febrero de 1981, p. 2.

⁵⁰ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, *El Alipuz*, “¡¡Violencia!!”, septiembre de 1982, p. 3.

⁵¹ Author interview with Elena Lupercio, May 18, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico.

⁵² MAV, Movimiento Urban Popular 1980s GDL, *El Alipuz*, septiembre de 1982, p. 7.

became the lasting institutional presence connected to the CEB movement in Santa Cecilia. It was located in the RSCJ-owned building that now houses the non-profit Oblatos Education Center (CEO).

In the 1980s, the nature of popular movement actions on infrastructure issues changed to defending against unwanted projects threatening homes and colonias. Residents of colonia Oblatos, near Santa Cecilia on the eastern side of the city, fought against a pavement project and the exorbitant price tag the municipal government planned for them to absorb. Guadalajara's previous mayor Guillermo Reyes Robles (1976-1979) had pledged to Oblatos residents that no infrastructure projects would be carried out against their wishes. But, as in colonias populares around the city, projects moved forward despite residents' opposition. Police repressed one peaceful protest of Oblatos residents at the mayor's office in 1981, during Arnulfo Villaseñor Saavedra's term (1979-1982). Organized citizens from Oblatos responded to Villaseñor Saavedra's authoritarian measures with more visible, larger protests and sit-in occupations of downtown spaces.⁵³

Hundreds of residents from across the southern periphery and their allies from other colonias populares met in colonia López Portillo for a large popular assembly on the afternoon of May 17, 1981. The pivotal issue affecting most attendees was the need to regularize their lots through the Commission for the Regularization of Land Tenure (CORETT). But CORETT ignored citizen demands to regularize and provide titles. Residents of colonias Villa Guerrero, Echeverría, Lomas de Polanco Oriente, Polanquito,

⁵³ BPEJ, Hemeroteca histórica, *Proceso*, "En respuesta a cargos contra el alcalde tapatío, se le designó orador en Hermosillo," 9 de febrero de 1981, p. 20.

López Portillo, Emiliano Zapata, and Francisco Villa participated in the assembly. Activists from Santa Cecilia, Santa Margarita, San Isidro, and Lomas de Gallo attended in solidarity. Popular assembly participants formed committees according to colonia and each delegation went to CORETT offices in the ensuing days to state their demands and negotiate with officials. Assembly participants from across the urban peripheries committed to mutual support and solidarity with colonia-specific struggles.⁵⁴

Three days later, independently organized residents in colonia Polanco Oriente won control of the Neighborhood Committee from the PRI-backed contingent in elections on May 20. Making neighborhood committees work for the people was a signal achievement in colonias across the peripheries in this period. The PRI understood the importance of neighborhood committee control in populous colonias on the peripheries, and the party dispatched the state representative and the city councilperson to the Polanco Oriente elections. But independent residents outnumbered PRI supporters 140 to 60 at the meeting and swept the vote.⁵⁵

Coalition efforts in organizations like the MPI reflected nationwide trends in the formation of broad fronts with sectors of the poor majorities as base. Different sectors organized *coordinadoras* (coordinating committees) to connect and strengthen organizing

⁵⁴ MAV, Movimiento Urban Popular 1980s GDL, *El Alipuz*, “Gran asamblea popular en colonia López Portillo,” junio de 1981, p. 1.

⁵⁵ MAV, Movimiento Urban Popular 1980s GDL, *El Alipuz*, junio de 1981, p. 2.

efforts independent from the PRI's corporatist blocks.⁵⁶ CONAMUP became the coordinadora for urban popular movements.⁵⁷

CONAMUP defined its struggle as class based. At the end of López Portillo's term as president in 1982, CONAMUP argued the administration's rhetoric and policy of "no land invasions" sought to satisfy the privileged classes in Mexico. The evidence could be seen in the repression of low-income residents and the independent movements they led.⁵⁸ CONAMUP leaders pointed out the strings attached to loans Mexico received from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), including significant restrictions on public spending that weakened basic social services. They believed López Portillo did not understand the conditions in urban Mexico for most citizens.⁵⁹

Amid an already challenging situation for low-income workers and residents, the federal government cut public programs that constructed and financed housing, even as the working-class population became increasingly dense in the nation's cities. CONAMUP criticized the Mexican government's oversight of a situation in which luxury condominiums went up alongside impoverished colonias where the MUP was anchored.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, CONAMUP contended that "the organized political activity of urban

⁵⁶ The *coordinadoras* of independent popular sector movements at the outset of the 1980s included CONAMUP, the National Education Workers Coordinating Committee (CNTE), and the National "Plan of Ayala" Coordinating Committee (CNPA),

⁵⁷ For more on CONAMUP, see, for example, Lynn Stephen, *Women in Social Movements in Latin America: Power from Below* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 111-157.

⁵⁸ Grupo de Apoyo al Movimiento Urbano Popular, Equipo Pueblo, *Surgimiento de la Coordinadora Nacional del Movimiento Urbano Popular: Las Luchas Urbanas-Populares en la Coyuntura Actual* (1982), folletos 5, 8, and 11.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, folletos 11-13.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, folleto 16.

residents is capable of imposing limits on this process.”⁶¹ The unjust situation could be overcome, they posited, by the “democratic struggle of the masses.”⁶²

1983 was a crucial year in the history of the urban popular movement. Like their comrades in other cities around Mexico, the urban popular movement in Guadalajara mobilized a series of large protests against the economic austerity measures of Miguel de la Madrid’s presidential administration (1982-1988). On October 18, 1983, local MUP groups joined a nationwide general strike under the slogan of “No to Austerity!”⁶³ In another year of peak activity for the movement in 1984, The Forum of the Struggle for Housing,⁶⁴ the Association of Housing Solicitors, and the ACNR all expanded their bases and organizing in Guadalajara.⁶⁵ With an acute sense of the broader urban struggles underway across Mexico, local MUP groups drew inspiration from powerful popular organizations like the Asamblea de Barrios in Mexico City.⁶⁶ Learning from wisdom shared through national networks, movement groups held public forums to address the enduring and deepening problems surrounding housing conditions. Out of the series of

⁶¹ Ibid, folleto 20.

⁶² Ibid, folleto 23.

⁶³ Regalado, “El movimiento popular independiente,” 148-50.

⁶⁴ This organization is analyzed in-depth as part of the urban history in Jorge Regalado Santillán, *Lucha por la vivienda en Guadalajara: Historia, política y organización social, 1980-1992* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1995).

⁶⁵ Rafael Sandoval Álvarez, *El zapatismo urbano en Guadalajara: Contradicciones y ambigüedades en el quehacer político* (Mexico City: INAH, 2009), 172.

⁶⁶ For more on the Asamblea de Barrios, see Paul Lawrence Haber, *Power from Experience: Urban Popular Movements in Late Twentieth-Century Mexico* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2007).

forums, movement groups anchored in colonias populares drafted an alternative housing policy and presented it to state officials.⁶⁷

MUP groups and participating residents grew to understand themselves as part of a broader popular struggle in Mexico. They frequently engaged in public actions led by teachers, workers, and campesinos. On October 7, 1986, hundreds of campesinos from the southern region of Jalisco marched north to Guadalajara under banners of “*Tierra y Libertad*.” They entered the capital city that Tuesday and caused traffic chaos along principal avenues leading downtown from the south. Marchers arrived at the Plaza de Armas in front of the governmental palace and occupied that central space for eight days. MUP groups and CEB members provided key support to the campesino movement during the October march and occupation of the downtown plaza.

Colonias Populares Coordinating Committee (CCP) members registered their outrage at PRI-state’s abandonment of rural people, saying, “It’s as if we weren’t in the year 1986 and more than seventy years had passed since many Mexicans died in order that the law enshrined the right of every campesino to the land they need to live.” The protest led to the release of eighteen campesino prisoners and the invalidation of arrest warrants against movement participants. Campesino leaders negotiated with state officials for professional assessments of damage to lands and property in southern Jalisco, a guarantee of assistance in cultivating undamaged lands, and expedited agricultural regulations that ended the conflict. In the process, residents of the urban peripheries who stood with their rural counterparts learned the power of solidarity.

⁶⁷ Elba Noemí Gómez Gómez, *Mundos imaginados-mundos posibles. La sociedad reflexiva en los participantes en un proyecto educativo-político, veinte años después* (Guadalajara: ITESO, 2007), 92.

“There are thousands of us that are getting together to form a great force capable of transforming our way of life into one that is more just and dignified,” CCP members reflected soon after.⁶⁸

In December 1986, vigilant activists in the urban popular movement sounded the alarm about the threat of another increase in bus fares. Residents again objected to the looming rate hike. They demanded improved public transportation services, new routes and more buses, and extended hours of operation. On February 6, 1987, members of the CCP and Intercolonias marched to the government palace in downtown Guadalajara and presented state officials with four thousand signatures from citizens rejecting the rate hikes and put forward their agenda of specific demands.⁶⁹

In March, CCP members argued the bus fare increase had been delayed because “the government fears that popular discontent will be uncontrollable if it authorizes the increase.” Guadalajara’s municipal government paid bus companies 300,000 pesos per unit to appease the powerful owners meanwhile. “As we can see, the government spends millions on these businessmen and it denies us basic services,” the CCP observed in its monthly newsletter. “How much longer do we have to pay the cost of the crisis?” The *Boletín de la Coordinadora de Colonias Populares* appealed for readers’ assistance collecting signatures on the circulating petition and urged people to attend the upcoming March 31 protest.⁷⁰ On the last day of the month, the CCP, Intercolonias, and other

⁶⁸ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, *Boletín de la Coordinadora de Colonias Populares*, vol. 1, noviembre de 1986, pp. 7-8.

⁶⁹ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, *Boletín de la Coordinadora de Colonias Populares*, “¿Qué pasa con el transporte?” marzo de 1987, p. 1.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 2.

popular movement groups marched through downtown streets to the municipal palace. They called for “dignified” public transportation in the city, and they pushed broader demands to end austerity and enact democracy.⁷¹

As the independent popular organizations anticipated, the local government announced a bus fare increase on May 8, 1987. Bowing to pressure from the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM) *cacique* Heliodoro Hernández Loza, they raised rates to 100 pesos per ticket.⁷² Hernández Loza’s Alliance of Bus Operators continued turning profits throughout the sustained economic crisis of the 1980s. Even so, Guadalajara’s municipal government spent millions of pesos in public money to outfit the company with new buses. For residents of the urban peripheries, “the increase means we’ll spend more on transportation, the increase we got in our minimum wages.”⁷³

The MUP struggles of the 1980s have been characterized as defensive ones, as the movement acted more to prevent state intervention rather than only requesting it in the form of urban services.⁷⁴ Once residents settled in colonias on the peripheries, they often had to resist bulldozers and concrete trucks. Residents of colonia Buenos Aires on the southern periphery faced displacement in early May 1987, during the region’s hottest and

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 4.

⁷² A *cacique* is a local strongman who wields outsized power at the regional, local, and/or neighborhood levels in Mexico. For more, see Alan Knight and Wil G. Pansters, eds., *Caciquismo in Twentieth-Century Mexico* (London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2005).

⁷³ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, *Boletín de la Coordinadora de Colonias Populares*, mayo/junio de 1987, p. 1.

⁷⁴ Rubén Martín and other scholars describe the popular movement’s struggles locally across the 1980s as “defensive” ones, in Colectivo Cuadernos de la Resistencia, *Las luchas sociales en Jalisco 2010 [borrador y antología histórica preliminar]*. Cuadernos de la Resistencia no. 4, Seminario Movimientos Sociales, Sujetos y Practicas (Guadalajara, 2011).

driest month. The municipal government bulldozed a school, a market, and two homes, with the accompaniment of an imposing police presence. Buenos Aires residents succeeded in stopping the destruction of the church. When confronted by enraged citizens the following day, PRI officials claimed no knowledge of the operation. As a result of the demolition, “the people are organizing and are prepared to defend themselves, knowing that now the government doesn’t construct, it destructs,” CCP’s newsletter editorialized days later.⁷⁵

In colonia Primer de Mayo, residents campaigned for more than three years to compel Guadalajara’s municipal government to repair the major canal that regularly flooded their neighborhood, often damaging or destroying homes. On the strength of their incorporation into the broader CCP network, Primer de Mayo residents finally received a response from authorities and action on the issue.⁷⁶

In colonia El Mante in Tlaquepaque municipal territory on the southern edges of the metropolitan zone, residents built a militant movement to secure urgently needed water services. Backed by CCP allies from across the peripheries, El Mante residents occupied a downtown plaza on May 11, 1987 and demanded water. The sustained public disruption tactic yielded a meeting with the state of Jalisco’s undersecretary of state, where the citizens’ group aired its grievances. State officials promised to move swiftly in commissioning the public works projects. But the government also responded to the El Mante protest with repression. State political investigation operatives detained CCP

⁷⁵ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, *Boletín de la Coordinadora de Colonias Populares*, mayo/junio de 1987, p. 3.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 3-4.

member Humberto Ascencio later on May 11; illegally, according to movement participants. Authorities released Ascencio after twenty-four hours and levied a fine on the activist. “We consider this an open act of aggression toward the popular movement and a violation of the constitutional right of freedom of protest,” the CCP responded.⁷⁷ The movement often achieved their goals, even as participants sometimes paid the price via detention, surveillance, and political violence.

**Transnational Praxis Flows:
Popular Education and Movement Infrastructure, Guadalajara to Central America,
1971-1992**

This movement history from Guadalajara features noteworthy transnational aspects related to the development of liberationist Christianity and Freirian popular education in Mexico from the 1960s through the 1990s. The popular education movement and liberationist Christianity circulating around the Americas both emerged from and galvanized a range of local experiences. Popular educators from Guadalajara established transnational pieces of movement infrastructure that continue to shape struggles for democracy and human rights. In traditionally conservative Jalisco, the interconnected currents of liberation theology and Freirian critical pedagogy infused political imaginaries and cultures in an unlikely place. In this section, I show wider Latin American influences, relationships, and networks in the local movement history by exploring the intellectual trajectories and evolutions in practice of central figures and groups based in Guadalajara.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

Existing scholarly literature suggests a scarcity of intellectual production on liberation theology in Mexico.⁷⁸ Arnaldo Zenteno defied that characterization with a diverse and influential set of publications from 1971 to 1983.⁷⁹ The Jesuit priest captures the Latin American liberationist movement in his early, foundational writings on liberation theology and base communities in Mexico and the many ethnographic reports he produced on Santa Cecilia from 1971 to 1975. Since his childhood in a working-class section of Mexico City, Zenteno lived in colonias populares there and in Guadalajara, before departing for base communities in rural Nicaragua during the mid-1980s in the context of the Sandinista revolution.⁸⁰ He moved to Guadalajara in 1971 to work in the poorest barrios, supplementing priestly functions for overwhelmed parish priests and organizing base communities. Zenteno published a very early liberation theology book in 1971—the year Peruvian priest and theologian Gustavo Gutierrez’s groundbreaking *Teología de la liberación* came out—and the first comprehensive survey of Christian base communities in Mexico in 1983.⁸¹ During the early 1980s, Zenteno played a pivotal leadership role in the national CEB organization that spearheaded efforts to resource,

⁷⁸ Most studies simply omit Mexico, except for occasional mention of Cuernavaca-based Ivan Illich or Sergio Méndez Arceo. In an insightful comparative study, Joseph Palacios suggests Mexico had no consequential liberation theologians. See Joseph M. Palacios, *Catholic Social Imagination: Activism and the Just Society in Mexico and the United States* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

⁷⁹ Arnaldo Zenteno, S.J., *Liberación social y Cristo: Apuntes para una teología de liberación* (Mexico City: Secretariado Social Mexicano, 1971); *Encuentro con el pueblo y evangelización liberadora: búsqueda y experiencias de evangelización en una colonia popular* (Mexico City, Imprenta Mexicana, 1974); and *Un camino de humildad y esperanza: Las CEBs en México* (Mexico City: Centro Antonio de Montesinos, 1983).

⁸⁰ ITESO-FCN, Arnaldo Zenteno, S.J., “Una pequeña historia del inicio de mi vocación,” 1 febrero 2008, pp. 1-8.

⁸¹ Zenteno, *Liberación social y Cristo*; Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Teología de la liberación: Perspectivas* (Lima: CEP, 1971); and Zenteno, *Un camino de humildad y esperanza*.

train, and connect CEB groups and members across Mexico. Now in his eighties, the Jesuit works with base communities in urban Nicaragua.

An architect by training, Carlos Núñez co-founded the non-profit Mexican Institute for Community Development (IMDEC) in Guadalajara in 1963. He collaborated with Brazilian Paulo Freire, Colombian Orlando Fals Borda, and others in the Popular Education Council of Latin America and the Caribbean (Consejo de Educación Popular de América Latina y el Caribe, CEAAL) during the 1980s and 1990s, a popular education resource network with continental reach.⁸² Núñez and Graciela Bustillos moved to Nicaragua with their three children temporarily during the early Sandinista years, where the couple worked for the Ministry of Education directing popular education initiatives in the countryside that drew from the successes and failures of experiences in colonias Santa Cecilia and Santa Margarita in Guadalajara.⁸³

Bustillos left a lasting legacy in Cuba. Longtime IMDEC team member Luis Fernando Arana credited Bustillos and Núñez with introducing Cuba to Freirian popular education.⁸⁴ Since its first publication in 1988, Bustillos's text and vision for the prominent guidebook, *Técnicas participativas para la educación popular* (participatory techniques for popular education), shaped approaches to popular education with small

⁸² For more on CEAAL, see <http://ceaal.org/v3/>.

⁸³ Author interview with Juan Carlos Núñez, April 26, 2019, Tlaquepaque, Mexico.

⁸⁴ Comments made by Luis Fernando Arana Gutiérrez during panel discussion of the legacy of Carlos Núñez at the opening of his collection of personal papers at ITESO university in Guadalajara, August 23, 2018. After Brazilian liberationist priest Frei Betto interviewed Fidel Castro and proposed the idea, Cuba began hosting international popular education conferences in 1983, which led to sustained work by many, especially Bustillos. After her untimely death in late 1992, Cuban colleagues paid tribute by naming a new popular education center in Havana after her— the Centro de Investigación Educativa “Graciela Bustillos.” For more on Bustillos, see the compilation of remembrances in Carlos Núñez, ed. *Desde el Corazón... Graciela Bustillos: Anécdotas y Testimonios* (Guadalajara, 2002).

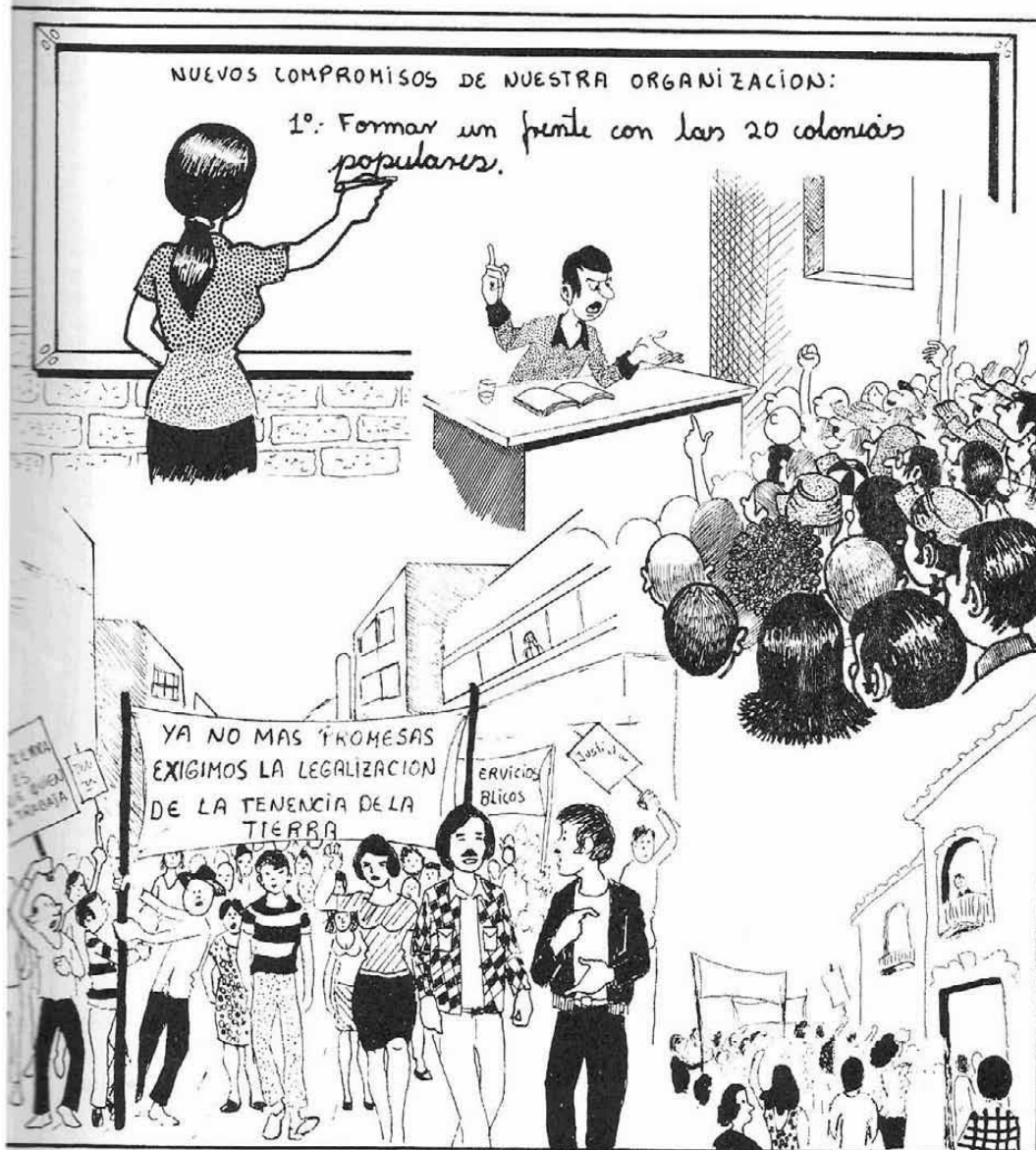
groups for generations of community organizers and activist educators across the Americas.⁸⁵ Among practitioners from Latin America to North America, *Técnicas participativas* remains perhaps the most widely disseminated popular education resource.⁸⁶ To inform projects around the Americas during the 1980s and 1990s, Bustillos and Núñez drew from lessons learned in colonias populares on Guadalajara's peripheries during the 1970s.

On the ground from the 1970s through the 1990s, a generation of priests, nuns, intellectuals, social workers, and community organizers extended traditions of Latin American leftist solidarity and adapted them to the neoliberal era. Zenteno and Núñez wrote accessible but rigorous works based on experiences in Guadalajara that remain little known outside Mexico, though they represented the cutting edges of liberation theology and popular education when published. The sustained consciousness-raising and political education efforts led by Núñez, Zenteno, Bustillos, Arias, and others during the 1970s and 1980s created durable infrastructure for grassroots organizing and counterhegemonic movement building into the 1990s in Guadalajara and across their solidarity networks in Latin America.

⁸⁵ Graciela Bustillos de Núñez and Laura Vargas Vargas, *Técnicas participativas para la educación popular, Tomo I* (Guadalajara: IMDEC, 1988).

⁸⁶ I base this claim on several years of experience as a community organizer for social justice groups in the southeastern United States from 2008 to 2014 and research into groups working in the Freirian tradition in Mexico.

El proceso dialéctico se completa con el *Regreso a la Práctica* para transformarla y mejorarla poniendo en juego los elementos adquiridos que suponen una mayor comprensión de la Realidad y de la Práctica del grupo.



Pero el regreso a la práctica no es un hecho final del proceso educativo, sino por el contrario es el **nuevo punto de partida**.

Figure 5.3. Page from the widely distributed popular education resource *Técnicas participativas para la educación popular*, published in various editions by IMDEC and Alforja. This page illustrated the dialectic between theory and practice, highlighting the “return to practice” of collective action. The text at the bottom of the page says, “But the return to practice is not the last step of the education process, on the contrary, it is the new point of departure.” Source: Graciela Bustillos de Núñez and Laura Vargas Vargas, *Técnicas participativas para la educación popular*, Tomo II, Segunda edición (San José, Costa Rica: Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones ALFORJA, 1988), p. 9.

Hired by IMDEC in 1975, Efrén Orozco led the National Methodological School that trained popular educators and community organizers across Mexico from the mid-1980s until its final cohort in 2016. In addition to his involvement in CEAAL's larger-scale effort, Orozco was instrumental in the interconnected popular movement resource network Alforja, which linked educators and organizers in Mexico and Central American countries.⁸⁷ Orozco and many in his generation of religious workers, community organizers, and intellectuals preserved intimate ties to grassroots movements of the poor and working class, especially urban popular movements on the peripheries of Guadalajara and other Latin American cities since the 1970s.

Núñez, Fals Borda, Panamanian Raúl Leis, and Peruvian Oscar Jara provide indispensable treatments of Freire's philosophy and praxis of popular education.⁸⁸ For his part, Núñez understood the intellectual precursors to include nineteenth-century Cuban independence leader José Martí, Peruvian Marxist José Carlos Mariátegui, and Cuban revolutionaries Ernesto "Ché" Guevara and Fidel Castro. Forerunners of popular education praxis were early-twentieth century "workers' circles," Augusto Sandino's improvised schools in the mountains of Nicaragua during the late 1920s and early 1930s, Mariátegui's writings and political activism, and Lázaro Cárdenas's socialist education program in 1930s Mexico. Núñez traced additional roots of popular education in Mexico to Catholic social action and the activist educational efforts of the Mexican Social

⁸⁷ Author interview with Efrén Orozco, December 6, 2018, Guadalajara, Mexico. On the National Methodological School, see Efrén Orozco O., *Saber con sabor. La Escuela Metodológica Nacional 20 años de historia: una experiencia de capacitación en la Educación Popular* (Guadalajara: IMDEC, 2009). For more on the Alforja network, see <http://redalforja.org.gt/>.

⁸⁸ Alisa Natividad Delgado Tornés, "Ética y política en la concepción de la educación popular de Paulo Freire," *Universidades* 50 (julio-septiembre 2011), 20.

Secretariat (SSM) led by Pedro Velázquez in the 1950s and 1960s. Paulo Freire's influence in Mexico began after he attended a conference in Cuernavaca in 1967, identifiable in the ensuing decades in politicized, class-based pedagogical and organizing approaches that pitted rich against poor, oppressors against oppressed.⁸⁹ For the emphasis on theory that emerges from practice, Freire served as the prime exponent for popular educators and liberationist clergy in Mexico.⁹⁰

Social scientists attempting explain poverty in Latin America advanced the theory of marginality and "it's antidote," "popular promotion," worked out in Chile by the Belgian Jesuit Roger Veckemans and others in the 1960s. Like dependency theory, which had tremendous currency at the time, popular promotion viewed Latin American poverty from historical and structural perspectives.⁹¹ The concept of popular promotion retained some intellectual and political currency in Guadalajara into the 1980s.

Much of the Latin American Left interpreted the U.S.-sponsored Alliance for Progress during the 1960s as a "strategy of cooptation of the discontent that would appear in any place on the Latin American continent." With its "community development" projects the Alliance for Progress (AL-PRO) funded housing, basic services, and infrastructure in many countries. The associated programs introduced useful concepts and organizations to the region, despite AL-PRO's "demobilizing" objectives in relation to

⁸⁹ Carlos Corrales Díaz, "La promoción popular en México: el punto de vista de uno de sus protagonistas, entrevista a Carlos Núñez," *Renglones* 2 (1985), 4-11.

⁹⁰ Carlos Núñez Hurtado, *Permiso para pensar... Educación popular: propuesta y debate* (Guadalajara: IMDEC, 1995), 4.

⁹¹ Delgado Tornés, 22. Veckemans later became a crusader against liberation theology.

popular sectors in Latin America.⁹² The Alliance for Progress had unintended consequences in Mexico, as “concepts such as ‘participation,’ ‘felt necessity,’ and many others... with the passage of time were surpassed in their purely developmentalist original scope.”⁹³ The Catholic Church also advocated “development” in the Americas during the 1960s. A “theology of development” emerged and predominated for several years. Carlos Núñez later critiqued these development paradigms for their paternalist, “assistentialist,” and “economist” elements. But from those early paternalist efforts at “community development” in Mexico, solidarity with the poor majorities grew and grassroots organizational forms and understandings took shape.⁹⁴

Núñez and colleagues in Guadalajara thought in terms of community development during the 1960s. The terminology and framework of popular education came later, in the early 1970s. Since IMDEC’s founding, the organization focused on the “educational dimension” of popular promotion and community development initiatives. Núñez and colleagues emphasized educational aspects with the goal of forming “leadership cadres” in specific places and groups. The former IMDEC director later recalled that their first approach in the 1960s was “community organizing.”⁹⁵

The process of popular education’s elaboration in Latin America during the 1970s was aided by the creation of grassroots organizations and non-profits, myriad collective actions conditioned by local contexts, and deepened solidarity across national borders.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Núñez, *Educación para transformar*, 35-36.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 36.

⁹⁵ Núñez, *La revolución ética*, 130-132.

“For us,” Núñez later wrote, “the beginning of a new decade (1970s) marked a new stage.” With the 1968 student movement and Tlatelolco massacre reverberating in Mexico, a “crisis of conscience” pervaded student and religious sectors.⁹⁶ Núñez and Bustillos moved to colonia Santa Cecilia in 1973, next door to the cooperative IMDEC operated to provide low-cost construction materials and technical assistance to residents slowly piecing together their homes. The couple lived in Santa Cecilia with their children for four years during the most intense and successful years of the colonia’s base communities. Throughout the 1970s, Núñez, Orozco, and IMDEC collaborators developed a “synthesis” through “dialectical methodology.” The synthesis merged the “best elements” of community development, theories of marginality and popular promotion, ethical and revolutionary components of liberation theology, and Freirian politically committed pedagogy and ethics.⁹⁷

As noted above, many movement participants believed “the future of Latin America is being decided in Central America” during the early 1980s.⁹⁸ Nicaragua became another point of convergence for Núñez, Zenteno, and others formed in Guadalajara CEBs and popular movements. Scholars and practitioners viewed the Sandinista Revolution as inaugurating another phase in the historical development of popular education.⁹⁹ “In all these years of meaningful developments,” Carlos Núñez’s

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 133.

⁹⁸ MAV, Movimiento Urbano Popular 1980s GDL, *Prole del 4: Boletín de Información Popular*, “En Centroamérica se decide el futuro Latinoamericano,” Segunda época, no. 2, febrero 1981, p. 5.

⁹⁹ Delgado Tornés, 23.

fellow Freire disciple Raúl Leis wrote in 1985, “the Nicaraguan Revolution came to be the fundamental event that catalyzed the experience of popular education we were involved in.”¹⁰⁰ Núñez and Graciela Bustillos contributed to literacy campaigns and other initiatives for Nicaragua’s Ministry of Education in 1979 and 1980, utilizing familiar forms of popular communication such as *teatro campesino*.¹⁰¹ Building on the durable historical model of “radical transnationalism” in twentieth-century Latin America, a “revolutionary diaspora” descended on Sandinista Nicaragua.¹⁰²

For Raúl Leis, the lasting impact on intellectuals and activists from around the Americas who converged in Nicaragua with the Sandinistas rests on the concrete achievements they witnessed during the revolution’s early years. The Literacy Crusade—“an enormous popular effort” Leis, Núñez, and Bustillos participated in—reduced illiteracy rates from 50.4% to 12.9% in just five months. That intensive campaign also created 15,000 Popular Education Collectives (CEPs) across Nicaragua, laying the groundwork for mass organizations and critical consciousnesses that animated social movements.¹⁰³ Bustillos and Núñez returned to Guadalajara in 1980, though they continued making regular visits and built lasting relationships with communities in

¹⁰⁰ Raúl Leis, “Prólogo: Un texto para caminar,” in Carlos Núñez H. *Educación para transformar*.

¹⁰¹ Carlos Núñez and Raúl Leis, “Nuestro diploma,” in *Más sabe el pueblo... anécdotas y testimonios de educadores populares latinoamericanos* (Guadalajara: IMDEC, 1990), 11-12; Núñez, “Soy el pueblo,” in *Más sabe el pueblo*; “Un revolucionario,” in *Más sabe el pueblo*; and Anabel Torres, “Esperanza compartida,” in Núñez, ed., *Desde el Corazón... Graciela Bustillos: anécdotas y testimonios* (Guadalajara, 2002), 148-149;

¹⁰² Barry Carr, “Pioneering Transnational Solidarity in the Americas: The Movement in Support of Augusto C. Sandino 1927-1934,” *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research* 20, no. 2 (2014), 144. The quoted phrases are Carr’s in describing the revolutionary period fifty years prior in Nicaragua.

¹⁰³ Leis, “Prólogo: Un texto para caminar.”

Nicaragua. The startling successes of the Sandinista literacy campaign expanded the horizon of the possible for *luchas populares* and popular education. Out of common, ongoing concerns for revolutionary movements and civil wars in Central America, popular educators created the “Mesoamerican” network of practitioners, Alforja, grounded in shared Nicaraguan experiences.¹⁰⁴

In Mexico, the so-called lost decade of the 1980s saw an economic crisis paralleled by the strengthening and expansion of popular education initiatives. IMDEC and a growing network of non-profit organizations dedicated to serving as resource centers for social movements pushed popular education forward. IMDEC focused especially on what they called “popular capacity-building.” Orozco and IMDEC spearheaded the creation of the National Methodological School (Escuela Metodológica Nacional, EMN), where they conducted intensive, week-long workshops that trained generations of popular educators and community organizers.¹⁰⁵ The 1980s was a time of establishing and consolidating networks of radicals with transnational vision and local grounding.

Dubbed “the circuit” by Núñez, CEAAL comprised a larger-scale, slightly more formally structured network that convened popular educators from across Latin America.¹⁰⁶ At CEAAL’s 1989 annual meeting in Guadalajara, Uruguayan educator Arlés Caruso connected the contributions of both popular education and participatory

¹⁰⁴ Efrén Orozco O., *Saber con sabor. La Escuela Metodológica Nacional 20 años de historia: una experiencia de capacitación en la Educación Popular* (Guadalajara: IMDEC, 2009).

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Núñez, *Educación para transformar*, “Prólogo a la 4ª. Edición de IMDEC.”

research to democratization processes. Caruso maintained that both concepts and practices were fundamental to popular movements in Latin America. Orlando Fals Borda served as president of CEAAL at the time, having succeeded Freire in the role, and presented on participatory research and knowledges at the Guadalajara conference.¹⁰⁷ From Fals Borda's perspective, the local community organization IMDEC had matured to function as a regional "temple of knowledges."¹⁰⁸

Grounded in local grassroots movements across Latin America, popular education networks and organizations—collectives of practitioners—such as CEAAL, Alforja, and IMDEC contributed to knowledge production in ways that warrant further research and analysis. To actively shape historical knowledge, IMDEC began conducting multi-session retreats with groups in colonias populares in Guadalajara where participants collectively wrote their movement's history. Núñez and Efrén Orozco became the lead duo in designing and facilitating IMDEC's myriad workshops and trainings. Popular educators and liberationist nuns and priests consistently encouraged CEB and MUP groups to reconstruct the histories of local struggles. Sagrado Corazón nuns guided sessions in "remembering the history of our colonia" with Santa Cecilia CEB members in 1981-1982.¹⁰⁹ More recently, with the fiftieth anniversary of the colonia's founding in 2018, memory is being conceptualized and put to use as a tool of resistance in Santa

¹⁰⁷ Carlos Núñez Hurtado, Orlando Fals Borda, and Arlés Caruso, *Investigación participativa y educación popular en América Latina hoy* (Guadalajara: IMDEC, 1990).

¹⁰⁸ Orlando Fals Borda, "La investigación participativa y el proceso de generación de conocimientos," in *Investigación participativa y educación popular en América Latina hoy*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁹ AHCEO, Documentos, "Recordando la historia de nuestra colonia," nos. 3-5, 1982.

Cecilia.¹¹⁰ IMDEC worked with colonia El Colli residents in 1988-1989 and again in 2001-2002 to narrate their unique history on the western peripheries. In the case of the El Colli housing cooperative, residents and IMDEC organizers sought a “recovery of practice” in a project-centered history.¹¹¹

El Colli provides another example of CEB and MUP organizing emerging from and intersecting in the same context. This project was unique because the colonia was founded in the 1980s as a housing cooperative on land donated by the Mercedarias Misioneras de Bériz congregation of nuns. El Colli sits beside the Bosque de la Primavera forest in western Zapopan, near some of the city’s more affluent zones. Residents traced the project’s “historical development” in order to inform ongoing and future popular movement efforts in their colonia and around the city.¹¹² IMDEC recognized the 1988-1989 “Historical-Cultural Reconstruction” workshops in El Colli generated documentary narratives not found in institutional archives. By the late 1980s, Núñez, Bustillos, Orozco, and IMDEC conceptualized their work in colonias populares as providing “process support”—resources and analytical guidance for residents to write movement history, in the case of El Colli.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ As mentioned above in Chapter Three, Jesuit priest and scholar David Velasco urged employing memory—remembering and storytelling—as tool of resistance in his homily at Santa Cecilia’s 50th anniversary event in November 2018.

¹¹¹ Biblioteca ITESO, Fondos Documentales, Fondo Carlos Núñez (ITESO-FCN), D-1111, IMDEC, “Proyecto de servicio social para la recuperación de la práctica: escenario: comunidad El Colli (cooperativa de vivienda),” 2002.

¹¹² ITESO-FCN, D-426, IMDEC, “Memoria del primer taller de recuperación histórico-cultural: cooperativa Colli Sitio,” pp. 1-22.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

With a global transition into what intellectuals and activists alike called a “crisis of paradigms” at the close of the 1980s, some wondered about the relevance of utopias in Latin America. In Nicaragua, the Sandinistas went down to electoral defeat in 1990. That revolutionary project’s exit from the stage produced a “profound political crisis” for many Mexican leftists.¹¹⁴ Liberation theology and popular education were pronounced dead by many during this period, relics of Cold War ideological conflicts now resolved. But at a conference session Carlos Núñez organized for the 1992 Feria Internacional de Libro (FIL) in Guadalajara, Orlando Fals Borda asserted “utopias have not died.”¹¹⁵ The 1990s became a period of self-critical reflection and reassessment of the popular education project. Base communities continued to be active in Mexico and across the Americas, though struggling and transient in many places with the steady withdrawal of institutional resources.

Carlos Núñez and IMDEC colleagues travelled to Europe for one of their regular trips to secure funding in the early 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Sandinista loss. “If socialism is finished,” many European counterparts asked them, “then why continue with popular education?” Núñez responded that popular education “continues being relevant in its substantive elements, and historically reclaimed with urgency.” Many elements required revision, and the process of popular education’s development in Latin America had always included critical reflection on practice. But to those pronouncing popular education dead with the Cold War’s end, Núñez railed,

¹¹⁴ Núñez Hurtado, *Permiso para pensar*, 5.

¹¹⁵ Carlos Núñez Hurtado, ed., *Educación para construir el sueño: Ética y conocimiento en la transformación social* (Guadalajara: ITESO, 2001).

we reject as simplistic, unserious, antiscientific, and lacking in ethical commitment, the formulations we alluded to before and that are expressed not only by those that from afar, from outside, from the financial power, want to declare the death of “Popular Education,” but also by those defined as within the field of Popular Education who are tearing their clothes to affirm, without any nuance, that everything done by her [popular education] was vulgar ideology and cheap politics.¹¹⁶

In this period of political reassessment, Núñez argued radicals in Mexico and Latin America experienced setbacks in part because of tendencies to divorce theory from practice. The Latin American Left seemed “schizophrenic” in the 1990s, preaching participation and democracy, but too often running organizations and institutions as authoritarian and “*verticalista*.” Nevertheless, Núñez declared, “we are not ‘throwing in the towel’” in the face of the challenges precipitated by neoliberalism and postmodernism. The crisis of paradigms put previously obscured contradictions on full display. And based on experiences in communities across Latin America—Santa Cecilia and Nicaragua most impactful—he maintained that popular education was indispensable to “new ways of doing politics.”¹¹⁷

Movement Knowledges

In 2000, Carlos Núñez’s Colombian colleague Orlando Fals Borda returned to ITESO university to give a talk. ITESO was inaugurating its Paulo Freire Institute, with Núñez—the local guru—as director. During his presentation at the Jesuit university in Guadalajara, Fals Borda synthesized his late collaborator Freire’s legacy into components of utopian politics and vision, humanist education and thought, and politically committed

¹¹⁶ Núñez, *Educación para transformar*, “Prólogo a la 4ª. Edición del IMDEC.”

¹¹⁷ Núñez Hurtado, *Permiso para pensar*, 4-7.

pedagogy and knowledge production.¹¹⁸ Both Freirian popular education and liberationist Christianity built on Latin American traditions of humanism, utopian thought and movements, Pan-American independence, anti-imperialism, socialism and Marxism, and religion used in counterhegemonic ways.

Peruvian popular educator and CEAAL president Óscar Jara recently pointed to Freire and Fals Borda, the first two CEAAL presidents, as “our inspirations for fomenting rebellious subjectivities, and for imagining and constructing unscripted scenes at the impetus of popular capacities which are deeply rooted in our history.” In a CEAAL presidential memo to the network previewing the organization’s 2017 annual meeting in Cartagena, Colombia, Jara referenced a 1977 Fals Borda presentation to articulate the movement’s ongoing project of democratizing knowledge production. CEAAL titled their 2017 conference, “Participation and the Democratization of Knowledges.”¹¹⁹

Dan Kerr recently sketched a revised historiography of oral history practice in the United States, linking its origins to popular educators and community organizers.¹²⁰ Especially in Latin America, many oral history practitioners worked in the more fluid borderlands between academics and commitment with popular struggles. In the course of my research, I have been impressed and influenced by the oral history work done by priests, nuns, social workers, and activists in the 1960s and 1970s in Mexico. Through their methods and practices, we can see an epistemology in action.

¹¹⁸ Núñez Hurtado, ed., *Educación para construir el sueño*.

¹¹⁹ Óscar Jara Holliday, “Educación Popular y Democratización del Conocimiento,” CEAAL, 2017.

¹²⁰ Daniel R. Kerr, “Allan Nevins Is Not My Grandfather: The Roots of Radical Oral History Practice in the United States,” *The Oral History Review* 43, no. 2 (2016): 367-391.

Mexican Jesuit Arnaldo Zenteno, other priests, and many nuns conducted interviews during the initial research phases of pastoral projects in colonias populares where they lived and worked. On the eastern peripheries of Guadalajara in 1971, Zenteno began his research in Santa Cecilia by walking around the entire colonia. The Jesuit priest assembled and facilitated numerous discussion groups and then documented perspectives, thoughts, and a broad sampling of discourses of the popular classes. Freirian approaches, particularly “dialogical interviews,” influenced Zenteno and the methods used by Santa Cecilia’s pastoral team in the 1970s.¹²¹

In Santa Cecilia during the 1970s and 1980s, Sagrado Corazón nuns created the conditions for residents—base community members—to reconstruct the colonia’s history themselves. Nuns and CEB promotores facilitated discussions and exercises for remembering and recuperating a history of the colonia and their movement. They brought together seven CEB groups, then recorded and edited guided discussions about the colonia’s history. Each group registered its narrative based on the “themes” provided. The nuns compiled and edited the diverse narratives and produced a synthesis with excerpts from specific group contributions tacked on the end. They recognized beforehand the probability of faulty chronology, repetitiveness, and the use of non-technical terms in the narrative. In 1986, Santa Cecilia’s CEBs published the collective article with testimonios in the Mexican journal *Christus*.¹²² These documents illustrate skillful practices of producing history collectively, like the workshops with residents and

¹²¹ Zenteno, *Encuentro con el pueblo*, 31-32.

¹²² AHCEO, CEBs de una colonia suburbana, “Historia de nuestra comunidad 1970-1985,” *Christus* (March 1986).

IMDEC in El Colli.¹²³ Both movements engaged in what they understood as another essential responsibility in reconstructing the decades long history of the colonia and the project. Creating sources, building archives—however rudimentary—shaped what researchers and the public can know about that time and place.

“Marxist science” and “Christian ethics” were the mainstays of popular education’s historical development from the mid-1960s to mid-1990s.¹²⁴ IMDEC was anchored in popular education philosophy and liberationist Christian ethics and closely aligned with local Jesuits. In 1970, they began collaborating on the popular promotion efforts in colonia Santa Cecilia.¹²⁵ The non-profit community organization played an invaluable supportive role during three decades of the urban popular movement in Guadalajara. It continues providing resources, training, and an amplified communications platform for grassroots movements and popular educators in the region.¹²⁶

¹²³ ITESO-FCN, Documentos, D-1111, “Proyecto de servicio social para la recuperación de la práctica: escenario: Comunidad El Colli (cooperativa de vivienda),” IMDEC.

¹²⁴ Núñez Hurtado, *Permiso para pensar*, 4-7.

¹²⁵ De la Peña and De la Torre, “Religión y política en los barrios populares,” 583.

¹²⁶ For more on IMDEC’s contemporary activities, see <http://www.imdec.net/>.

CONCLUSION

In the twenty-first century, colonias populares in Guadalajara continue coping with violence stemming from territory-based gang and cartel satellite activity. The notion that they are particularly violent is part reality and part careful construction by the mainstream media representing middle-class and elite perspectives. Colonias surveyed here continue being designated “no-man’s land” (Lomas de Polanco), “dangerous” (Santa Cecilia), “conflictive” (Santa Margarita) and nearly universally by residents of the westside as “*fea*” (ugly).¹ Such representations dominated discourse in the public sphere locally across the period covered in this study. But residents of the city’s peripheries regularly interrupted with counternarratives about “another reality” characterized by “fraud, injustice, and inequality.”²

Independent popular struggle (*lucha popular*) and the daily struggle (*lucha*) for survival are interwoven threads running throughout this history for Mexico’s poor majorities. Martha Arias remembers the diverse struggles of period as forming part of same underlying struggle, the processual creation of “changes in the conditions of life.”³ Lucha Chin-Chentavoz, *El Alipuz*’s archetypal woman resident of the urban peripheries,

¹ On Lomas de Polanco, see *El Informador*, “Aquejan estafadores a la colonia Lomas de Polanco,” 18 de agosto de 2008, <https://www.informador.mx/Jalisco/Aquejan-estafadores-a-la-colonia-Lomas-de-Polanco-20080818-0206.html>; on Santa Cecilia, see Ezequiel Cruz, “Santa Chila’: robos y pandillerismo,” *El Diario NTR*, 10 de agosto de 2019, https://ntrguadalajara.com/post.php?id_notas=132035; and on Santa Margarita, see *El Informador*, “Colonias aisladas sufren vacío de autoridad,” January 24, 2011, <http://www.informador.com.mx/jalisco/2011/265887/1/colonias-aisladas-sufren-vacio-de-autoridad.htm>, which cites Zapopan government officials describing the colonia as one of the most “conflictive” in the municipio.

² Orozco, “Señor Turista.”

³ Author interview with Martha Arias, February 1, 2019, Tlaquepaque, Mexico.

and Madre Lucha, the nun from El Perdón, told and lived counternarratives. Madre Lucha worked toward the destruction of hierarchies and inverted hegemonic narratives about the popular classes. Under the archbishop's directive to ask men in the Church hierarchy's for permission to be outside their Santa Rosa residence after seven p.m., Madre Lucha responded, "We are not little girls... What are we going to ask permission for?" On the classist stereotype that poor people and colonias were dangerous, she asserted, "Better think of it in reverse. The poor have to defend themselves from us."⁴ In *El Alipuz*, Lucha reflects on and analyzes relations and power. Pascual, her infant son, fell ill because the patrón exploited them. She reasoned that the patron and his family had full healthcare, but the patrón "enriched himself at our cost." The patrón owed them, and Lucha and her family had the right to be healthy.⁵

In Guadalajara, the urban popular movement emerged as grassroots opposition in the public sphere during the post-1968 period. There the movement was rooted in liberationist Christianity, popular education, and residents' uses of urban space. Crowds at protests and marches in this oppositional politics were comprised mostly of poor women. Independent Left-popular organizing in Guadalajara hinged on recognizing popular religion and popular culture, and building movements anchored in the experiences of people in the specific colonia. As priests' surveys and reports from the peripheries in the 1970s demonstrate, each colonia had its unique makeup and tendencies. For one, more than half of the heterogenous working-class was not from Guadalajara

⁴ Author interview with Madre Lucha, April 24, 2019, Tlajomulco de Zúñiga, Mexico.

⁵ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, 1970-, Revistas, *El Alipuz* 14, 30 de marzo de 1974, p. 4.

originally. The social movements that arose elaborated a utopian imaginary and political project that pushed toward ideals of equal rights to the city, democratic participation, just distribution of resources, and community (colonia) autonomy.

I focused on organized groups of working class and poor people in Guadalajara who built on counterhegemonic political cultures in conflict with clientelist, neoliberal, and neofascist versions of the political. Their principal contribution to the political history of this period in Mexican history was the expansion of democratic spaces in several aspects of public life in the city. In short, it is a story of democratization outside electoral politics. CEBs and independent popular movement groups provided alternative information to publics on the peripheries through communication tools and strategies like teatro popular and street newspapers.

In processes of class formation, participants in CEBs and the MUP developed a relational analysis that argued the “luxury of the cities” was “paid by the poor.”⁶ A loose class consciousness came into view at stages of peak unity in the 1970s and 1980s. It was based in the colonia and peripheries, with socio-spatial segregation conditioning where different groups lived. As Cecilia González from Santa Cecilia put it, “There wasn’t any rich people here.”⁷ A variant of Orientalism permeated middle-class and elite views of and approaches to the peripheries and residents of colonias populares. Indeed, the “West” side saw in the “*Calzada para allá*” (Calzada Independencia and beyond) its inferior social and cultural other. Given the categories imposed from above, liberationist priests, nuns, and CEB leaders offered “good news” of a “great inversion” after shifting the focus

⁶ Orozco, “Señor Turista.”

⁷ Quote from interview with Cecilia González, September 2018, Guadalajara.

of preaching and teaching post-Vatican II to the historical Jesus. For many men in colonias populares, Jesús was the poor *albañil* who identified and socialized with the lower classes and society's rejects, and who was abused and executed by elites and the state.⁸

Movement success rested on its immersion in and dialogue with popular culture and popular religiosity. Both liberation theology and popular education as systems of thought privileged the experience of *el pueblo* (i.e. the poor or popular classes) as essential epistemological input— learning and knowing from experience. Carlos Núñez pointed to class distinctions between many popular educators and residents of the urban peripheries.⁹ Efrén Orozco sang about the responsibilities of the middle-class in relation to the struggles of the lower classes, an ethical congruency beyond merely singing and listening to protest songs.¹⁰ Novelist José Agustín identified the generational tendency of many middle-class Mexicans in the counterculture to become conscious of inequities but seem satisfied with listening to *corridos* while never listening to the poor themselves.¹¹ By contrast, liberationist clergy and Freirian popular educators tuned in to popular culture

⁸ The figure of the *albañil* has recently been thrust into public discourse in Mexico with the murder of thirty-year-old *albañil* Giovanni Lopez by authorities in the state of Jalisco. In the middle of a pandemic and global uprisings responding to state violence and police brutality in early June 2020, youth-led movements launched a series of protests in Guadalajara over the police killing of Lopez. The government of Enrique Alfaro met protestors with startling repression. The brutality and disappearances reminded some of the “*halconazo*” of June 10, 1971 in Mexico City. For more, see the reporting of *ZonaDocs* journalists at <https://www.zonadocs.mx/>; and Rubén Martín, “Testimonios del Halconazo tapatio,” *El Informador*, 13 de junio de 2020, <https://www.informador.mx/ideas/Testimonios-del-Halconazo-tapatio--20200613-0018.html>.

⁹ Núñez, *Mas sabe el pueblo*, 3-4.

¹⁰ Orozco, “Los profesionistas.”

¹¹ José Agustín, *Tragicomedia mexicana 2: La vida en México de 1970 a 1982* (Mexico City: Planeta, 1992).

on the urban peripheries. Among the lessons they learned, as Sagrado Corazon nuns in Santa Cecilia observed in the 1970s, was to structure activities on the scaffolding of people's abiding religiosity and sense of *festejo* (celebration).¹² Núñez and IMDEC also fundamentally grasped the importance of culture to leftist movements and socialist projects in Latin America. Their heterodox Marxism increasingly engaged Gramsci and theorists who accounted for culture and religion.

Carlos Núñez, Graciela Bustillos, Efrén Orozco and other popular educators contributed to the creation of a political culture imbued with "*senti-pensamiento*."¹³ Base communities and Ignatian spirituality engendered cultures of *senti-pensamiento* as well, perhaps especially in Santa Cecilia, Santa Margarita, and Lomas de Polanco where Jesuits played important roles. Those intentionally *senti-pensamiento* programs meshed with liberationist nuns' organizing from relationships of *cariño* with residents of the peripheries. In the development of their practice in CEBs and the urban popular movement in Guadalajara in the 1970s and 1980s, they mixed political cultures of "critical citizenship" and "care-tizenship."¹⁴

Migrants from rural zones and residents of previous peripheries got continually and increasingly squeezed upon moving to *colonias populares* on the city's outer edges. Guadalajara's spatial segregation on the basis of socioeconomics situated them far from

¹² AHRSCJ-MX, Período Graciela Volpe, Guadalajara, Santa Cecilia, Sta. Cecilia Evaluación, Comunidad de Santa Cecilia, "Evaluación del Proyecto Sta. Cecilia," 5 de septiembre de 1979, 10-11: "Acciones Masivas."

¹³ Palacios, *The Catholic Social Imagination*. Núñez, *La revolución ética*. *Senti-pensamiento* could be translated "feel-thinking," or "feeling-thought."

¹⁴ Lazar, "Schooling and Critical Citizenship"; and Maribel Casas-Cortes, "Care-tizenship: Precarity, Social Movements, and the Deleting/Re-writing of Citizenship," *Citizenship Studies* 23, no. 1 (January 2019): 19-42.

the material benefits of the system. Given the spatial organization in designs from above that intended to exclude, organized residents centered the periphery politically at certain interludes. Collective action campaigns generated through parish-based organizing soon began to be fueled by a pride of place forged in shared experiences of struggle, defeat, and David vs. Goliath victories to get water and electricity, and construct homes together. The CEB-based movement surged in response to necessity. It held together through protracted struggles because of a belief in and deepening commitment to their “rights to rights” and rights to the city. Until the late 1980s, participants articulated those rights claims as rights to basic dignity, accorded to them because of their status as children of god and human beings.

In recent studies of liberation theologians and social movements in Latin America, Jeffrey Gould finds Jesuit priest Ignacio Ellacuría in late 1970s El Salvador to be “one of the rare utopian thinkers who applied his ideas to quotidian social, political, and economic struggles.”¹⁵ A generation of these utopian thinkers crisscrossed the Americas. They saw in Christian base communities what Gould calls “minor utopias.” Joaquín Chávez’s history of prophets and prophetesses from the same period in El Salvador traces the formation of what became a revolutionary insurgency there.¹⁶ In the case of Guadalajara, Mexico, the broad-based activity of liberationist Catholicism and popular education infused with revolutionary pedagogy did not become revolutionary in its program and orientation toward the state. But citizenship practices and social

¹⁵ Jeffrey L. Gould, “Ignacio Ellacuría and the Salvadorean Revolution,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 47, no. 2 (May 2015): 285-315. Gould, 286.

¹⁶ Joaquín Mauricio Chávez, *Poets and Prophets of the Resistance: Intellectuals and the Origins of El Salvador’s Civil War* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017).

movements rose out of that revolutionary pedagogy milieu in Guadalajara.¹⁷ According to Arnaldo Zenteno in the early 1980s, CEBs functioned as a “trampoline” for groups and individuals.¹⁸

At the apex of the movement in Guadalajara, popular religion connected seamlessly to popular movements. Alternative politics and alternative information paralleled alternative visions of liturgical and sacramental life. The colonia’s streets and empty lots, and laypeople’s homes, became settings for the Church’s liturgy and sacraments. The new aesthetics included bishops wearing sandals and sitting on the ground with poor people, as liberationist Arturo Lona did memorably during the “beautiful” 1981 national CEBs convention in Tehuantepec, Oaxaca.¹⁹ In liturgical and sacramental life, many Catholics now experienced inclusivity, shared participation and voice, bible reading, usage of Spanish language, and connectedness to the concrete daily life of poor people.

Elements of the political culture of CEBs in Guadalajara in this period included independent organizing, colonia-based autonomy, enhanced capacity for individual and collective agency, solidarity and reciprocity forged through shared experiences, and relationships of *cariño*. Nuns became the mainstays and glue of both popular education

¹⁷ Noemí Gómez explores many facets of the Freirian political-educational approach in these historical contexts in Guadalajara. See Gómez, *Habitar el lugar imaginado*; and Gómez, ed., *Agentes y lazos sociales*.

¹⁸ Archivo Histórico Comunidades Eclesiales de Base, México (AHCEB-MX), Asambleas de Animadores Regionales, Carpeta 1, 1972-1981, 22-24-V-81 Cuernavaca, Experiencias, “Las CEB’s y el movimiento urbano popular, Guadalajara,” 24 de mayo de 1981, p. 6.

¹⁹ AHCEB-MX, Encuentros Nacionales, 1980-1983, Tehuantepec ’81, Memoria Encuentro Nacional Tehuantepec Oax., 6-10 octubre 1981, “Entrevista a Mons. A. Lona,” *Pueblo*, Año IV, segunda quincena de octubre, p. 8.

and liberationist projects in communities over time. The legacy of Santa Cecilia's CEB-based, women-led popular struggle is commitment to popular education, in the institutional example of Oblatos Education Center (CEO) and its intergenerational, spiritual, educational, and creative programs.

If we survey today's cityscape in Guadalajara, colonias populares are places of relative continuity while the city center and former working-class spaces gentrify and much of the materiality and memory on urban landscapes is wiped clean. Residents of the peripheries made the colonia theirs and claimed schools and churches for the community. They converted neighborhood streets into sacramental spaces. In El Perdón, the Eucharist bound participants in commitment to collective reflection, action, and solidarity. Sacramental moments in the streets in May 1972 led to the decision to launch an organizing campaign for sewer and drainage. In a *misa de barrio*, "by the light of the Word of God, they considered it unworthy of children of God to have sewage running through the streets, where kids played."²⁰

In seeking to address poverty and inequality since the 1960s, priests, nuns, organizers, and non-profit organizations shifted from community development and theologies of development to popular promotion, popular education, and providing capacity-building resources for popular movements. In Santa Cecilia and other colonias populares surveyed here, they aimed to tap into the capacity of people to intervene collectively and change their common material conditions. "If we're interested in getting what we don't have and what they are taking from us," *El Alipuz* agitated in June 1975,

²⁰ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, El Señor del Perdón, 1960-2000, Exp. 20, Caja 1, "Informe de la actividad pastoral de la parroquia del Señor del Perdón, Agosto de 1970 – Agosto de 1973," pp. 11-12.

then it depends on our unity and work.”²¹ As Santa Cecilia resident Lupe Gómez framed the task in 1977, “It’s not something where you just say, ‘Well, whenever they want to put in the water. Whenever God wants it to happen.’ No, it’s a right that we have to demand.”²²

A historiographical focus on the national level and the Mexico City-based movement leads to overlooking the MUP in Guadalajara. Groups from Jalisco’s capital city did not participate robustly in CONAMUP like their counterparts from other cities and regions. This points to the centrality of regional dynamics in Guadalajara, principally the Centro-Occidente region’s independence from the rest of the country. The CEB-based urban popular movement is connected with earlier luchas reivindicativas and organizing traditions in Mexico, especially popular urbanization traditions extending back to the late nineteenth century and tenants’ and renters’ movements from the 1920s.²³ In Guadalajara the movement’s concrete achievements included auto-construction of homes, popular urbanization of colonias, providing education (primary and secondary, literacy, research and analytical skills), and establishing lasting cooperatives and non-profit organizations. Residents of the urban peripheries, primarily via CEBs, democratized urban spaces, institutions, and cultures of collective action and decision-making in their colonias. Working-class and poor people in CEBs, especially women, took hold of the sacred, the

²¹ AHAG, Gobierno, Parroquias Urbanas, Santa Cecilia, 1970-, Revistas, *El Alipuz*, 23, enero de 1975, p. 3.

²² Interview excerpt on Orozco, “Los fraccionadores.”

²³ On popular urbanization efforts in Morelia decades earlier, see Christina M. Jiménez, “Popular Organizing for Public Services: Residents Modernize Morelia, Mexico, 1880-1920,” *Journal of Urban History* 30, no. 4 (May 2004): 495-518. On tenants and renters movements, see Jorge Durand, “Huelga nacional de inquilinos: Los antecedentes del movimiento urbano popular en México,” *Estudios Sociológicos* 7, no. 19 (1989): 61-78; and Andrew Grant Wood, *Revolution in the Street: Women, Workers, and Urban Protest in Veracruz, 1870-1927* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2001).

political, and the public. They prioritized the collective in an era of growing individualism, solidarity in a period when the social fabric was being ripped apart.

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Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Guadalajara (AHAG)

Folletería

Gobierno

Parroquias

Pastoral Social

CEBs

Archivo Histórico Religiosas del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús, Provincia México (AHRSCJ-MX)

Archivo Municipal de Guadalajara (AMG)

Obras Publicas

Fototeca

Archivo Municipal de Zapopan (AMZ)

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