

Date: September 23, 2015

To: Committee on Educational Policy

From: Andrea Steiner

Cc: Mary Beth Pudup

Re: Final Report on Disciplinary Communication Grant to Community Studies:  
Communicating across the Curriculum

Thank you for the opportunity to report on the implementation and outcomes of the grant awarded to Community Studies last year. We proposed to review, revamp, and in effect pilot a new approach to meeting Community Studies' disciplinary communication teaching requirement in light of specific changes to the program; most importantly, the decisions to (a) teach CMMU 194: Analysis of Field Materials as one full-cohort class and (b) require all students to complete their capstone – a senior essay – in the context of that course. Previously, CMMU 194 relied upon numerous small (<20 student) sections, each taught by a different faculty member, and while some students completed their capstone requirement with a senior essay due at the end of the quarter, many others used the course as a working space to develop a senior thesis, culminating in a detailed prospectus, reading list, and one chapter of work that would be completed at the end of the following quarter. We no longer have the luxury of this intensive model, yet wanted to find adaptations that would preserve the quality of our education and, ideally, turn necessity to our students' advantage.

Community Studies majors fulfill their DC requirement via two courses that wrap around the six-month full-time field study experience: CMMU 102: Preparation for Field Study and CMMU 194: Analysis of Field Materials. With the consolidation of separate 194 sections into a single-cohort class, we saw the opportunity to strengthen the connections between these two core curriculum courses.

Procedurally, we proposed two main activities:

1. Review and adjust reading and writing assignments for CMMU 102 and CMMU 194.
2. Consult alumni and community partners before implementing a new assignment focused on oral presentation and constructive dialogue with peers and stakeholders.

Substantively, we anticipated three curricular changes:

1. Change some of the 194 assignments to strengthen methodological and thematic connections with 102.
2. Require all students to complete a senior essay, and to do so by the end of (say) week 7.
3. Introduce a new capstone requirement: to participate in an issues forum moderated by alumni and community NGO partners, and to write a brief evaluative summary reconciling the arguments presented.

The consultation experience proved illuminating! As explained below, it led us to reject the idea of an “issues forum” assignment and instead introduce a “poster session” assignment, and to do it at the start of the quarter instead of the end.

We now explain.

### **Syllabus Review (102 & 194)**

As described in the grant proposal, students complete a variety of written assignments in CMMU 102: Preparation for Field Study (see Table 1). Some are intended to deepen students’ critical interpretation of their organizations (e.g., the Representation assignment); others to engage them in developing contextual understandings (Community Analysis, Legislative Frameworks); still others to help them develop skills such as preparing press releases or materials for grant proposals, conduct small data analysis projects, create brochures or flyers, devise curricula, etc. (Something Useful); and finally, there are assignments explicitly designed to identify research questions and develop the scholarly foundations for exploring those questions in a probing way (Research Questions, Literature Review).

As noted, for the purposes of this grant we were particularly interested in the articulations between this preparatory course and the return from field study course. We therefore reviewed the past three years’ senior capstone work. This review indicated that while some of the students became centrally engaged with the specific legislative frameworks that inform their organization’s work -- for example, those in single-issue advocacy organizations tend to be well-informed about current proposed or contested legislation, mostly at the state level -- others’ work was more in the nature of direct service, and afforded them greater contact with “target populations” than with target policies. Understanding the policy context in which they were operating, consciously or less consciously, remained important, but was not always central to their field study analysis. Instead, it became background. On the other hand, every student could find relevance in the news; often this meant that they were engaging with legislative frameworks as before, but not necessarily. As indicated in Table 1, we therefore made one change to the written assignments for 102: in place of Legislative Frameworks, we introduced a Field Study in the News

analysis, and contextualization, these assignments are equivalent.

As implied by the grant proposal, the changes to CMMU 194: Analysis of Field Materials were more extensive (again, see Table 1).

Table 1. Written assignments for CMMU 102 & 194, before and after review<sup>1</sup>

CMMU 102		CMMU 194	
Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Legislative frameworks	Field study in the news	Data inventory	Data inventory
Community analysis	Community analysis	Coding	Revised community analysis
Something useful	Something useful	Themes	Memos, findings, and claims
Field notes (3-4x)	Field notes (3-4x)	Integrative memo	Revised research question (n=1) and summary proposal
Research questions	Research questions	Capstone proposal	Poster session: mock-up, oral presentation practice, main event
Representation analysis	Representation analysis	Theoretical reflections	Revised literature review
Literature review	Literature review	Thick description	Senior essay draft or narrative outline
		Senior essay or Prospectus/narrative outline, working (partially annotated) bibliography, & one thesis chapter or Student-Directed Seminar syllabus & detailed class plan including fully developed sessions making direct use of field study material	Senior essay

<sup>1</sup> Shaded cells mark courses from Preparation for Field Study (CMMU 102) that are continued or revised during Analysis of Field Materials (CMMU 194).

Syllabus review for 194 produced these findings:

- A majority of assignments are tailored to preparing a senior thesis, with all the close supervision and intensive feedback that implies. Given that we're moving to a model where all students complete their senior capstone in the context of 194, and only a very few go on to write a senior thesis in spring quarter, those assignments are no longer appropriate.
- It remains essential for students to work with their field notes, both analytically (in terms of identifying key findings –not always initially obvious to those who have been immersed in their experience) and persuasively (in terms of knowing how to be appropriate in their selection of field study materials to focus on or from which to quote directly).
- The new emphasis on completion of the senior essay by the end of winter quarter argues for streamlined assignments that encourage students to refine their research questions, clarify findings and analytic claims, use academically appropriate literature as well as direct evidence to support and explain those claims, and demonstrate their ability to articulate such analysis both orally and in written form.
- In terms of reading for 194, Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw's *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* continued to seem like a good choice, especially in terms of articulation with 102, but would merit further monitoring. Historically, students have read the first half in 102 and the remainder in 194, to good effect. However, without an expectation of universal ethnographic writing, it might be that only some of the chapters on analytic ethnographic writing would remain relevant. In contrast, we judged that Howard Becker's *Writing for Social Scientists* remains a highly sensible, accessible choice that encourages clear and lively writing.

The third source has always been a course reader. Many faculty chose not to use one, preferring that at this point students focus on their own capstones and give all their reading time to that project. We decided to try that – to have each student develop their own personal course reader and work through the sources over the quarter in response to specific assignments. This too would be monitored for effectiveness.

#### *Changes to 194 assignments*

As summarized in Table 1, after syllabus review and the consultation process (see below) we decided to:

- Retain the data inventory assignment
- Revamp the coding, themes, and memo assignments into a single assignment called “memos, findings, and claims.”
- Replace the integrative memo assignment with a single revised research question and a summary capstone proposal
- Replace the capstone proposal assignment with the poster session project (see Appendix 1 for the new prompt)
- Add a revision of the 102 community analysis – this time with explicit discussion of the relation between the conceptualization of community and its role in analyzing field materials
- Reconfigure the theoretical reflections essay as a revised literature review, again for improved continuity with 102; and
- Make the final assignment uniform for all students: a completed senior essay of approximately 25 pages plus source list, that effectively represents the culmination and synthesis of Community Studies course and field materials.

The changes were intended to keep students working intensively on forging a powerful, personally meaningful relationship to theoretical and experiential materials in a cohesive manner and, especially, to be able to articulate this relationship to others. We planned to monitor these amendments with specific reference to quality of student performance and workload implications (really, feasibility) for the instructor.

## **Consultation**

In our grant proposal we proposed to enhance the written communication requirements of 194 by devising a new assignment whereby students would engage in a series of policy forums – “issues forums” -- designed to place the analysis of their own work in direct conversation with the analyses of others. We were motivated by the fact that persuasive oral communication is essential in advocacy and other social justice work, along with attentive listening and active engagement with various stakeholder perspectives.

During summer and especially fall quarter 2014, Andrea Steiner held discussions with six Community Studies alumni and three representatives of the sorts of community-based organizations that sponsor social justice field studies (see Table 2; half the alumni were also professionally affiliated with justice-focused non-profits). During these meetings, we explored the options for adding a stronger oral communications component to the 194 curriculum, specifically one that would engage students in articulating their ideas to audiences outside of their immediate peers in the classroom. We were interested in hearing from those who because of their professional position, the

benefits of hindsight as alumni, or both, could advise us on what kind of training community-based advocates would find most helpful for the long run, as well as what those who had been students would have found most beneficial in completing themselves as Community Studies majors.

Almost uniformly, our respondents were unenthusiastic about the “issues forums.” They were polite about the format, but rather than seeing them as an opportunity for reasoned debate, they worried about the time that would be pulled away from students’ more thorough analysis of their individual field studies, particularly given that the two-quarter senior thesis had become an option, not a requirement. For the new assignment to be done well, they reasoned, the forums would require weeks of preparation; in the absence of such preparation, the forums would prove an empty exercise. Our consultants ranged from health care providers to community activists, from social workers to applied scholars, from graduate students to non-profit directors. They were thoughtful and we were persuaded.

Yet they also enthusiastically supported the idea of developing students’ skills in speaking clearly, credibly, and persuasively about social justice. They encouraged us to bring activists of all sorts into conversation with each other, and to do so in a supervised, “structured enough” way to bring out the students’ best work. Finally, they thought that the earlier in the quarter we could begin to work on these skills pedagogically, the better.

Table 2. Consultations about Oral Communication Component of CMMU 194

Name	Role	CMMU Alumna/us?
Alison Barahona	Acting Director, Justice Now (Oakland)	Yes
Marielle Basseri	Caregiver (Santa Cruz)	Yes
Pau Crego	Case Manager, El/La (San Francisco)	No
Stephanie Furtado	Case Management Coordinator, Family Health Centers (San Diego)	Yes
Clay Kempf	Director, Seniors Council (Santa Cruz)	No
Láura Lopez	Director, Street Level Health Project (Oakland)	No
Angel Martínez	Community Health Educator, The Wall Las Memorias Project (Los Angeles)	Yes
Jenny Scafidi	Recent graduate, UCSF School of Nursing (MEPN & Certified Nurse Midwife)	Yes
Sarah Jane Smith	Current graduate student at UCLA in Latino Studies and Public Health	Yes

In response to the consultations, we retained our commitment to teaching oral communication for social justice/social change. However, we completely changed our strategy.

### *Poster Session*

Instead of a series of within-classroom debate-style forums at the end of the quarter, we introduced a single *public* forum: the first Community Studies Poster Session, held January 29, 2015 (week 4 of the quarter). The poster session was designed to achieve three key goals:

- First, to motivate the students to re-focus back to campus-based academics after being “in the field” by clarifying the themes and thesis of their senior capstones;
- Second (and more relevantly to this grant), to provide the experience of articulating that thesis by preparing a visually clear presentation and engaging in repeated oral summary and extemporaneous dialogue with a diverse audience; and
- Finally, to allow students to receive critical feedback – again from a diverse set of sources – at an early enough stage in their capstone preparation to be able to take advantage of constructive suggestions.

In the weeks beforehand, the students learned about the content and design of effective academic posters. They did mock-ups and practiced presenting to one another. They grappled with the appropriate theoretical frameworks for analyzing their field materials, because (as usual) about half the students had radically reframed their research questions once on field study. To support the students in identifying the themes and thesis statements, the instructor consulted extensively with each student.

Working with a low budget and packets of markers and stencils, they prepared their poster boards and mounted them in the hallways of Oakes’ second floor. On the evening itself, approximately 200 people attended, including: EVC Galloway, VPDUE Hughey, VPAA Lee, Diversity Programs Coordinator Smith, Oakes Provost and Community Studies faculty affiliate Langhout, other Community Studies affiliates including Professors Bertram, Bullock, Chen, Guthman, and Reinerman, representatives of campus and community organizations (CASFS’s Tim Galarneau, for example; field study organization directors and staff), Community Studies alumni from the first cohort (Chris Johnson-Lyon) to the most recent (numerous), the entire student cohort who would be starting their field studies the following summer and were in the process of identifying their placements, Community Studies faculty López and Marlovits, Oakes administrative staff, and many of the students’ friends and families, and *their* friends and families. It was a lively, stimulating session, after which the students began writing their senior essays in earnest.

## Assessment

As noted in the original proposal, the work plan explicitly incorporated the first round of evaluation; namely, syllabus review by former students and piloting of the most innovative addition to the DC requirement. We also planned to review students' CMMU 194 course evaluations, along with the instructor (Steiner)'s reflections, which are embedded in this report.

### *Syllabus*

On the whole, the changes to the syllabus were associated with high-quality senior capstones. Grades are often strong on this final product in the major, because the capstone is explicitly meant to be the students' highest achievement in the major, representing the culmination of all their learning. This year, nobody received less than a B, and fully four people (15% of the cohort) received an A+. This *is* unusual. The latter were essays that synthesized theory and critical primary data analysis at a sophisticated, even graduate school, level. Two of them (by Peña-Govea and Miranda-Alcazar) certainly qualify as undergraduate theses and will be submitted as candidates for campus awards. (See Appendices 2 and 3.)

Students' course evaluations were also positive (see Appendix 4). Of the 50 percent of students who completed the on-line evaluations, 100 percent rated the "course overall as a learning experience" as either excellent (64 percent) or very good (36 percent), and 100 percent rated the "assignments" as either excellent (37 percent) or very good (67 percent). On another marker relevant to this grant, 100 percent of students were pleased with the "quality of feedback on submitted work" (82 percent excellent, 18 percent very good).

Those who completed the survey were somewhat more mixed in their assessment of "required readings" (mean = 4.2; also see below) and "use of class time" (mean = 3.8). They wanted more time – for the posters, to work on their essays, to write. With respect to these (mild) criticisms, we are already planning ways to improve the course for next year (see below).

First, with respect to required reading, we concluded that the piloted approach whereby each student compiled their own individual course reader from sources they believed they'd use in their capstone, and then worked through them in reference to course assignments, was not optimal. Some students read voraciously and astutely, but others did very little. Overall, we agree with the student who wrote, "It would have been nice if [the instructor] assigned more readings to better help ground the materials we discussed." With the exception of a methods and a writing text, the lack of a common theory-based reading list, even in a course that's



been described at times as “putting a large umbrella over 25 independent studies,” significantly altered the kinds of group discussions that were possible.

Therefore, in academic year 2015-16 we will return to the instructor’s previous method of creating a course reader for CMMU 194; it is also innovative but far more engaging than the parallel processing model. Specifically, each student identifies one article or book chapter that, in their view, nobody should leave Community Studies without having read. The selection of readings occurs in the first week of classes. The instructor organizes the readings thematically and compiles the reader. During weeks 4-7, discussion sections –newly implemented in 2015/16 in light of the full-cohort structure –will support the class’s critical analysis of these materials. In the past this method has worked beautifully for reviewing the lessons of the core curriculum and extending them in ways that reflect the ‘cutting edge’ of contemporary social justice work and guide students in incorporating appropriate scholarly texts into their capstone essays. We’re going to return to it.

Second, with respect to students’ desire for more time to work on their essays, the program’s new, more modest structure cannot accommodate a return to the two-quarter senior thesis model except in unusual (honors-earning) cases. However, we *can* take steps to use the assignments in the second half of field study to help students revise their research questions and focus their analyses so that they’ll be further along when they return to campus. For example, we’re currently working on revisions to the fall quarter field note assignments to make them more (and variously) targeted: one week emphasizing power, another week diversity, yet another emphasizing dialogue, or the paradoxes of capitalism, or the ways that theories introduced in the classroom are manifesting in their field studies. The final assignment may be revamped in the form of a capstone proposal updated in light of their actual six months’ experience. In other words, we can’t lengthen the quarter or provide solo-mentored two-quarter thesis writing with a faculty of 1.5 FTEs; but we can and will lengthen the period of directed critical reflection to support the winter quarter’s education in disciplinary communication.

Finally, in order to support the structured reading assignments with appropriate time for critical reflection and discussion and simultaneously give as many opportunities as possible for in-class writing, review, and feedback, we’ve concluded that a teaching assistant and weekly discussion sections are essential. In order to produce high-quality written work, intensive small group review will continue to be a top priority. As the program grows, we’ll have to budget for TAs.

### *Poster Session*

Although still a work in progress, the poster session was a big success and an excellent alternative to the issues forum idea. As noted above, it was very well-attended and afforded Community Studies students opportunities to:

- Concisely convey the explicit mission and central activities of their organizations
- Describe the (most important social, political, economic, or cultural) contexts of their organizations' work
- Articulate a relevant, compelling research question in clear, simple language
- Present key findings from the field study
- Formulate a working thesis statement
- Visually communicate the above in an effective and appealing manner
- Orally communicate the above to a diverse audience, showing respect for that diversity by finding appropriate language for effective communication with varied groups
- Field as well as pose questions in order to gain the most feedback possible during this formative phase of their senior capstone development.

The instructor and program director circulated in the background, listening in on the small-group presentations and conversations. Naturally there was variability in students' skillfulness, but all were able to meet the requirements of the assignment and many proved adept at engaging their audiences. The students were energized in the run-up to and especially during the event. Based on informal feedback both in and outside the classroom as the course progressed, they also were very happy with the poster-to-paper model.

(At first, some were resistant to being "exploited" for publicity in that the poster session in a sense announced the re-establishment of the major. Many returning students had observed, uncomfortably, that their field study constituencies (e.g., "marginalized youth" or "the homeless") were turned into poster children for fund-raising purposes, then neglected in terms of actual programming. Understandably, they were suspicious. Others worried about the performative challenge because none had participated in an event like this before.)

In the end, students reported that the assignment helped them focus, and the interactive experience highlighted both strengths and weaknesses in their capstone plans, feedback that they utilized to improve their senior essays. Some even suggested that in future years we set an earlier date for the poster session in order to expedite this process. We won't do this – the instructor's assessment is that students wouldn't have time to refine their work – but, as described above, we will structure

field study assignments to bring everyone back to campus already actively engaged in targeted critical analysis of the major's themes.

#### *Additional Observations*

We'd share just a couple of comments from the course evaluations because they indicate something of what kinds of support students feel they need:

*[The instructor] is... a great resource. She can reference you many relevant readings and places to explore. Her incorporation of grammar lessons, I feel is very needed and rarely given. With a class of this level that has a final project of a senior essay, it was very relevant and helpful too.*

*I was really grateful for the second half of the class being completely dedicated to polishing and perfecting our senior essays. I was able to receive some incredibly insightful and helpful advice ... about not only how to become a better writer, but also of how to use writing as a tool to really understand the significance of field study. I learned how to make sense of my experiences and how to use this essay to figure out the missing links on what had been confusing me before I began writing.*

#### **Budget**

The \$12,186 grant covered Lecturer Steiner's time, plus compensation to support the various consultancies (travel reimbursement and honoraria). Many of the alumni we consulted refused our offer of an honorarium, preferring to donate their time to our mission. They did accept parking permits and in some cases a lunch. We applied the remainder of the funding to the costs of the poster session (\$293.30). As Table 3 shows, we came in \$27.70 under budget.

Table 3. Budget reconciliation for DC grant

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost (\$)</b>
½ course equivalency for Lecturer Steiner in summer session 1	5,793.00
½ course equivalency for Lecturer Steiner in summer session 2	5,793.00
Consultation meetings	111.00
Parking permits	35.00
Honoraria	50.00
Meals ("entertainment – academic")	83.00
Poster session supplies	293.30
<b>Total expenditures</b>	<b>12,158.30</b>

## Appendix 1: Poster Session Prompt

The poster session prompts you to gather your ideas together and, in effect, package them for other people –future reader/s of your capstone essay, faculty affiliates and others from outside the program, social justice professionals from Santa Cruz and nearby, and community members at large—in a meaningful, communicative way. Poster sessions allow for discussion of your ideas at a stage when others’ questions or suggestions can improve your own analytic process. They’re usually a lot of fun too.

Each person will have a poster board 32” wide by 40” long. The board will be kept in the Community Studies Resource Room for you to work on, starting Monday January 26.

Your poster is meant to present an early iteration of your senior capstone. That means you’ll lead with an idea, which should be captured in your title. I hope that everyone will be working with *both* the specificities of key findings (for example, “Volunteers at the Homeless Garden Project rarely engage in talk about causes of homelessness and often don’t even interact with the trainees [people who are homeless]” or important facts (for example, the number of youth estimated to be homeless in the city of Santa Barbara) *and* the relevant theories or analytic frameworks (for example, intersectionality theory or the concept of indigeneity or gentrification or Alinsky-style community organizing or popular education... etc.) that help you explain the question or problem that you pose. Start with your “moment of strangeness,” or start by asking, “Why did my organization work so well?” Then move into the development of your ideas.

Every poster should contain:

- Title (3” high; use black markers and provided alphabet stencils to write it onto the poster board)
- Your name (let’s decide on a uniform placement for that)
- Name and geographic location (not address) of your organization
- Summary of what the organization does, whether it’s a mission statement or a summary description of your own
- Very possibly but not necessarily, what *you* did during field study
- A statement of the problem you’ve identified or the question you want to explore for your capstone
- Very likely, identification and brief definition of the most relevant academic ideas you’re drawing on
- If you can –and most if not all of you will at least make a start on this— a working statement of your key claims (that’s the beginning of a thesis statement)... AND...
- (Everyone) Your central (relevant) findings
- If there’s room and it makes sense, next steps
- Key sources (APA format, can be small font)

Consider how to make your communication visually interesting. For example:

- Photos
- Graphical representation of data

- or (possibly) your field notes
- Arrows or bubbles or maps
- NOTE: You do not *have to* use visuals, and you *shouldn't* use them without reason. Change shapes or get away from words only to the extent that it makes sense.

You'll prepare for the poster session in the following stages:

**Thursday January 22 (12-1.45, Baskin 165) – Mock-up**

Please bring to class the following items:

1. Scale drawing of your poster's layout
2. Draft versions of everything you're thinking you'll put up on your poster board

Why?

Working in small groups, you'll have peer review plus my input as you explain your plan and begin to talk through your posters. It needs to be as ready as possible, so you can get the most useful feedback.

**Monday January 26 (& the rest of the week, Oakes) – Resource room is ready for you**

Joanie will have the Community Studies resource room ready for working on your posters, and we'll keep the room open all week until the poster session itself. We'll have colored paper, glue sticks, marker pens, access to a color printer, and probably whatever else you may need to put your poster together. *Allow time!* It's likely to take longer than you think, so start early. It has to be ready before class on Thursday, the 29<sup>th</sup>, at noon.

**Tuesday January 27 (12-1.45, Baskin 165) – Focus on content and talking it through**

Poster sessions rely on great conversation. Probably all of you can talk about your organizations from here to eternity. Now I want you to practice talking about your emerging analysis. In class you'll practice presenting your ideas, and pursuing them in a conversational, possibly confrontational, context. (By "confrontational" I mean that your listeners are meant to ask probing questions, to use the informality of the poster session to explore curiosities or concerns with you in a dialogical way.) Your ability to do this is a core aspect of capstone achievement.

**Thursday January 29 (12-1.45, OAKES HALLWAYS) – Put up your final posters**

Meet in the Community Studies hallway at Oakes to post your work.

**Same day, 6-8 pm: THE POSTER SESSION**

Friends, family, and colleagues all welcome. There'll be food and drink and open rooms for further conversation.

**Appendix 2:**  
**Senior Essay by Cecilia Peña-Govea**

**An Illustration of Conversations  
between Placekeeping Strategies in the Face of  
the Cultural and Economic Violence of "Columbusing"  
in San Francisco's Mission District**

Cecilia Cassandra Peña-Govea  
Community Studies, March 2014

In Partial Satisfaction of the Community Studies Major Requirements

*On 9/13, I walked over Bernal Hill to set up for and attend the Latino Cultural Corridor Community Planning Meeting at Brava Theater. Five months earlier, young community member Alex Nieto of District 9 was shot at 59 times and killed by police as he ate a burrito atop beautiful Bernal Hill. I visited his memorial that day and continued down the north face of the hill to Folsom and 26th, where a week and a half earlier an ex-student of mine, 14 year old Rashawn Williams, was stabbed to death by a classmate. My walk to/work led me to South Van Ness and 24th where a few nights earlier, my friend Ronnie Goodman had been shot and killed by Nortenos. The house in front of which Ronnie had been killed was grilled with graffiti; memorial tags and pieces covered the whole front of the building. Letters, flowers, beer bottles, paint cans, and candles made up an altar at the site of his death. As it was still early in the morning, the crowd of young people, Ronnie's family, and other friends had thinned to a small number of older Latino men on their way to work. I explained what had happened and processed with them in Spanish why things among youth of color in the Mission have been so violent. I urged them to attend the Community Planning Meeting that I was organizing at Brava that day. As I continued down 24th Street I took account of how various murals along the corridor, especially those in the parking lot at South Van Ness and 24th. had been defaced in homage to Mire, Ronnie Goodman's graffiti personality. Over the next week, the streets of the mission were crushed with memorial pieces to Mire, Rashawn, and other youth killed in the neighborhood. They graced the walls of long-abandoned buildings and the rolldowns of storefronts, springing up alongside the wheatpastes of my friend Oree 's Justice for Alex Nieto posters. They splattered the sidewalks and some found their way onto the faces of long-standing cultural pieces along 24th and Mission corridors. These graffiti pieces performed an integral role in publicly mourning the loss of a long-term Mission resident but in several situations obscured the messages shared by the longstanding murals they covered.*

*I understand these visuals of past and present as gestures of placemaking and placekeeping. But they struck me as miscommunicated articulations and sat heavy in my stomach, prompting painful questions to bubble up and fill my head Are not we all mourning the loss of our youth? Why was this pain we felt as a community being expressed violently against each other's arts and spaces?*

*At the community planning meeting later that day I noticed that none of the family or friends of the recently deceased were present, nor was there any sort of discussion of the killings. Was their absence from our planning process reflecting the violences of living in contested areas, akin to their going over the earlier generations' murals? What creates this conversation in which all parties are saying the same thing but screaming over each other, interrupting and invisibilizing each other? ·*

## **Introduction**

These questions still weigh heavily, though my research and theoretical frameworks have helped me gain a deeper understanding of how this conversation occurs. In this paper, I will use my research and experiences on field study to present an analysis in this paper of how different parties react to the physical, cultural and economic violences of living in contested areas, specifically in San Francisco, and show how these strategies converge and interact. This paper will shed light on issues not yet discussed in academia. It is important that I produce this document to counter the information being produced about my neighborhood by outsiders who are quick to condemn certain placekeeping strategies and make others invisible. This discussion will represent the power inherent in the responses and resistances to gentrification in a strong community while also carrying the pain and difficulty of living in a contested area. I hope that through disseminating this paper, I will be able to raise awareness of and respect for a divergent tactics and strategies for maintaining place.



The narrative presented by many different gentrification theorists communicates an inevitability of the eradication of the native, long-term residents. This paper will work to refute that and to complicate others' understandings of how we exist in such a turbulent time and place.

I gathered most of my information for this paper while on my field study at Brava Theater from July 2014 through the end of December 2014. I was present for the duration of a six month long community planning process spearheaded by the Calle 24 Neighbors and Merchants Association and funded by the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development. To kick-start this process, we first gained recognition of the lower 24th Street Corridor and surrounding streets as a Latino Cultural Corridor. This planning process engaged the community in determining what steps to take from there to ensure the longevity and prosperity of our community. To obtain community input, we organized public community meetings, hosted focus groups, and conducted interviews. In addition to working at Brava, I also was involved with community organizing and placekeeping as an artist in residence at the Red Poppy Art House and with my band Taraf de Locos. My parents, Miguel Govea and Susan Pefia, endowed me with a deep understanding of the activist landscape in the city and my aunt Irene Perez, one of the original Mujeres Muralistas taught me about muralismo and its role in Latino placemaking in the Mission and larger Bay Area (Cordova 2006). My knowledge of and intimacy with the producers of graffiti and other public art comes from growing up in the performative art world in San Francisco. This wide basis of experience and information aided me in absorbing all I could while on my field study, as well as tools for understanding and acting within the contested area.

In my time working with Brava on the Latino Cultural Corridor project, I found that a deep history of placemaking- specifically tying Latino cultures to the Mission- enables cultural organizing around collective art-making and a shared identity. A lot of this was

facilitated by Brava and other arts non-profits like Galeria de la Raza, Accion Latina, Loco Bloco, and Our Mission No Eviction. Working in these organizations also allowed me to see how much tension exists between organizations based on micro beefs, mistrust and competition over funding, audience, staffing, mission statements and organization structures. I saw these tensions manifest as divergent opinions on how the Latino Cultural District (LCD) should be organized and governed, sometimes inhibiting community mobilization around a clear and shared direction to take.

In my work with less state-sanctioned initiatives, I found that people of a younger generation of Mission natives are propelled to perform placekeeping in extra-legal ways, including but not limited to graffiti, vandalism, and public performance. I also found that while artists and performer of a younger generation are pushed towards placekeeping an area that their families made home through placemaking, their cultural production is inhibited by the economic and cultural violence of displacement. This overwhelming ethos in the neighborhood, of telling young people that they don't belong and that their days here are numbered, or an emotional displacement, works with their physical displacement to contribute to the local diaspora and enact these violences on cities laying at the periphery of San Francisco.

These findings have urged me to write arguing that the Columbusing (Meschi, 2014) of San Francisco's Mission District affects the older and younger generations of its long-term and Mission-born residents in distinctive ways. These different experiences of the cultural and economic violence of gentrification lead the respective generations to articulate placemaking and placekeeping in distinct ways. Their strategies emerge in both supportive and contentious ways, as depicted through arenas of public art making that testify to the tensions of growing up, living and creating in a contested area.

This analysis demonstrates that until we can minimize the cultural and economic

reflection of the tensions in the area. The LCD proposals coming out of this process will go a long way towards ensuring that the long-term residents will be able to maintain a connection to this place, and not be displaced, as well as that many cultural assets will be protected. There also needs to be more inclusion and outreach to this second generation in the process, because while we might not be those who have homes and spaces that are being threatened, who will live and create in, and govern the district when the first generation steps down? We need to set the next generation a place at the table that decides all of these things, and keep extra-legal activity out of the state-sanctioned realm, because that detracts from the power in placekeeping strategies. There needs to be more respect and understanding accorded these strategies, so that this generation does not resign itself to displacement and being swept away to Oakland in the waves of the local diaspora.

In order to explain my thesis, I will begin with a short history of placemaking in the Mission. I will follow with a discussion of gentrification theory and explain how much of it fails to explain the situation in the Mission, and how it is not useful for my discussion, whereas the idea of Columbusing is. I will move on to define other terms that I will be using throughout my paper, and provide an analysis of literature produced on these ideas. Next I will discuss the LCD project and the planning process that was carried out during my field study. I will examine the ways public art and performance are used as placekeeping in the Mission and how they function as extra-legal.

It is my intention to present these two narratives as a lived experience, that is, in the way that they interrupt and converse with one another. I will use my paper to reflect the nonlinearity of the conversation and the vernacularization of higher level theorizing and organizing strategies. I conclude with an analysis of why things result the way they do and make a call to action for those engaging in placemaking and placekeeping in the neighborhood, as well as to those who are not.

## **A History of Latino Cultural Organizing and Placemaking in The Mission**

There are two terms that require definition in our discussion of how the Latino identity functions centrally to creating a vibrant artistic and activist culture in the Mission District. The first of these is cultural organizing, which theorists Javiera Benavente and Rebecca Lena Richardson (2011) situate at the intersection of art and activism: "Cultural organizing is about placing art and culture at the center of an organizing strategy. It is also about organizing from a particular cultural identity, community of place, or worldview"(2). Cultural organizing refers to the mass of cultural production in the Mission District with an emphasis on Latinidad and transcommunal solidarity with other Latino communities around the world. Cultural organizing is related closely in this case to the second key term, placemaking, which Schneekloth et al. discuss as the process by which a community builds itself and connects itself to a site (1995). In other words, it is the process by which a community connects to place by performing their cultural expressions as well as creating a strong local economy to serve the needs of the population.

Through cultural organizing and placemaking, residents of the Mission tied themselves to the locality, creating a strong basis on which to create and engage in activism. Anne Meredith Nyborg's piece, "Gentrified Barrio," offers a full background on how the working-class Latino identity came to represent the Mission. According to this article, the Latino presence in the Mission quadrupled between 1950-1970 when the Euro-American population white-flighted out of the city (27). This suburbanization of many Irish and Italian Mission residents, paired with the socio-political turmoil wreaked by US imperialism in Central America, established the Mission District as a node for Latinos in the city and the larger US (27).

The climate of activism and cultural movements of the 60's and 70's cultivated the community's engagement with art and activism. This era saw the emergence of community

as many mural spaces and cultural events (29). The cultural events that emerged from an environment of placemaking include Carnaval, Dia de Los Muertos, Cesar Chavez Day and Cinco de Mayo. These are constituted by collective artistic expression in public spaces like Mission and 24th Streets, Dolores, Garfield and Precita Parks, epitomizing the role of placemaking as tying a people to the land that they occupy. Placemaking is articulated through the Aztec dancers beating their rhythms into the cement of Mission Street, as well as by the paint layered onto the walls throughout the neighborhood. This sensuous cementing of the artistic Latino presence onto the landscape of the Mission created community connection to place and a feeling of home.

This cultural organizing and placemaking work of an older generation in the Mission cements the Latino presence in the neighborhood in a manner that complicates a lot of the existing theories on gentrification that are promulgated in academia. In looking into literature on the relationships between art and gentrification, I find that many theorists problematically differentiate between the native population and the in-moving artists. Let us provide space for looking at a few of these theories in order to understand why and how they do not apply to the gentrification process in the Mission.

### **Complicating "Gentrification" and Presenting "Columbusing":**

In his article "Artists, Aestheticisation and the Field of Gentrification," David Ley (2003) defines gentrification as the "( ... ) transition of inner-city neighborhoods from a status of relative poverty and limited property investment to a state of commodification and reinvestment" (1 ). He ties gentrification to the aestheticisation of space (3) and positions artists as scouts for the commodification of cultural production. Ley endows his model artist with low economic capital and high cultural capital, capturing how they exist in tension with those possessing high economic capital even though they function along the same "dominant axis of class relations," in that the artist is positioned with "middle-class origins and/or high

disposition" ( 5). Artists aid in the process of gentrification by engaging in cultural production that appeals to the commodifying and consuming abilities of the upper echelon; as Ley describes it, "The artistic lifestyle, like the creative art-work, deliberately presses the borders of conventional middle-class life, while at the same time representing its advancing, colonizing arm" (7). Ley charts gentrification as a colonialist project of the economically powerful on a space that artists have imbued with high cultural capital.

This piece is important because it sheds light on why money follows the arts, but it problematically situates cultural producers in the same social location as the economically rich consumers of art, i.e., the perpetrators of gentrification. Ley's work traces the in-movement of artists but ignores the possibility that cultural capital is high among the indigenous community. In not taking into account that the cultural producers might be native or long-term residents of the neighborhood, Ley's argument applies a dangerous rhetoric of inevitability to the relationship between art and gentrification.

Stuart Cameron and Jon Coaffee's work(2005) is in direct conversation with the work of Ley; "Art, Gentrification and Regeneration- From Artist as Pioneer to Public Arts," adds a third phase to the process of gentrification introduced by Ley: "The emphasis in the third phase, with the more explicit public-policy engagement and link to regeneration, is on the public consumption of art, through public art and artistic events, and particularly through the creation of landmark physical infrastructure for the arts, such as galleries, museums and concert halls" ( 46). The authors use various case studies of the state funding art events and spaces in order to demonstrate the regenerative and gentrifying capabilities of public consumption. It is interesting to locate their position on gentrification by interrogating their conflation of "regeneration" and "gentrification." Cameron and Coaffee apply a neocolonialist and utilitarianist lens in examining the benefits of these projects in vivifying the economy of "a declining industrial city" (46).

While Ley' s discussing of the role of cultural production in luring investment,

this process, Cameron and Coaffee effectively ignore the ways that the cooptation, dilution, and commodification of local artistic productions perform colonially on native residents. This omission is captured by their celebration of "( ... ) the potential of art and culture as regeneration catalysts focusing on, first, building the confidence of a town and, then, of developers, through careful partnership working."

Obscured by celebration are the ways that regeneration through redevelopment of a neighborhood, or their loss of artistic sovereignty, might lessen the "confidence" of the community, or create a contested space in a place already thoroughly claimed through placemaking. Cameron and Coaffee's work paints a picture of the evolution of a neighborhood as beginning with the in-moving of the artistic community; the artist, as the pioneer of . gentrification, then lures a second wave of affluent in-movers to the neighborhood. Their divorce between the indigenous community and the production of art conflicts with the reality of how gentrification has worked in the artistic and cultural history of the Mission District. Extensive placemaking through cultural organizing by the indigenous population in the Mission is invisibilized through these theories of gentrification.

For this reason, I would like to introduce a word better fitting the process of physical, economic and cultural displacement in the Mission than gentrification and what that word implies. Columbusing, a term introduced to me by coworker and activist Sarah Guerra, refers to the discovery of something that already exists, the employment of "hidden gem" rhetoric (field notes, 9.25.14). The term Columbusing relates the native population to those who hold the resources and the land, while gentrification tends to talk about different populations occupying land solely in economic terms, ignoring cultural claims to territory. Under neoliberal capitalism, the economy of the Mission District is vulnerable to the recolonizing arm of the Columbusing tech industry. As long as the San Francisco Planning Department and large developers have the area in a stronghold, role casting us as the friendly Tainos, on the cultural front we are the Ciguayos, resisting recolonization in a myriad of ways.

displacement, representing how we experience the legacy of colonialism that maintains the marginalization of less wealthy, less white people even in their own home. It echoes a line of the song we learned in elementary school- "Now it isn't like it was empty space, The Caribs met him face to face. Could anyone discover a place, When someone was already there." The housing market might be open to the penetration of the tech economy but this paper will not outline the power that in-movers, new-neighbors, techies-however you wish to classify those who are displacing long-term residents- have over us, but rather, how we are responding to and resisting the violence of that capitalism-endowed power.

I argue that the violence of gentrification is enacted on the long-term residents of the Mission as Columbusing, challenging cultural production to transition from placemaking to placekeeping. Placekeeping is a term coined by activist Jenny Lee and defined by artist and activist Roberto Bedoya's blog entry (2014) as, "not just preserving the facade of the building but also keeping the cultural memories associated with a locale alive, keeping the tree once planted in the memory of a loved one lost in a war and keeping the tenants who have raised their family in an apartment. It is a call to hold on to the stories told on the streets by the locals, and to keep the sounds ringing out in a neighborhood populated by musicians who perform at the corner bar or social hall" (Accessed 1-12-15).

Placekeeping in the face of cultural genocide takes form in many different ways. It is performed by everyone producing cultural materials that reflect the Latinidad of the Mission, it is articulated by the work of musicians, artists, activists, educators, program directors, service providers, and those whom many consider vandals. It operates within all realms and capacities of interaction between the individual and the state; it takes forms legally and extra-legally. Placekeeping is an expression of resistance to the severing of an individual's and a community's connection to a space. In this context I now turn to discuss two different sets of tactics employed to maintain place in the face of Columbusing: The Latino Cultural District and public artmaking.



## **State-Sanctioned Placekeeping Initiatives**

The first tactic I will discuss is the Latino Cultural District Community Planning Project of which Brava was the fiscal sponsor and an integral organizer. In order to situate the Latino Cultural District planning process at Brava, I will provide a brief history of the origins and work of Brava for Women in the Arts.

In 1986, Ellen Gavin and 75 women artists met at Galeria de la Raza in San Francisco's Mission District to magnify the female voice through theater productions. Ellen and her community lacked a space in which to produce their own words and decided to work on creating a space in the physical and cultural landscape for their plays. These women embarked on various creative endeavors together and thus, Brava! For Women in the Arts was founded.

In 1996, BRA VA purchased the shuttered York Theater, a former vaudeville movie house built in 1926, on the vibrant lower 24th Street Corridor in the Mission District. The building underwent renovations to create several different performance spaces in the theater. According to my sources (field notes, 2014), Ellen was controversial in the community because she was "mandona" - loud and bossy. She was also relentless in getting funding and doing both her and others' work. She had the bad habit of burning bridges with different entities both in the neighborhood and larger theater community and she gave Brava the reputation of being a white lesbian theater. At the same time, she did great work for women in the arts.

In 2007, the Board decided to replace her because she was making it difficult for them to do work with a lot of people. They hired Raelle Myrick-Hodges as the artistic director. Raelle had no management or business direction. Ellen and Raelle got in a huge blowout fight and Ellen was basically banned from the property and the organization. During Raelle's tenure, things really fell apart financially and the building went into foreclosure. They continued to produce some plays of import to the black, queer and feminist communities, but

In 2012, Stacie was hired as a consultant at Brava and then the board decided that she would be the one to save the theater, and hired her as the executive director. There were a lot of negative feelings from several community members in the Mission when Stacie took this job because a number of organizations were hoping to take over the building. Anger was directed at Stacie for maintaining the mission and focus of Brava, and for being another white woman in charge of the old York Theater in the Mission.

### **Development of and Adherence to Mission Statement**

Brava for Women in the Arts emerged under Ellen Gavin to create a space for women and other silenced artists to produce and present their work at a professional theater. Brava as it exists today, presents, produces, and cultivates the artistic expression of women, people of color, youth, LGBTQ, and other unheard voices. This is done by providing access to affordable professional production space for community organizations, local artists, and youth arts educational programs. This last year, Brava provided performance space to 78 events, the Mission Academy of Performing Arts, and meeting space for Calle 24 Merchants Association and other community groups. Thirty-eight of these events and classes are subsidized, adding up to a total of \$40,000 that Brava contributes to help these groups have their meetings, classes and productions. It also hosts a vibrant youth program, the Mission Academy of Performing Arts (MAPA) at Brava provides quality arts training to youth from the ages of 13-18 years old.

Brava's long standing technical theatre program for youth -San Francisco Running Crew – along with Brava's resident programs, Cuicacalli Escuela de Danza, and Loco Bloco Dance and Drum Ensemble, team up with SF Youth Theater to provide Mission District youth a comprehensive curriculum in the performing arts.

MAP A strives to serve youth from the community who might have limited resources for affording extra-curricular arts programs. This distance and inaccessibility for many low-

inaccessibility felt by many adult women, LGBTQ, and people of color into the performing art world. In the same way that Brava works to diminish that distance of artist to production space, MAP A works to do that with Mission youth. These classes expose them to the varying worlds of performance art and production. This is important because many kids who live and go to school in this area are impacted by the insurgence of wealthy venues but are often unable to interact with such spaces as a worker or customer due to rigid class distinctions and general discomfort. MAP A instructs its students on how to navigate artistic and professional spaces that are often dominated by an upper-class, white population. The production and distribution of art and theater is not useful to the Latino and lower-income population of this neighborhood if they aren't producing it.

Brava also demonstrates its loyalty to its mission statement through our community collaborations. This last year, we produced events and programs with Precita Eyes, Acci6n Latina, AIM West, Loco Bloco, Epiphany Productions, La Bohemia Productions, Calle 24, Yerba Buena Gardens Festival, Union Square Presents, and Round Whirled Records.

Though animosity was shown to Stacie in her early days at Brava due to her positionality as a white female, she has since engaged many different communities within the Mission and cemented her role as an advocator for the arts and Latinidad in the Mission. One example of her advocacy work is her sponsorship and involvement with the Latino Cultural Corridor.

### **First Tactic: The Latino Cultural District**

Most of the following material is derived from the 2014 LCD final report that I helped write and compile with consultants Juliana van Olphen, Ana Cortez, Oriana Reyes and Planning Committee members Anastasia Powers Cuellar, Miles Pickering, Georgiana Hernandez and Erick Arguello.

Street corridor as a Latino Cultural District (LCD). This was headed by the Calle 24 SF, an association which includes several dozen people who work, live, create, study and are activists in the areas. The LCD resolution was called for based on the rampant displacement from the Mission that the Latino community is facing due to gentrification and the cultural violence enacted by Columbusing.

The resolution passed with full support from the Board of Supervisors, considering the very recent history of the dot-com boom and the departure of 50,000 from the Bay Area because of the lack of affordable housing; approximately 10% of the Latino population left San Francisco in the early 2000s, making San Francisco one of the only U.S. cities to lose Latino/a residents (Census, 2000; Census, 2005). In her project collecting oral histories from Mission district residents about the neighborhood's gentrification, Nancy Raquel Mirabal found that many saw the loss of Latino residents, businesses, and culture not only as examples of gentrification but also as acts of cultural exclusion and erasure (Mirabal, 2009). As the technology sector began to boom again and the neighborhood began to quickly change; Calle 24 advocated for its successful designation as a Latino Cultural District (LCD) to preserve and further develop the area's rich cultural heritage. Those to gain protection and support from this designation were identified to include individuals (e.g., LCD families, including traditional, non-traditional, and extended; artists; working people; residents; immigrants; youth; and elders), organizations (neighborhood businesses, arts and culture organizations, educational institutions, and community service agencies), and San Francisco and the general public.

The LCD designation required a six month long community planning process through which we would gather community input about the Latino Cultural District's purposes, strengths, opportunities, challenges, targeted strategies, and governance, review the best practices employed by other designated cultural districts like Little Tokyo, Fruitvale, and Japantown; and draft a final report with findings and recommendations.

My work at Brava revolved around this community planning process. Throughout the six months I was there I was involved in the organizing of the ten in-depth stakeholder interviews, four focus groups, one study session with experts in the field, four community meetings, and one Council retreat. I also organized meetings for and sat on the Calle 24 Council and the LCD Planning Committee which was comprised of Erick Arguello, the president of Calle 24, Anastasia Powers Cuellar, the executive director of Brava, Georgiana Hernandez, the executive director of Accion Latina, and Miles Pickering, a relatively new merchant and owner of restaurant Pig and Pie. The planning committee met regularly throughout the planning process to utilize community input to inform each step of the planning process.

During our Planning Committee meetings we drafted the mission and vision statements of the LCD. These were fluid and changed with all of the community input we gathered. At the end of the process, they existed as follows:

Mission Statement: To preserve, enhance and advocate for Latino cultural continuity, vitality, and community in San Francisco's touchstone Latino Cultural District and the greater Mission community.

Vision statement: The Latino Cultural District will be an economically vibrant community that is inclusive of diverse income households and businesses that together compassionately embrace the unique Latino heritage and cultures of 24th Street and that celebrate Latino cultural events, foods, businesses, activities, art and music.

We propose to use the LCD designation to strengthen, preserve and enhance Latino arts & cultural institutions, enterprises and activities; encourage civic engagement and advocate for social justice; encourage economic vitality and economic justice for district families, working people, and immigrants; promote economic sustainability for neighborhood

coordination with other local arts, community, social service agencies, schools, and businesses.

The process was extensive and labor intensive. All members of the planning committee worked incessantly on this project for over seven months. Several general findings that emerged from our community meetings, interviews and focus groups were the import and strength of cultural assets and arts and community identity in the Mission. This organizing of a community around cultural assets and community identity is the main function of cultural organizing. We were able to engage a large number of community members through methods of cultural organizing, including holding ceremonies during meetings, providing culturally relevant foods, and holding a presence at rallies, demonstrations and other actions.

The community planning process was extremely fruitful in taking inventory of our cultural assets that need protection and determining how to best govern the district and leverage policy and financial support. The findings and resulting key strategies of this process are listed below:

#### LCD Key Strategies

1. Create an organizational entity- a 501(c)(3) -to manage the activities of the Latino Cultural District
2. Create and leverage Special Use District designations
3. Implement a Cultural Benefits District campaign and assessment
4. Develop a community-wide communications infrastructure and promotion of the District through traditional and social media
5. Collaborate with, connect, and support existing arts and cultures and other nonprofit service organizations in implementing the Latino Cultural District's mission, rather than replacing or competing with them

as Carnaval, Dia de los Muertos, and the Cesar E. Chavez Holiday Celebration

7. Generate sufficient resources to support creation and sustainability of the Latino Cultural District programs and activities

8. Pursue social and economic justice fervently, and conduct its work with the Si Se Puede spirit of determination, collective strength, and compassion

Community input also helped define four program areas: land use and housing; economic vitality; cultural assets and arts; and quality of life, with related activities that are further discussed in the report. Finally, the community provided extensive input on the governance structure for the LCD, including the organizational structure, committee structure, member eligibility, and board size, composition, and conditions.

This LCD designation is a form of placekeeping through cultural organizing. The taking of cultural inventory identifies events, spaces, practices, and stores that emerged through placemaking. The implementation of the LCD goals will maintain those assets, and keep the cultural producers connected to the land on which they produce.

## Limitations

As shown above, this process produced strategies and goals for the LCD that will benefit all who work, live, create, study and are active in the Mission, especially those who identify as Latino. It is important, however, that we discuss how the demographics of people who were involved in this process shaped the assets and needs of the community that were identified. Most of the people who sit on the Council are executive directors of arts and service non-profits along the corridor. There was also a strong presence of activists and activists, though none of them under the age of 40. Though present, there were few merchants on the council, which speaks both to the weak outreach done by the Council to merchants but also the political inclination (or lack there of) of that demographic. The council

youngest person by far to be present at these meetings, and no one problematized the lack of youth voice. This somewhat homogenous group identity was also represented in the attendees of the larger community meetings and the stakeholder interviews. This group is largely representative of the residents of the Mission but that does not mean that these are the only voices to be heard in the process. I don't expect that the inclusion of differently identifying people would have substantially changed the outcome of this community planning process but I do think it is important to acknowledge the homogeneity of the group and the biases it could engender.

At this point in my paper, I expect questions to arise about how the new neighbors fit into this narrative and the larger cultural landscape. Though I intentionally limit the space I provide for talking about how the new neighbors coopts, create and otherwise interact with cultural production in the area because, for too often, papers concerned with gentrification centralize the experiences of the incoming demographic, I will briefly discuss this presence. It is obvious to me as I walk down 24th Street and observe the realities of how the techie presence clashes with the long-term resident presence. It is apparent when I look at the sharp corners of the steel and glass condos that tower above the Victorian and Edwardian houses on the block. It is apparent when I look at the neat, sleek techie-patroned cafes full of mac books and lattes next to the mercados spilling fruit and vegetables onto the street. These distinct populations exist in the same area like oil and water. While I see cultural production by all generations of native and long-term Mission residents. While I see cultural production by all generations of native and long-term Mission residents as integral to maintaining their connection to the neighborhood, I also want to acknowledge that these practices are threatened not only by deculturation but also by strangling chokehold of underfunding and lack of economic vitality. I see the new demographic of neighbors as part of that displacing force but also as potential financial supporters of the arts in the neighborhood. It is my last intention to put forth acculturation



cultural memory and creative means is not living, but rather present transculturation as a possibility for creating a symbiotic relationship.

Acculturation is the melding of two cultures that meet with the implication that the demographic with more economic or social capital will incorporate that with less.

Transculturation, as coined by Cuban theorist Fernando Ortiz in 1947, is the existence of two or more cultures in a non-violent relationship (Ortiz, 1947). Before my field study at Brava, I was unable to imagine new and old neighbors existing peacefully. Well, let me clarify, I still think that as long as economic power is wielded over long-term residents through threatened or enacted cultural and physical displacement, we will continue to work and produce in resistance to such subjugation. Let me say, though, that since working at Brava I have come to see how we can use the resources available to us through these new neighbors. A phrase I heard repeatedly at Brava was "Access to excess," that is, we have to maintain creative autonomy while opening avenues to independent funding (field notes 2014). During the first community meeting at Brava, a new neighbor raised her hand to bemoan her position of having money and wanting to be involved but not knowing how or to whom to donate. Everyone else in the room kind of rolled their eyes and perked up their ears at once.

In this contested neighborhood, transculturation can be utilized by cultural arts organizations being supported financially by the incoming demographic. While this problematically puts cultural production in the hands of the funders and contributes to the nonprofit industrial complex, I see this as the most productive way that these new neighbors can contribute to the culture of the neighborhood. This is not a claim that the cultural productions of the gentrifying people are not art or that they aren't coming from a valid place, but rather a problematization of the incoming culture as alienating and financially inaccessible to long-term residents. The eleven-dollar toast at Local's Comer is a testament to that! These state-sponsored and non-profit designated spaces can benefit from the influx of new neighbor money, but there is a more recent movement of cultural production that speaks

demographic.

## **Second Tactic: Public Art and Placekeeping**

Placekeeping is also performed in the extra-legal realm, quite often through public art practices. Several of these practices flirt with the legal and state-sanctioned, but have their roots outside of the legal. A couple of sites of these performances, like Balmy Alley and the Galeria de la Raza billboard, emerged during the placemaking era. Balmy Alley is a small street off of 24th Street that hosts the largest concentration of murals in the heavily painted city of San Francisco. The earlier pieces in Balmy were painted by Patricia Rodriguez and other members of the Mujeres Muralistas. The rest of the alley was converted into murals in the early 80's (field notes, 8/19). This alley emerged as a reclamation of spaces from which immigrants, Chicanas, and other Latino and minoritized populations were excluded. The murals represented messages of Chicanisma as well as transcommunal solidarity with liberation movements in Latin America. This project converted blank walls into reflections of the concerns, interests and backgrounds of Mission residents in ultimate placemaking acts.

Today, these alleys host murals that depict similar messages but which illustrate a shift in tactics for cultural organizing, from placemaking to placekeeping.

Fig. 1: Mission Makeover by Lucia Ippolito (2012)



Mission Makeover highlights the changes in the neighborhood under Columbusing, with special attention to how policing in the neighborhood works with economic displacement to eradicate the long-term community. In-movers are represented as fixie-riding hipsters and cyborg-like figures literally plugged into their laptops. Locals are shown to be criminalized and forced into homelessness as a younger, whiter, wealthier population enjoys their new residences.

Another articulation of extra-legal placemaking which literally claimed space is the billboard outside of Galeria de la Raza. Galeria de la Raza is an art gallery and non-profit that formed in 1970 to showcase Latino art produced around community concerns and interests. Although I was unable to confirm this information online, I gathered the following information from a conversation with Galeria Executive Director Ani Rivera. According to my sources, the billboard was owned by a corporate entity that seldom used the space. Galeria artists began painting murals over the advertisements, restoring them or creating new

gifted the billboard space to Galeria, which has owned it ever since. This is a prime example of how extra-legal forms of placemaking created such a strong connection, strong enough to displace the corporate powers that controlled space in the Mission financially. It advances the claim that cultural and artistic connection to place is stronger than financial ownership.

Today, the Galeria billboard continues to host politically astute murals that speak out against police brutality and the violences of gentrification. (See murals and artists' statements below.)



*The Mission is suffering. The forced displacement that many families and residents of this neighborhood are going through has reached a critical level. These families have not only lived here for many years, but have also contributed the formation of the identity of our neighborhood. Today, this identity is being attacked by corporate developers and speculators and new residents, who arrive ready to pay ridiculous sums of money for rent and the purchase of a home. This mural was inspired by the powerlessness and frustration felt over seeing how our neighborhood, the Mission, is suffering (as a consequence). The forced displacement of these residents is a serious issue that is changing the traditions and cultural diversity that have characterized this district for over a century. The lead artist of this mural, alongside a group of artists and Mission District community members, came together to create this mural in protest of these evictions. Some have been directly affected by this forced displacement. Among the collaborators are muralist and painter Pancho Pescador, Indira Urrutia, Cesar Augusto Oyagata (Tukuy), Che/is Lopez, Ricardo Ibarra, Alejandro Meza, and Todd Brown, and Alberto Toscano, and Ariel Lopez.*



*These images call attention to the ongoing issue of police terrorism and also the culture of violence brought on by the ideals of white supremacy in our society. In recent years we have witnessed an onslaught of police killings of black and brown people; in most cases justice is rarely served. We also deal with violence within our own communities resulting from the fear and lack of understanding of the difference within us, such as race, gender, age, economic status and disability. This project encourages us to engage in conversation with each other to recognize the common ground between our struggles and about how we collectively respond to injustice on a cultural and political level.*

Oree's work contributes significantly to the placekeeping movement because, though it is being displayed on the now-legal Galeria billboard, it is also highly active in the extra-legal public art realm. His posters representing brown and black people killed by police have become widely used as an activist tool for mobilization around Black Lives Matter, Brown Lives Matter, and Our Lives Matter movements across the country (field notes 2014).

In the months following the murder of Alex Nieto, Oree's posters were wheat pasted all over the Mission and larger SF Bay Area. These posters occupied sites usually held by graffiti pieces but ran for longer than a graffiti piece typically would have. "Running" in the public art world refers to the amount of time that a piece of art is left undisturbed. Parties usually responsible for disrupting a piece's run include property owners (who are fined by the city for having graffiti on their storefronts), private property owners, the city's buff squad

throughout the city), and other graffiti artists, though such disruptions follow a strict code. The lengthy runs of the Alex Nieto memorial pieces represent observances by the community of how police brutality is acting on our members. These posters are particularly powerful articulations of placekeeping because they are accessible and understandable to a lot of community members.

Fig. 4: Oree's poster wheatpasted on storefront roll-downs



I want to acknowledge that these wheat pastes ran for longer than other public art pieces partly because they weren't read as an attack on any residents or stakeholders in the Mission, but rather as speaking out against the police state, which few people are supporting. It is a community truth that gentrification, resulting in high police presence, amplifies crime rates.

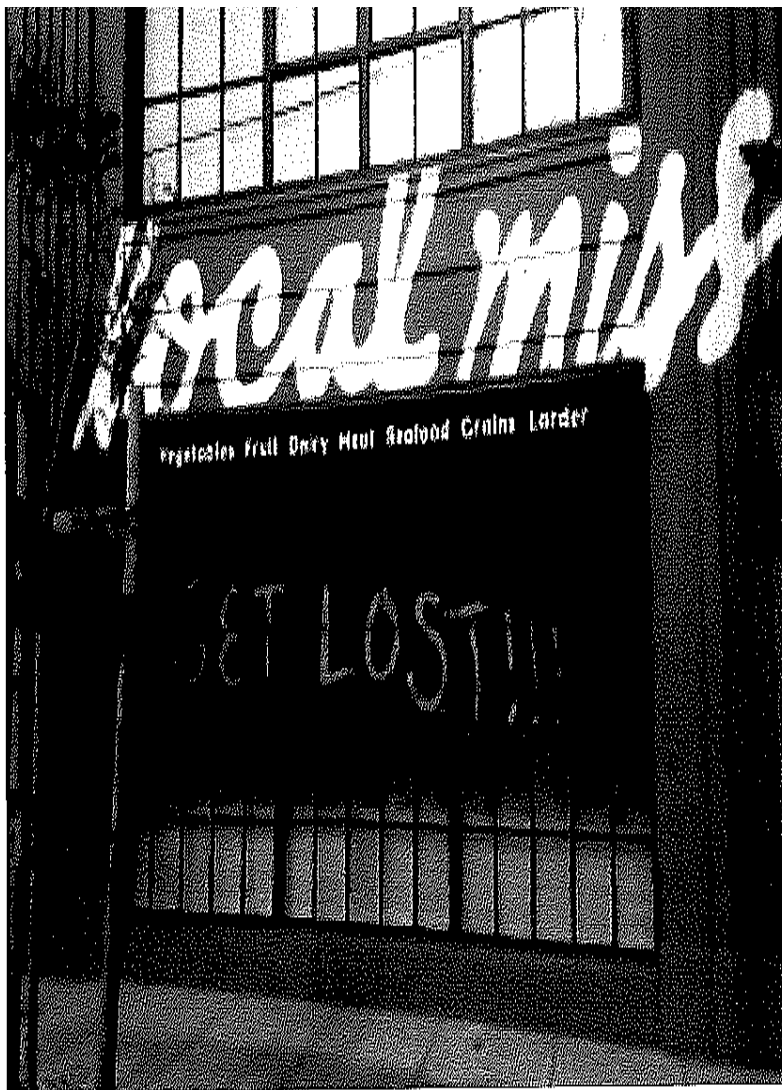
Other articulations have more direct targets. The following information was relayed to me by community member Patty Ing when I ran into her while on her way to celebrate outside of the Local's establishment which was to be closed: On Cesar Chavez Day, long-

Comer for lunch. The family was ignored by staff and eventually told that there was no room for them there, though they had already seated themselves at an empty table. The Cuadra family made public the way they were discriminated against at Local's Corner and the community responded in a variety of ways. Articles about the incident were published by Mission Local, and people gathered in outrage to protest Local's Corner and the larger issue of the birth of a new economy that alienates and discriminates against long-term residents. The storefronts of the "Local" businesses represent the new economy claiming space that was once occupied by real local and legacy businesses. Graffiti artists highlighted the violence of the Columbus economy by painting messages speaking out against it, with messages like "Keep Mission Brown," "GET LOST" and "Keep Hoods Yours." Though the Local stores had the resources to paint over and buff the spray paint, and they used them, new messages of resistance sprang up as quickly as they were invisibilized.

Figs. 5, 6, 7, and 8: Graffiti on the Local establishments









These tags were a very important contribution to the placekeeping movement because the artists used a tool very specific to the locality of the Mission. The style of the writing reflects the bus flow aesthetic which works to identify the artists as native to the Mission. The messages speak explicitly against the Columbusing economy epitomized by the Local stores. The presence of these stores communicate ownership over an area by the "new locals." It reflects the invasion of a new market which represents a threat to and displacement of the long-standing working-class Latino economy.

Much of the vandalism of the Local stores was produced by members of the crew KHY, or Keep Hoods Yours. KRY is a crew that emerged out of San Francisco's Mission District and has since become an active presence in a lot of anti-gentrification and anti-police brutality movements nation-wide. KHY members have a strong presence in organizing and disseminating information about actions as well as announcing the obituaries of victims of police brutality, through social media venues like Instagram.

Another way that that graffiti contributes to the placekeeping movement is by memorializing victims of gentrification-spurred violence. To an outsider, memorial pieces might look like other pieces of graffiti in the streets. To those who know the

victims and their artistic styles, we understand them as commemorating their lives and artistic contributions through representing them in the spaces that they once occupied. A memorial graff piece, throw-up or tag functions similarly to the Alex Nieto posters. They are produced illegally in a variety of spaces; healing takes place through the production of the piece and through viewing the piece, whose site becomes homage, an altar, to the fallen artists.

Fig. 9 and 10: Memorial piece to Mire, or Ronnie Goodmann who was killed in 2014





Fig. 11: Memorial pieces to Mire and Jade, both of whom were killed in 2014

[didn't transfer]

### **Violent Interactions of Placemaking and Placekeeping**

It is important to understand that the violences of gentrification as operationalized as Columbusing hurt the population in a myriad of ways. The memorial pieces discussed above are not just memorializing the lives of homicide victims but are representations of the pains of a population severely threatened by displacement. This art is shaped by a sturdy foundation of placemaking but really takes form as placekeeping expressions in a landscape that invisibilizes or criminalizes the presence of the artists. The layers of violence are painted over each other as wall spaces become sites of contestation.

Nancy Raquel Mirabal's (2009) "Geographies of Displacement" captures how gentrification-based displacement and the claims to space are acted out on the walls in the Mission. In 1998, Jesus "Chuy" Campusano's mural 'Lilli Ann' was literally whitewashed

by the new owners of the building, the Robert J. Cort Family Trust, in order to open space for the dot.com company's logo (24). Add to this wall several more parties' claims to space entering this illustrated conversation. The results of this territory war manifest in the erasure of some art forms and the pathologization of others. Below are examples of some violence interactions between murals produced during an era placemaking and murals produced during times of placekeeping.

Fig. 12: Alto al Fuego by Juana Alicia (1988)

[didn't transfer]

Alto al Fuego/Cease Fire is a mural by Juana Alicia painted in 1988. This piece is about the genocide in Honduras and a larger portrayal of the effect of civil wars in Central America on youth. The above full, non-buffed image represents two large hands protecting a young girl from a battalion of guns.

Fig. 13: Alto Al Fuego, buffed

[didn't transfer; hands, which are 2/3 of the canvas, are blacked out]

This image has existed with few graffiti artists going over it for almost 30 years. This partially buffed (painted over in bucket paint) image demonstrates the tensions between graffiti artists, muralists and storeowners. The buffing is a response to graffiti artists going over the mural. These communicate the contentious conversation that is taking place between placemaking and placekeeping generations in public space in the

Mission. Graffiti follows a strict honor code that outlines whose murals you are allowed to go over and whose you aren't. For decades these murals were for the most part spared being vandalized, though in recent years, the violence on placemaking art sites has amplified. This can be understood as representative of the amplification of cultural havoc being wreaked on the community under Columbusing.

Fig. 14: Memorial piece to Mire going over a mural of Cesar Chavez and Rigoberta Menchu, two Latino activists of an earlier generation.

[image didn't transfer]

Just as gentrification raises the economic and social pressures that manifests in brown on brown violence, it raises the artistic pressures that propel graffiti artists to perform placekeeping wherever possible. While being painted over is part of the performance of graffiti, the murals of the earlier generation follow a different code and require more resources to be maintained. These interactions cause tensions to rise between generations of artists and again, as in the case of brown-on-brown violence, the targets of such activism are those least affected by this violence.

### **Conclusion: Unpacking These Interactions and Next Steps**

Let us make explicit that the destructiveness of certain types of graffiti is created by the violence of the environment in which the graffiti is being produced. While this production of graffiti does deface and silence messages integral to the cultural memory and identity of the neighborhood, it is useful to look at where the need for such violent

expression comes from. In an ethos of impending displacement, residents are pushed to tie themselves to place with whichever tools are available to them. This understandably elicits negative responses and a popular understanding of graffiti and other extra-legal tactics for placekeeping as criminal. This is exemplified on page 27 of the final report on the community planning process that was turned into the city; under goals for enhancing quality of life along the corridor is listed "abate graffiti." This clearly reflects the pathologization of producers of graffiti and the de legitimization of it as cultural productions and tools for placekeeping.

It also begs a look at the homogeneity of those involved in the planning process. How can it be that in such a large group of artists, the truth was held that graffiti needs to be abated? It is problematic that the younger generation, those who are the main producers of graffiti were completely excluded from the LCD planning process but I think a way to look at it is such: Those closely involved with project of placemaking tend towards legal and state-sanctioned means of placekeeping, while those who grew up in an ethos of threatened displacement came into their artistic selves through tactics of placekeeping which, reflecting the cultural, economic, and physical violence of the neighborhood in those times, are more urgent and sometimes destructive.

This is more clearly shown when looking at the placemaking efforts of the earlier generation in the context of the reformist Chicano Movement that worked to make space for Latinos in the social, political and artistic systems. Their art is about making a place for themselves in a hostile society. The placekeeping art like graffiti can be framed as a more radical claim to space, with no attempts at working within the state-sanctioned realm of activism and advocacy. This convergence of radical and reformist tactics is



contentious though both work towards similar ends, that is, against cultural, economic and physical displacement.

The framing of graffiti as criminal is compounded by its erasure in the cultural assets inventory. Page 87 of the report takes inventory of the public art and installations in the LCD. Listed are the murals of the placemaking era which began in the 1970's. Missing from the list is any mention of the later generation of muralismo that was acted on, influenced by and typified by graffiti aesthetic. This exemplifies the way that art forms that the older generation sees as "other" or destructive are ignored and labeled for eradication. This is similar to the relationship that sometimes arises between younger artists and the art of the older generation that is seen as irrelevant to their current struggles.

It is my position that all types of artistic placekeeping need to be recognized and discussed when planning the LCD, and that this will result from the inclusion of young artists in the new governing structure of the district. I also call for the inclusion of more young people on the council, as we are creating the Latino Cultural District to promote the health and longevity of our culture. "Our culture" should not just refer to the older generation who unarguably shaped the neighborhood and made it our home but also to those who are faced with maintaining connection to place for the next decades, long after the older generation has passed on. I am hopeful for this inclusion, and I expect that this inclusion will reform the conversation that erupts between different tactics for placekeeping. I call for solidarity among artists of all generations, and while they might not agree with the production of each other's art forms, that they understand and observe them as tools for placekeeping.

[Final image didn't transfer]

Precita Eyes muralist teaches a graffiti workshop at Buena Vista Horace Mann, educating young students about the importance of respecting running pieces and intentionality in choosing sites to paint.

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**Appendix 3:**  
**Senior Essay by Magally Miranda-Alcazar**

Mujeres and the Work that Makes All Work Possible:  
Latina Immigrant Women Organizing in a New Global Regime

Magally Alejandra Miranda Alcazar  
CMMU 194, March 2014  
In Partial Satisfaction of the Community Studies Major Requirements

*Dedication:*

This paper is dedicated to my mother, an immigrant Latina woman (*mujer*) whom I came to understand better through the course of my field study, to my Tia Emilia, the most powerful *mujer* I ever met (may she rest in peace) and to all of the *mujeres* who make all other work possible.

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### *Introduction*

In 2000, urban studies scholar Mike Davis wrote about the tremendous impacts of globalization on America's urban cities, centering the impact of Latinos in the United States where other scholars had rendered them invisible due in part to the rigid disciplining of area studies (Davis 9). Davis' book "Magical Urbanism" made a marvelous attempt to remedy this oversight fifteen years ago, most importantly by incorporating transnational anthropological studies like the following one that illuminates what he calls the "superexploitation" of Latina immigrant women in the context of globalization. He writes that,

"There is evidence that transnational social networks are frequently subsidized by the superexploitation of women. The increasing shift in the social reproductive function of the household from the local family farm to the provision of labor for export generates new disadvantages for women. With so much of the male workforce in California, for example, the women who remain...shoulder even larger burdens of childcare, domestic toil and wage labor. Likewise, female immigrants are often shunted into sweatshop apparel or servile house-cleaning jobs that offer the least opportunity for vertical or horizontal mobility (Davis 88)."

He goes on to say that while certain freedoms such as educational access may be afforded immigrant women in specific places, the bulk of wealth and opportunities afforded to transnational populations of men has tended to come at the expense of women's opportunities (ibid).

While migration from Latin America to the United States is by no means a new phenomenon, globalization and the neoliberalization of the economy has produced new

regimes of power and labor that have compounded the exploitation of poor immigrant Latina women. For some context, Mexican politics may be a good indicator here. According to David Harvey, in 1984, the international financial institution known as the World Bank lent money to Mexico in exchange for “structural neoliberal reforms” that saw the divestment of public services and a surge in crime in Mexico City (Harvey 99, 100). Basic services for the public good were on the decline at the same time that corruption and abuse became more rampant. Privatization restructured the labor force and strike activity was severely repressed, processes that eventually gave way to North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, making it so only the most affluent and efficient elements of Mexican business could even compete with American corporations (Harvey 101, 102). At the same time that there were less public services, Mexico’s best hope for fighting back, the industrial workers and farmers, were beaten into docility. So while an egregious number of magnates became wealthy, most of Mexico’s poor and peasantry found itself unemployed and flocking to urban cities (Harvey 101) both inside and outside of the country. As the account by Davis in “Magical Urbanism” illustrate, the new regimes of power have been further stratified to posit Latina and Latina immigrant women at the bottom rungs of the new social and economic order.

The most vulnerable to lack of services and most exploitation in the new regime of power and labor have been Latina women, and in the United States especially those who lack citizenship. As early as 1987, Gloria Anzaldua also began to articulate not only the economic and political but also the psychological, physical and spiritual plight of Latina immigrant women in this new regime of power and labor. She says,

“[The Mexican woman] cannot call on country or state health or economic resources because she doesn’t know English and she fears deportation. American employers are quick to take advantage of her helplessness. She can’t go home. She’s sold her house, her furniture, borrowed from friends in order to pay the coyote who charges her four or five thousand dollars to smuggle her to Chicago. She may work as a live-in maid for white, Chicano or Latino households for as little as \$15 a week. Or work in the garment industry, do hotel work...She suffers from hypertension.”

These various accounts of the plight of Latina immigrant women reveal that their situation is almost a bipolar one. The superexploitation of Latina women, we see, on the one hand is anchored by the new needs and possibilities for a cheap, docile and exploitable workforce while on the other hand it is driven by certain utopic desires by women themselves for more freedoms and possibilities either for themselves or their loved ones. This is evident in certain industries where Latina immigrant women are quite prominent like the care industry, which is driven by housekeeping, nanny and personal care work. The care economy, as I will discuss later in this paper, is ground zero for this tension.

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In the summer of 2014, I attended a concert by a Chicana/o son-jarocho group called Las Cafeteras in Oakland, California. While the millennial musical ensemble waited to play, a group of Latina immigrant domestic workers took to the stage to let attendees like myself know about their campaign to educate and organize Latina



immigrant domestic workers throughout the Bay Area. They announced that they had just won a modest but important bill in the state of California that would grant domestic workers the right to overtime pay.

In the following months, I found myself conducting academic research, doing an internship and undertaking participant observation at this organization's Oakland office. At Mujeres Unidas y Activas (Spanish for United and Active Women and furthermore abbreviated as MUA) I quickly learned that people were organizing on a daily basis against all of the various abuses of power they face as Latina immigrant women embedded in the neoliberal regime. For me, this meant that speaking English and Spanish, having the capacity to listen with humility and having very limited legal experience became incredibly useful tools for supporting Latina immigrant women in their struggles against the hyper-exploitative elements of the new regimes of labor and power. I had the incredibly opportunity to perform the day-to-day tasks of supporting the *mujeres* who make all other work possible: home-makers, nannies, care-takers for the elderly and people with disabilities, industrial factory workers, MUA support staff who came from the grassroots base (*la base*), fast food workers and many others. MUA has found a way to institutionalize—in sometimes-reformist and sometimes-radical strategies—the act of turning care work inward for Latina immigrant women in the midst of neoliberal processes that tend to elicit their docility while also imbuing them with utopian dreams of better opportunities.

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### *Towards an Interdisciplinary Methodology*

Throughout the course of my research, I found myself being incredibly frustrated by the fact that these two theoretical, political and strategic movements were not being put in conversation with one another despite what I see as an opportunity for discussion. When I picked up “The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics and Post-Work Imaginaries” by Kathi Weeks I understood partially why. She writes that wages for housework lost some of its steam due to shifting preoccupations among many feminist theorists that took place in the 1980s. She writes that “the locus of materialist analysis had shifted from the terrain of economics to the terrain of the body (Malos 1995b, 209), and the preoccupations with the constituting force of laboring practices gave way to increasing interest in language, discourse, and culture as forces that shape the lives of gendered subjects (Weeks 2011, 118).” She goes on to describe that many Marxists became more involved in post-structuralism (ibid). This historical analysis is important for understanding at least partially why popularity for the wages for housework campaign simmered among its would-be proponents—feminists and Marxists. And how might we be able to think differently about domestic work in interdisciplinary, or even undisciplined, form of study? I will attempt to do this in the following paper.

Allison Piepmeier is an inspiration in this respect. Through a methodology of studying communities of “girls” who create and distribute zines, she argues that “while there are certainly relevant differences between third wave feminism and earlier generations... there is an undue emphasis on—or exaggeration of—those differences masks the far more prevalent similarities between all incarnations of feminism

(Piepmeier 2009, 27).” Is the grassroots study of communities, be it of girl zine makers or domestic workers, inherently an act of rethinking how we know what we know? In this process, unknowing assumptions about domestic workers has been vital.

The first part of this paper will answer the question, how does Mujeres Unidas y Activas turn care work inward? As this case study suggests, it does so by being “a grassroots organization of Latina immigrant women with a double mission of promoting personal transformation and building community power for social and economic justice” ([mujeresunidas.net](http://mujeresunidas.net)). The effects of MUA’s dual mission are that they have effectively consolidated social power in Oakland and oppositional consciousness through community organizing and class articulation. Their mechanisms have proved incredibly effective in producing results throughout the last 25 years and won statewide domestic reform in January of 2014. Specifically, I highlight how they institutionalize already-existing affinities, desires, needs and resources to minimize and eliminate abuse and exploitation as well as to build one another up. To some degree, however, I also discuss various limitations to MUA’s nongovernmental strategies and concluded there were certain instances where lacking an analysis of the compounded struggles of the base led to erasure and epistemic violence.

Ultimately, I suggest that if my findings are correct, organizations that are equipped to support various forms of compounded abuses—in the intersectional and borderlands spaces that inform the experiences of Latina immigrant women in the neoliberal regimes of power and labor—are few and far between. For these reasons, MUA’s methodology, mission and theory of social change present an important model

for community organizing and class articulation that would make an impact on the lives of Latina immigrant women elsewhere.

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Before I can begin to answer the question of how MUA turns care work inward, it is important to deconstruct various terms, beginning with care itself. Particularly in the current campaign to organize more domestic workers, the term “care” gets thrown around a lot to refer to describe the nature of the labor of nannies, housekeepers, caretakers of the elderly and people with disabilities. For example, one of my first experiences at MUA consisted of talking to a woman of Central American descent who was experiencing depression because she had left her job as a caretaker for an elderly man because he sexually assaulted her. Throughout, she would refer to care to describe both why the man felt as though he could take advantage of her and the reason why she felt sad about leaving the man’s side in his old age. Care is also mobilized when referring to people’s roles as mothers and home-makers, or other forms of unwaged work and it is discussed by people as motivation for continuing to struggle like during the campaign to have the heads of state grant asylum to the Central American migrant children stuck at the border.

Though it goes unspoken, there is an underlying assumption that feminized and racialized bodies are well suited for this kind of work. This assumption dates back to slavery. The following passage is the preface of an account by a black woman nurse originally published for *Independent* in 1912, which illustrates the history of care as a gendered and racialized term. It does not get more unnatural than black women’s work in the “peculiar institution”:

“In folklore the black nursemaid was seen as a dutiful, self-sacrificing black woman who loved her white family and its children every bit as much as her own. Yet the popular images of the loyal, contented black nursemaid, or “mammy,” were unfortunately far from the reality for the African-American women who worked in these homes. In 1912 the Independent printed this quasi-autobiographical account of servant life, as related by an African-American domestic worker, which dispelled the comforting ‘mammy’ myth.”

Although care work often requires skills and training as would any other job, it is also coded as feminine instinct. As such, we can understand the continuities between contemporary conditions of domestic work and the system of slavery that was built on the exploitation and abuse of black bodies, black women suffering specifically egregious forms of sexist violence (Home Economics). Care can refer both to an emotion of love that may require sacrifice as well as to the expectations of docility.

Today when we talk about care industries, we must also consider that we are talking about allegedly natural instincts that are applied in mass to entire populations like Latina and Asian immigrant women on the basis of their gender, race, national origin, citizenship status, among others to uphold exploitative systems. The slave-like exploitation that takes place in many care industries reflects the contradictory nature of the superexploitation of Latina immigrant women whereby it is the basis for their exploitation and their abuse as workers, though it is often also the basis for their most important attachments.

In a 2013 piece called “Workers’ Inquiry and Reproductive Labor,” Italian scholar Alisa Del Re argues for a historical analysis of care that defines it as both the reproduction of persons and the power dynamics “that are inherent in every relationship that assumes it and needs it, that is, in the lives of individuals”. She writes:

“Care seems to be something separate, extraneous to the world of production; but, particularly today, when capitalist production has invaded life, and therefore reproduction, it is not possible to hold these two sectors separate. They are connected, even if historically distinct, and in these capital hierarchizes and organizes human activity to the end of its own reproduction.”

We might logically proceed to think historically about how the work of reproducing humans, “reproductive labor,” has developed unevenly as waged and unwaged work. What’s more, we can begin to think about why Latina immigrant women and their allies have been in many ways at the forefront of the struggle for dignity and rights of domestic workers today.

“Domestic work” is understood by the National Domestic Workers Alliance and others to be a rapidly growing sector with little to no legal protections. If reproductive work is a job as old as humanity, why the sudden surge in domestic work? We have already discussed several of the reasons in this paper but they are worthwhile to ruminate on further.

First, as social welfare programs are de-funded through neoliberal austerity reforms, a heavier burden of reproductive labor is put on individuals rather than the state. This is not only the case in Mexico, but it is a global phenomenon.

Secondly, women in families have historically done much of this labor in what was understood as a labor of love and a duty to be taken care of in the private sphere of the home. As more affluent women in developed countries like the US have taken to working outside the home, this work is now largely being done in a waged manner by domestic workers. This is a messy situation for whiter, wealthier feminists (Tronto). When it comes to Latina immigrant women domestic workers, they may do paid reproductive labor outside the home that leaves them little time and energy to do reproductive work inside their homes, though unlike their whiter wealthier counterparts they may not be able to afford the same quality of care. Accompanied by an expected hike in retirees from the “baby boom” era, the demand for reproductive work in the private sector may be in high demand. Lastly, “domestic work,” I found, differs from previous forms reproductive work precisely because of its contradictory neoliberal nature. Domestic workers movements today have sought to consolidate domestic workers not into unions but into nongovernmental organizations whose goals are to minimize and regulate the degrees of exploitation as a way of regulating the private sector. In other words, regulations for certain more professionalized kinds of reproductive labor—namely “domestic work”—are being sought in the US as a palatable compromise to private sector superexploitation faced by mostly immigrant women of color.

Going forward with this in mind, we can begin to ask the question of how Mujeres Unidas y Activas turns care work inward.

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### *Mujeres Unidas y Activas Turn Care Work Inward*

Mujeres Unidas y Activas is an organization that emerged in California's Bay Area in 1989. More than twenty-five years ago, two Latina women researchers were sponsored by the University of California, Berkeley to conduct a survey of hundreds of women in the bay area about "nutrition and acculturation." What they discovered was that the situation for Latina immigrant women was in fact in a state of crisis, but it was not limited to nutritional issues. Rather, they found that domestic violence was a severe issue for those women whom they interviewed and that they were especially vulnerable to compounded abuse and exploitation because of their status as Latina immigrant women. They concluded that "social isolation and poverty" were two of the important issues that MUA would tackle and with only 8 members in 1990, the organization was formed with support from the Coalition for Immigrant Rights (NCCIR).

For the last 25 years, MUA has been a haven for Latina immigrant women came seeking out a community away from their homes of origin—be that Mexico, Central America or South America. The same study found that many of the health and economic disparities faced by Latina immigrant women could be traced back to social isolation. Women who I spoke with shared their stories of migrating to the United States because



either their husbands had found work here or because a family member or family friend asked them to care for someone here. Social isolation can be caused by being uprooted from ones' community, because of the nature of paid and unpaid care labor that takes place principally in the home, as well as due to cultural and language barriers and can also be inflicted by abusive intimate partners. Some of the effects of social isolation can be decreased self-esteem, mental health problems like depression, higher propensity to abuse and can create barriers to asking for help.

Many of the symptoms can be and are dealt with at MUA through informal and formal case-management. Hortencia, a staff person from the base, would constantly remind me to smile and offer women some bread and coffee "*porque nunca sabes porque estara pasando una mujer.*" Throughout my time at MUA, for example, I was able to listen and do counseling, escort women to the courthouse when they did not have a lawyer, supported women filling out paperwork to get a restraining order, healthcare and enrolling their children in school. I facilitated a workshop on how women could support their children in going to college. And I supported entrepreneurial projects by women making and selling food. One thing that was consistently instilled in me by my supervisors was to always foster a feeling of belonging in the space.

Several *miembras* (members) who I spoke with told me that MUA was unlike other service agencies they had been to. Unlike service agencies of primarily professionalized social workers and other mental health professionals, MUA has a *base-centered* model of support that goes beyond what many other organizations can do for these women. The *mujeres* are never clients but members with stakes in the organization and responsibilities to pay dues after three months. And because MUA counselors and

staff can always refer members to those agencies for more specialized support if necessary, they are able to focus on very personalized peer-to-peer flexible kinds of support. *Companeras* (comrades) from the *base* have a lot of insightful knowledge, customs and ways of knowing that are especially of interest to me in understanding the significance of MUA's work.

I found that MUA was better equipped than many other local organizations to deal with the compounded abuse faced by women of color. Throughout the week in Oakland and in San Francisco, *mujeres* would come and sit in on workshops about Domestic Violence (DV), Immigration, Reiki healing, Parenting Classes, Family Acceptance of LGBTQ people, Mass Incarceration, Sexual Harassment in the Workplace and many others. They are a multi-issue organization that recognizes people live multi-issue lives. What's more, Apoyo staff are often equipped with a lot of the knowledge of how to overcome situations of the *miembras* because they themselves have been through these situations. For example, one day when a woman came in because her estranged husband had called Child Protective Services (CPS) on her because her daughter had gotten lice at school, my supervisor Maria knew exactly what to do. Maria told the *miembra* to go home and buy cereal, milk and eggs because those were the things that CPS would be looking for. The valorization of this kind of experiential knowledge among the staff plays an important role in MUA being able to provide support to women of color.

The majority of cases I participated in during my field work required very intentional handling and highlight the compounded nature of abuse many women experience. Various times, I was asked by my supervisor to support a *miembra* in finding

emergency shelter. A number of the times the *miembras* had children, so they needed facilities that were equipped with housing. All but one time, the *companeras* did not speak English who I was supporting so my role was to facilitate getting Spanish-speaking person on the phone to do an intake. The receptionist would often tell me right away if there was a vacancy or not and these were rare either because they were full, they required women to have experienced DV, they required women to have a certain number of children or no children. In other instances, I was asked by my supervisor to support one *mujeres* going to court—this was one of my most difficult tasks. This particular *miembra* had been in emergency housing before with her two daughters after leaving her husband. Because he was the only one employed for a wage in the relationship, he kept the house they rented and she and her two daughters moved into the shelter. Her oldest daughter, a teenager, enjoyed her dad's house better than the shelter, so she eventually decided to go back. Her youngest daughter stayed behind with her. When the husband decided to file for divorce from this *companera*, he retained a lawyer, a very aggressive woman by the name of Kelley Snider. He decided not only to go after a divorce, but full custody of all of the children except the youngest who was with the mother. Because the mother did not understand English, let alone the legal jargon, she was persuaded into signing a document she did not understand that gave away her full rights as a parent to all of her oldest children. One day when she went to drop off a bag of clothing to her youngest son, her estranged husband and his new wife placed a restraining order against her. They now wanted to take away her youngest daughter as well. She had found a lawyer from a Domestic Violence resource center to support her pro bono except that the service was only for one or two sessions. Her situation was very entangled, but

unfortunately it was not the exception. At MUA, she was able to speak with peer counselors and MSWs, she was offered parenting classes, assistance finding a lawyer who could take her case to keep her youngest daughter and my support standing up to her husband's lawyer who was incredibly intimidating.

One thing that became clear to me was that MUA was centering what many organizations would have found marginal.

Throughout my field study, I found the Marxist concept of “workers inquiry,” specifically how it was used among 1970's Italian feminists in *Lotta Femminista* to be very useful for me in understanding the function of turning care work inwards in the context of political struggle as well. In 1972, Selma James and Mariarosa Dalla Costa wrote *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*. James and Dalla Costa changed the game with their campaign of Wages for Housework when they defined something called reproductive work as the work that makes all other work possible. If wages for housework seems utopic, unattainable, and idealistic, that is the point. It is what some would call a transitional demand. It should not be mistaken as a misinformed nor a phony demand.

Workers inquiry is a concept put forth by Karl Marx and popularized by a movement in Italy called “operaismo,” or workerism. Italian workerists actually privileged the body and politicizing everyday life (Del Re 2013). Del Re, writes “it is a question of taking the characteristics of life and the historical memory of women into consideration, producing an idea of society as a whole, starting from their strategic position and from the totality of their lives. Workers' inquiry requires contact with and

knowledge of the subjects of production, for the construction of an organizational and political project.” How can workers inquiry as a research and political methodology be put in practice in the contemporary domestic workers movement? Are there elements of workerism already in place among the *mujeres* who make all work possible?

I do not pretend to know the methodology of workers inquiry from 1960’s Italy in any detail. If time permitted, it would have been worthwhile to uncover some archival data or secondary sources on their specific research methods to provide a more in-depth analysis. Furthermore, I recognize that a number of limitations prevent me from attempting a thorough workers inquiry, even if I had the knowledge to do so. For starters, when I interned at Mujeres Unidas y Activas between July and December and I was by many accounts, a complete outsider. Second, even if I did know the specific research methods of Italian workerism, I have neither the financial, political or organizational resources from a party or any such body to carry them out. If I have any qualifications to speak on the subject, they are thanks to the training I received as part of Community Studies at UCSC in participant observation and field note-taking. Where I fall short, it is no fault of theirs.

But based on the observations I made during my time at MUA, I found that despite MUA’s incredible capacity to center at the margins, there were also various moments of disjuncture where the organization fell short of representing the desires and aspirations of its *miembras* (members) politically. Two examples immediately jump out at me. The first is concerning the California Domestic Workers Bill of Rights. Table 1 represents the nine labor rights written by domestic workers. I acquired the document from an organizer and translated the document from Spanish myself. It is the

original bill of rights presented to Governor Jerry Brown in 2011. When Brown vetoed the bill, lobbyists succumbed to the will of the governor and instead introduced AB241, the legislation that passed in 2013 that was hardly a bill of rights at all. The second incident is regarding a *miembra* who I became close with and become my informant in an interview. We talked about many things and in the process of the interview she said to me that she felt there was dignity in being a domestic worker because there is a recognition of her labor as opposed to terms like “chacha” that I gathered she found to be offensive, racialized and sexualized. I soon realized that she was the same person who had been interviewed for the NDWA’s website saying that she was proud of being a domestic worker. As trivial or insignificant as this incident or the first may seem, and as well intended as they may be, it is worthwhile to assess these strategies against the original motivations of MUA for the sake of transparency and respect for the *mujeres* whom I grew to care a great deal about.

I insist that MUA in fact has workerist origins and that these have actually been incredibly successful. When Navarro and Olea were collecting data, they began with presupposed categories but were open to revising their project when they discovered that the needs of Latina immigrant women were different. They proceeded to form a political project on the basis of these needs and this became MUA. At the risk of sounding too speculative, one question this raises is whether workerism is in fact imminent in MUA?

Workers inquiry, as I suggested earlier, is not about finding pre-supposed categories including that of “domestic worker.” If in fact the categories of analysis are to be found only through the process of workers inquiry, this instance fits the bill. By

collecting stories and creating a cohesive analysis of the state of society, Navarro and Olea were in fact articulating certain subjectivities.

The principle of MUA that underlies the work of the organization is very important. Their website sums it up thus, “MUA is one of the few programs founded on the concept that immigrant women themselves are uniquely equipped to find solutions to the problems that most directly affect their lives.” Kathleen M. Coll, a member of MUAs board of director and published author lays this theory out best in her book, “Remaking Citizenship: Latina Immigrants and New American Politics,” a study of *Mujeres Unidas y Activas* in San Francisco. In the book, she presents data and analyses from hundreds of interviews she conducted with MUA members as well as extensive participant observation.

Coll argues that under the hegemonic liberal understandings of citizenship and personhood, Latina immigrant women are marginalized in multiple ways—as Latina (nonwhite), immigrant (sometimes undocumented, sometimes documented but always non-native), women (not men), often mothers and often in situations of domestic violence, and working class. Furthermore, if we take seriously intersectionality which argues that the marginalizations compound on one another, we begin to get a picture of the importance of the issues that brought MUA into existence in 1989. We can see how social isolation and poverty, domestic violence, and immigration issues for these individuals are symptomatic of an American immigration and welfare system that necessitates critical intervention.

If Coll’s arguments are true, they help us think about MUA as an organization intervening and remaking citizenship and personhood in a radical way. By putting

Latina immigrant women in counterhegemonic positions, they radically counter liberal hegemonic American discourses. MUA is almost exclusively a space for Latina immigrant women to develop as citizens and people with all of their experiences and identities intact. Programming such as mutual support meetings, information workshops, counseling, referrals and crisis intervention services, employment opportunities, leadership trainings, community campaigns and capacity building are designed to nurture a feeling of belonging, entitlement, confidence and unity. Thus, MUA counteracts marginalization and undermines the liberal hegemony through creating a safer space for alternative subjectivities. At least this is one interesting framework for thinking about the work that MUA is currently doing.

Their internal structure is also an interesting piece of the puzzle. The organization is committed to amplifying the self-activity of the women they organize through some of the aforementioned daily programming. Many members go from training and service-recipients to acquiring positions within the organization as staffers. The group counts on at least three different departments which all work in tandem to achieve goals.

The first of these is the Apoyo, or support, branch who are on the front lines, so to speak. They do intakes of individuals seeking resources and support for domestic violence. They are selected because they have undergone extensive sensitivity training and many times can reassure the women that they can get through the situation because of their own personal histories. One member of Apoyo recently told me she has written her story in English which is almost ready to be shared with donors and other supporters.

The second cohort is called Campana and they are the political branch. They often do the work of political education for new members and conduct research to create



compelling workshops and meetings for the members. I've seen college educated women deliver talks on settler colonialism in Palestine and Queer liberation. In each instance, the women broke down the complexities of the issue while framing it as a fundamental struggle between oppressors and the oppressed. The curriculum also politicized these women *as mothers*, asking them to imagine their own children in the situations of the oppressed.

Lastly, there is the administrative branch. Administrators perform the tasks of fundraising and general finance logistics. They also recruit and retain volunteers like myself and place them where they are needed. One of the women who I met from administration, however, is also plugged into the news from the local labor unions and recruited a few of us to a demonstration in front of a grocery store along with many other unions as part of the "Fight for 15" campaign to raise the minimum wage for service workers.

It goes without saying that there is a division of labor within capitalism that endows us with differential skill sets, corresponding to different prerequisites for accumulation. At first glance MUA's own division of labor mirrors if not reproduces these divisions, with more educated, and perhaps more privileged women being endowed with the intellectual responsibilities of governing the organization. This would be unfortunate, even if it was merely drawing from the ways structure shapes us as people. But, thankfully, MUA's own division of labor appears to work in a more liberatory direction, as evidenced for example by the fact that most of the women are paired up with conversation partners whom they exchange language.

Twenty-five years later, MUA has naturally moved into supporting the struggle for rights and dignity for domestic workers and it brings to bear questions about its fidelity to the original mission. Earlier in the paper, I mentioned that there were trade-offs with any political strategy. This fact may or may not be self-evident. In the case of the contemporary movement of domestic workers, the majority of analyses and strategy has been shaped by social-democratic organizations like the National Domestic Workers Alliance. Earlier in the paper, I highlighted the obvious strengths of their organizing methods. Most notably, their orientation toward policy change is proving itself effective in winning some legislative gains. One should have a more clear picture of the downfalls by now as well.

But to put this another way, it may be worthwhile to delve into the mission of MUA and its day to day practices. *Mujeres Unidas* “has a double mission of promoting personal transformation and building community power for social and economic justice.” Surely this could be its own other paper but in short I found that there are two possible interpretations of MUA’s mission statement. One is that there is an expectation for members to become particular kinds of citizens—assimilated and acculturated perhaps—in order to be political actors. The other is that women are supported in every step of their process towards becoming whole, from being in a state of vulnerability to empowerment within and through struggle. To put this another way, Allison Piepmeier explains what her research on girl zines yields in terms of putting this analysis in the context of the neoliberal moment. She writes that the neoliberal moment has tended to produce subjectivities of either “at-risk” or “can-do” (Piepmeier 11). In the case of the *mujeres* I have discussed, it should be a priority of ours to

question whether we are placing them into these far-too-easy neoliberal stereotypes when there is always overlap between vulnerability and strength, disempowerment and empowerment.

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### *MUA and the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights*

As part of MUA's political branch, it has participated in a growing international movement today making the case that domestic work is fully deserving of labor protections and dignity. Nationally, it appears to be picking up significant steam. In 2014, California became one of the first states to affirm the legal right of domestic workers to overtime pay, for example. Table 1 of this document shows a list of nine labor rights advocated for by domestic workers in California, among which is the right to overtime pay. In New York, where similar legislation was passed years earlier, a study found that 15% of employers reported that they had begun paying their employees overtime (cite). The movement appears to be picking up steam primarily because of campaigns by a coalitional body called the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) which has provided the movement with analysis and strategy.

These measures fall far too short of a success story for a number of reasons. First, domestic workers in California have found that the struggle for recognition of full labor rights will be an uphill battle with the state, whose governor Jerry Brown vetoed a previous bill encompassing all of the matters in Table 1. Furthermore, their enforcement has proven difficult, as evidenced in the case of New York because the undervaluing of domestic work remains a prevalent cultural factor. The result is that the situation of

domestic workers in the United States remains bleak. In a 2012 report issued by the NDWA, they found that nearly a quarter of nannies and household workers earned less than the minimum wage and almost half of them do not make enough to support their children. Furthermore, sexual harassment and intimidation are pervasive, especially among vulnerable workers who may be immigrants who fear deportation or lack language access to resources. Simply put, domestic workers continue to lack rights and dignity as long as the political powers that be and employers believe they can get away with it.

In the following portion of this paper, I focus on the part of the workforce of reproducing humans called “domestic work” because it has been the sector that is a very dense and important subject and because MUA has been active in helping these struggles gain political clout. One would be hard pressed to find a report, demonstration or any promotional material about domestic worker reform that does not count among it Latina immigrant women—*mujeres*. Image 1 demonstrates a promotional poster prominently featuring various figures of domestic workers that reflect this demographic particularly. Most recently, many of their stories have been mobilized in campaigns for reform policies.

“Domestic worker” refers to workers (mostly women) who care for children, homes, parents and neighbors who may bring skills and experience to the job, but unlike other workers, their work is done in the private sphere of the home and outside of the inclusion of legal protections. The NDWA’s working definition of a domestic worker “includes nannies, childcare providers, caregivers or attendants to people with disabilities or seniors, housecleaners, cooks, gardeners, or other household workers. They work in a

private home, whether they are directly hired by the household or by an agency.” This strength of this definition of domestic work is that it is ready-made for legislative campaigns. Truth be told political strategy is always a trade-off and this one emphasizes a broader strategy of training domestic workers, employers and pushing local and state legislators to introduce bills like AB214. What is the tradeoff?

In this sense, this political project shares important similarities and differences with the current movement. Key among the similarities is that their goals are for the full rights and dignity of domestic workers. They also believe that domestic workers/reproductive laborers are the workers who make all other work possible and central to the reproduction of society. Where they diverge is in political strategies. Where the contemporary movement has tended towards pragmatic, winnable policies, the women of *Lotta Feminista* believed in demanding the unattainable as a transformative strategy.

“Labor power is a commodity produced by women in the home. It is this commodity which turns wealth into capital. The buying and selling of this commodity turns the market into a capitalist market. Women are not marginal in the home, in the factory, in the hospital, in the office. We are fundamental to the reproduction of capital and fundamental to its destruction.”

-Selma James, Introduction to *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community* (1972)

### *Implications*

Many support services do not always account for these experiences of compounded abuse in the intersectional, liminal and borderland spaces in which many Latina immigrant women fall within the new regime of power and labor.

For example, on October 16, 2014, I had a phone call with a Latina immigrant woman who will remain anonymous from the rural town of George, Washington. She needed support for domestic abuse and she did not speak English. She hoped that I could help refer her to an agency nearby that could help. After some online research, I discovered that there were two agencies that might help—an immigration center that had Spanish-speaking staff, but that did not specialize in domestic violence cases, and a Domestic Violence resource center that had few Spanish-speakers and did not specialize in immigration cases. Both places were also miles away in the nearest big city.

The above exchange took place in Spanish in Oakland, California, at an organization called *Mujeres Unidas y Activas* (Spanish for, United and Active Women), but this organization is rare. Can we imagine a world where the *mujeres* who work so hard to make all other work possible in this country can have the support they need to combat their superexploitation and carry out their dreams?

The following stories are ones I collected, in the style of the National Domestic Workers Alliance and they illustrate not only the paid and professionalized elements of the reproductive workforce, but others as well.

*Margarita is a first-generation Latina woman whose son was shot and killed by a security guard at the Oakland coliseum swap meet. She approached a friend of hers who*

*was a member and found support to host a vigil from the political committee, received counseling from the support committee and received support from me to decipher legal documents and be referred to a lawyer.*

*Maria Cortes is a regular at MUA. She comes by almost daily to receive counseling from Laura. Maria, a single mother living with a disability, was staying in a shelter only two years ago with her 6 year old daughter, Melissa, but now they live in a low-cost apartment near MacArthur BART. Melissa is a shy little girl whose voice and energy flourish in day care with the other children. In the last 6 months, Maria has been attending leadership trainings, joined the fundraising committee and co-facilitated workshops on “mass incarceration.” She is currently interested in starting a Kickstarter campaign to fund reconstructive dental work so her smile can match her new confidence.*

*Ana is in the middle of a personal crisis. Two years ago, she left her husband who had been abusing her since they got married in Jalisco, Mexico. In retrospect, she tells me, he abused her physically, emotionally and most of all sexually and that if she could go back in time now, she would have spoken up about it. She was raised being told to be quiet and her own mother did so. Now she is in the middle of a custody battle with her husband over her youngest daughter, Jamie, a very sharp 6 year old who follows her along everywhere. Her husband has already gained full custody of her 3 older children, one of whom is on house arrest and another one who has been hospitalized for suicide attempts. He was able to do this because he speaks some English and has an attorney*

*who has intimidated Ana. She is gaining her self-esteem and her voice with the help of MUA.*

*Maria Distancia is a middle aged woman with four children. She is one of the newest facilitadoras and is active in Manos Carinosas/Caring Hands, the cooperative of domestic workers. She first learned about MUA when several members did a presentation on domestic violence in her English as a Second Language class. She did not pay much attention to it because she had convinced herself that her marriage was not abusive, but she was interested in the political activism and rallying for undocumented workers rights. She wanted to know, why aren't they afraid? Later, she began to understand that her husband was abusing her by withholding her from financial freedom. She wanted her own source of income and her independence so she found a job as a domestic worker through MUA and never looked back. Now, she can be seen in reuniones encouraging companeras to stop the cycles of abuse. In her experience, many other service agencies told her she had everything she needed to find healing and be independent, but it was only MUA that helped her get a job and the tools she needed.*

*Maria Santiago lights up a room. She is in her 60's and is no more than 5 feet in stature but she has a voice that will make you shake. One day when there appeared a cup full of acorns, people asked whether it belonged to Maria Santiago, if she was making some crafts out of it. She is an active member in the local chapter of the Revolutionary Community Party (RCP). She participates because she believes in the power of revolutionary activity. She says that one of the men who calls himself a leader will often*



*try to yell at them about what they could have done better but she does not let him yell at her. No, sir. In the fall of 2014 a young black man named Michael Brown was shot in Ferguson, MI by a police officer named Darren Wilson. This sparked a national movement against police brutality. Maria was always present at the Oakland demonstrations, even the freeway blockades. She told other members that it was important they be there too even if they disagreed with the tactics protesters used because it could be their children next.*

MUA is a place where *mujeres'* dreams are supported, but many women have dreams, needs, and already-existing networks to support them. What strategies can others use to institutionalize these so that women like them do not ever have to suffer again? How do we center the well-being of those who make all other work possible?

### *Conclusion*

Neoliberalism has restructured various regimes of power and labor, leaving Latina immigrant women among the most vulnerable but also with the most to gain. This contradiction is delicate and whether the tables will turn in the direction of the women or in the other direction depends largely on the work of organizations like Mujeres Unidas y Activas and anyone who considers themselves an ally or a social justice activist. Every tool in our activist arsenal, from being bilingual to being a good listener, or writing what we know can be a powerful tool for tipping the scales. Ultimately, the goal however should not be to teach people our way of knowing, but to embrace their expertise on their own lives. *Mujeres* are the ones who experience compounded violences on a daily basis

and it is they who hold the keys to social change. In the recent campaigns for domestic worker reform, it would be a critical mistake for them to lose sight of their workerist origins in favor of pragmatism. Nevertheless, the kinds of organizations that exist to deal with the issues of the most exploited workers with the most to gain are few and far between. It is our duty to help them generalize this.

The following table and image illustrate some of the strategies of how to generalize these dreams through legislation.

<i>Table 1:</i>
<p>California Domestic Worker Bill of Rights</p> <p>The Bill of Rights will see to it that Domestic Workers have the right to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Equal Rights to Breaks and Lunchtime for Personal Assistants</li><li>2. Equal Pay for Overtime</li><li>3. Equal Right to a Safe and Secure Workplace</li><li>4. Equal Right to Worker's Compensation</li><li>5. Equal Rights to Payment for Showing up to Work Even When There is No Work</li><li>6. Right to 8 Hours of Uninterrupted Sleep Under Adequate Conditions</li><li>7. The Right to Cook One's Own Food</li><li>8. The Right to Paid Vacations</li><li>9. The Right to Sick Days</li></ol>



**DOMESTIC WORKERS**  
**DESERVE RIGHTS & RESPECT. PASS AB 241**  
**RESPECTO Y DERECHOS PARA LAS**  
**TRABAJADORAS DEL HOGAR. APOYEN AB 241**

*This promotional poster was created by Bay Area artist Melanie Cervantes. It shows three areas of domestic work—caregiving for the elderly and people with disabilities, housekeeping and nanny work. The women featured are women of color.*

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**Appendix 4:**  
**Student Evaluations of CMMU 194 (Winter 2015)**

Winter 15 Analysis of Field Materials,  
CMMU 194, Steiner, A.  
40781 SEM 01: CMMU 194  
Steiner, Andrea (steiner)

Results of survey  
Started: March 3, 2015  
Ended: March 20, 2015  
Reply rate: 50% ( 12 / 24 )  
Sakai Online Evaluation System  
Winter 15 Analysis of Field Materials, CMMU 194,  
Steiner, A.

**Course/Group Items:**

1. Please enter your year in school.

11 answers, mean = 3.91

Freshman  
Sophomore  
Junior  
Senior  
Graduate  
Other  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
9 % (1)  
91 % (10)  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)

2. My major field of study is:

- Community Studies
- Community Studies
- cmmu
- Community Studies
- Community Studies, Feminist Studies
- community studies
- Community Studies
- Community Studies
- Community Studies
- Community Studies & Psychology

**Instructor Appraisal**

Rate the quality of the following from  
poor to  
excellent.

- 1 = Poor  
2 = Fair  
3 = Satisfactory  
4 = Very Good  
5 = Excellent

3. Course preparation and organization

12 answers, mean = 4.25

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
0 % (0)  
8 % (1)  
0 % (0)  
50 % (6)  
42 % (5)

4. Use of class time

12 answers, mean = 3.83

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
42 % (5)  
33 % (4)  
25 % (3)

5. Clarity and Understandability

12 answers, mean = 4.50

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
8 % (1)  
33 % (4)  
58 % (7)

6. Enthusiasm for subject and for teaching

12 answers, mean = 4.92

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
8 % (1)  
92 % (11)

7. Respect for students; sensitivity to and concern with their progress

12 answers, mean = 5.00

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
100 % (12)

8. Instructor availability and helpfulness

12 answers, mean = 4.92

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
8 % (1)  
92 % (11)

9. Instructor fairness in evaluating students

12 answers, mean = 4.83

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
8 % (1)  
0 % (0)  
92 % (11)

10. Quality of feedback on submitted work

11 answers, mean = 4.82

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
18 % (2)  
82 % (9)

11. Instructor's overall effectiveness as a teacher

12 answers, mean = 4.83

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
17 % (2)  
83 % (10)

Course Appraisal

Rate the quality of the following from poor to excellent. Leave blank if not applicable. 1 = Poor 2 = Fair 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Very Good 5 = Excellent

12. Syllabus and handouts

11 answers, mean = 3.91

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
9 % (1)  
0 % (0)  
18 % (2)  
36 % (4)  
36 % (4)

### 13. Examinations

9 answers, mean = 4.44

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
11 % (1)  
33 % (3)  
56 % (5)

### 14. Assignments

12 answers, mean = 4.33

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
67 % (8)  
33 % (4)

### 15. Required reading

10 answers, mean = 4.20

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
30 % (3)  
20 % (2)  
50 % (5)

### 16. Supplementary materials (films, slides, videos, guest lectures)

10 answers, mean = 4.00

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
10 % (1)  
0 % (0)  
20 % (2)  
20 % (2)  
50 % (5)

### 17. The course overall as a learning experience

11 answers, mean = 4.64

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
36 % (4)  
64 % (7)

### Student Profile

Rate your level of agreement with these statements from strongly disagree to strongly agree. 1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Somewhat Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Somewhat Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

### 18. I had a strong desire to take this course.

12 answers, mean = 4.67

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
8 % (1)  
17 % (2)  
75 % (9)

### 19. This course is in my major field of study

12 answers, mean = 4.92

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
8 % (1)  
92 % (11)

### 20. I attended class regularly

12 answers, mean = 4.75

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
25 % (3)  
75 % (9)

### 21. I put considerable effort into this course

12 answers, mean = 4.83

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
0 % (0)  
17 % (2)  
83 % (10)



22. I gained a good understanding of the course content.

12 answers, mean = 4.75

1

2

3

4

5

0 % (0)

0 % (0)

0 % (0)

25 % (3)

75 % (9)

### Comments

Please give serious thought to your comments. This evaluation will become part of the faculty member's personnel file to be reviewed by colleagues and administration when considering the instructor's reappointment, promotion, and salary increases. Your comments will be studied by the professor after the grade and performance evaluation of your work have been submitted and may be used to improve future offerings of the course.

23. Please comment on how the instructor's teaching helped your learning in this course

So willing and available to meet and help with anything, also very open to student suggestions and requests.

•

• Andrea is an amazing professor who works hard so that her students can do well in her class. If anyone asks for help she is more than willing to meet with the student to help them with anything.

•

Andrea is very engaging and a great resource. She can reference you many relevant readings and places to explore. Her incorporation of grammar lessons, i feel is very needed and rarely given. With a class of this level that has a final project of a senior essay, it was very relevant and helpful too.

•

I was really grateful for the second half of the class being completely dedicated to polishing and perfecting our senior essays. I was able to receive some incredibly insightful and helpful advice from Andrea about not only how to become a better writer, but of also how to use writing as a tool to really understand the significance of field study. I learned how to make sense of my experiences and how to use this essay to figure out the missing links on what had been confusing me before I had began writing. Thanks Andrea! You're the best!

•

Professor Steiner is very clear about expectations and always thoroughly helpful in questions. I notice that students come to her in and outside of class hours to get feedback. Her feedback on writing always contributes a lot of food for thought. She also cares about every individual in the cohort and has the utmost respect for everyone's ideas.

•

Your patience in interacting with students makes it hard to think that we are in an institution that makes students pay thousands of dollars to get this education and at times interacting with you made the investment worth it. I hope that you mentor future educators so they can follow examples of how to be patient and go the extra mile for student's success.

•

Andrea went above and beyond in terms of helping us with our individual academic growth process. She was so available and that was incredibly helpful and beneficial.

•

I love Andrea! She is the best teacher I have had at UCSC and I love every course I have taken with her. She should be a bigger part for the students away at field study.

•

If Andrea had not met with me one on one several times, I would not have a senior essay most likely. She availed herself to us all the time, on weekends, late nights and days off. She truly cares about us as people and as students, without one compromising the other. She approaches teaching holistically and she is damn good at it. I want to thank her for helping shape the person I am today and for this major coming back. I would not be half the person I am today without Andrea or Community Studies.

•

24. Please suggest how the instructor's teaching might improve:

Have more time discussing how to write a senior essay, maybe look at example essays.

•

Sometimes I felt unsure of what was going to happen in class and how I should prepare. Also I wish we could work more in class on our essays, many times something came up and I wish I could just start writing in class but didn't want to disrespect the professor or class. Just talking sometimes left me leaving the class wishing I could have made more progress on my paper, and I wish we had more small group time to discuss theories and our writing concepts.

•

I think I could have even used more time in writing my essay. I know that is hard, but I feel like more class time could have been used for days dedicated to the writing process and meeting with Andrea/ fellow community study students who actually wringing the

essay.

•

In this course, specifically, it would have been nice if she assigned a few more readings to better help ground the materials we discussed and I would have liked more days for peer editing.

•

I think that it would be helpful to have some sort of writing in the first weeks. At least a journal entry in which we are already thinking about what we will be writing about. I know it might seem a lot for the first weeks but it makes sense now that we are finished with the course.

•

more time to edit and rewrite papers. That's one thing I HIGHLY recommend

•

I think there needs to be more time to write the large senior capstone paper. I honestly think that we can do the poster section in week 3, and then start the writing process in week 4 to take off a lot of stress.

•

We were the test run! And I think we talked about a lot of the issues in class. But the big ones would be the amount of time we spent on the poster and on hearing about each other's field studies. Even though it was SO awesome hearing what everyone did, it took a really really long time and we could have spent that time talking more about the posters or talking about our essays more in class. I know things will change with such a big class load next year but just keep in mind that starting the essay so late is super stressful and even if we just had like a little more structure right when we got back apart from the poster, that would be awesome.

•

## 25. Other comments:

• Thanks so much Andrea!

•

•

I think it would be better to do all the debriefs/ summaries from field study in 2 or so classes. There's a certain setting that is created when sharing and it seemed that all the split time between classmates' sharing and regular class time was a weird transition. I feel like talking about the field study with others is one of the most important pieces in analytic processing and that should come first. It also opens the door to speaking with others on a similar topic because everyone is there together. Finally, I feel our senior essay of a minimum of 20 pages is very similar to a senior thesis, which is usually played out with a student connecting to a mentor and that professor will only work with a few students.

•

I have no idea how Andrea is able to do all the work she does! I'm surprised and happy to get all the quality feedback she gives, the most I've ever received from a teacher, but it must be hard to do. She gets my props.

•

Thank you for a great year and the best major! I hope you get a TA for next year too :)

•

Good job on the first class to graduate with the new community studies major, it was stressful and we all had our moments but we got through it thanks to Andrea, Joanie, and Mary Beth! <3