Watchful Lives in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands

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Catherine Whittaker, Eveline Dürr,
Jonathan Alderman, Carolin Luiprecht

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Preface

When Arndt Brendecke, who acts as Speaker of the Collaborative Research Center on "Cultures of Vigilance" at LMU Munich, invited Eveline Dürr to participate in the initial funding application and to contribute to the CRC with a project from anthropology, she instantly thought of her research experiences in New Mexico, where she conducted fieldwork in the late 1990s. Eveline's project in the city of Albuquerque focused on individuals who self-identified mainly as Hispanic.[1] Some took pride in their Spanish ancestry and knew that their families had lived in the area for centuries, while others felt a stronger connection to Mexico and to their Indigenous heritage. However, regardless of their self-identification, most of her interlocutors felt disadvantaged and discriminated against in an Anglo-American-dominated society – and under pressure to justify their presence in their own country. While responses to these conditions of ongoing coloniality differed significantly, questions of belonging and identity were key in their daily lives. In this vein, she became aware of the need to better understand the ways they anticipated being watched and classified as 'other' in an Anglo-dominated context. These observations nurtured her research design for the CRC's project in a setting with different historical trajectories and politics, from which this book on "Watchful Lives" in San Diego, California, results. The objective of the CRC is to discover the ways in which vigilance is employed and has developed historically and across cultures, focusing on how the attentiveness of individuals contributes to collective goals. The aim of our project has been to interrogate the particular ways in which individuals use vigilance in a borderland context in which they face discrimination.

In the original proposal, which Eveline designed before the outbreak of COVID-19, the ethnographic work was center stage and she had planned to carry out joint fieldwork with a postdoctoral researcher. However, in the light of the pandemic, the initial research plan had to be adjusted – and so did the composition of the project team, which eventually evolved to include four researchers. This book then, is the result of the particular circumstances under which it was written. Conducting research at the height of the pandemic further accentuated the very inequalities that we highlight in this book.

The book evolved to have four authors principally because Catherine Whittaker, who was postdoc on the project, took up an assistant professorship at Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main after completing the main phase of the fieldwork in San Diego. We thus also thank Goethe University for contributing research fund-

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[1] Dürr, *Identitäten und Sinnbezüge*; Dürr ¿Héroe Español O Déspota Colonial?.

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ing for Catherine's contributions to this project since April 2021. Catherine's new location and responsibilities required hiring a new postdoc, Jonathan Alderman, who joined at the initial writing-up stage of the project. Meanwhile, Catherine returned to San Diego as often as her teaching schedule and finances allowed, in hope of increasing the accuracy of our descriptions and analyses in a way that serves the communities we are writing about. The fourth author, Carolin Luiprecht, acted as research assistant and then became co-author of this book. She also wrote her master's thesis on a topic related to this research project. Finally, we have been pleased to count on the collaboration of San Diegan artivista (artist-activist) Nanzi Muro, who herself identifies as a *fronteriza* ("borderlander"). Nanzi Muro's non-textual articulations of our book, which accompany each chapter, can be read alongside the texts themselves and as artwork in their own right. We wanted to work with her because she uses art to address social injustice, which is a key topic in this book.

The different members of the team have had different roles in the production of the book. However, while drafts of chapters began with a single author, the book has evolved to a shared authorship over the book as a whole. While this writing process has at times been challenging, it has allowed us to discuss how we each understand vigilance, and what we each took from our experiences in San Diego, as well as allowing us the opportunity to read through and improve each draft of chapters collectively. For these reasons, it is important to introduce the team members individually, our biographies and our roles in the production of the book.

Eveline Dürr is a professor of Social and Cultural Anthropology at LMU Munich, where she is engaged in a range of mostly collaborative research projects on urban issues, such as ethics and notions of the "good life" in cities, "poverty" tourism and inequality, (non)human-environmental entanglements and identity politics. She was trained at Universities in Heidelberg, Mexico City and Freiburg. She has lived and conducted fieldwork in Mexico, the U.S. and in New Zealand. In each case, she pays special attention to political forces and local responses, and the ways their interplay shapes individuals' life worlds. Her roles as Deputy Speaker of the CRC and as Principal Investigator of this project consisted of conceptual work, in particular on vigilance, subjectivation and temporality, in managing the project's workflow and in co-writing this monograph. During our joint fieldwork stay September 2021, Eveline noticed similarities and differences between New Mexico and California pointing to the heterogeneity of the borderlands and the resulting identity politics. In addition, she made suggestions for possible publication avenues for further research outputs and enhanced the project's profile by increasing its international visibility, facilitating workshops and international conferences – all supported generously by the CRC.

Catherine Whittaker is an Assistant Professor at the Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology at Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany, and was the principal fieldworker in this project as a postdoctoral researcher at LMU Munich (2019 – 2021). She was drawn to this project both because of her personal life and her research background. Born in Central Germany as the trilingual daughter of Italian and Irish-British-Australian immigrants, Catherine has continued to live a nomadic life. Having often been mistaken for a foreigner in her countries of citizenship sensitized her to issues surrounding migration, mixed identities, and belonging. In her previous research on women's anti-violence activism in Michoacán, Mexico, Catherine had found vigilance to be a salient issue: entering some towns meant being watched, or even stopped, by cartel lookouts and police or armed citizens. Many local people navigated insecurity by ensuring that their neighbors knew them and watched out for them. It follows that where the state is absent or untrustworthy, a culture of vigilance becomes key to safety. After completing a postdoc on the Michoacán research at the University of Aberdeen, UK, in 2019, Catherine was a visiting scholar at the University of California San Diego (2020 – 2022). She has studied Latin American Studies and Anthropology in Bonn, Oxford, London, Edinburgh, and Mexico City. Currently, she is working on a book on the interconnectedness of love and violence in Central Mexico, based on her 2019 PhD thesis at the University of Edinburgh (2018 recipient of the Radcliffe-Brown/ Sutasoma Award of the Royal Anthropological Institute) and a recent article for American Anthropologist, "Beyond the Dead Zone: The Meanings of Loving Violence in Highland Mexico." Her research is driven by the desire to humanize often misunderstood populations, such as survivors and perpetrators of violence, by uncovering the structures that shape their circumstances.

Jonathan Alderman came into the project after Catherine had already conducted a year's fieldwork in San Diego. He has previously carried out ethnographic research in Bolivia. Although new to the project, he had already been interested in some of the themes that became important in the course of the project, such as citizenship, belonging and subjectivity. He studied Philosophy at the University of Essex, completed a master's degree in Latin American Studies at the Institute of Latin American Studies, University of London, and finally a PhD in Social Anthropology at the University of St Andrews in Scotland. His PhD thesis, *The path to ethnogenesis and autonomy: Kallawaya-consciousness in plurinational Bolivia* concerned citizenship and subjectivation within Bolivia as it became a plurinational state. He has conducted postdoctoral research in Bolivia, including as a research fellow at the Institute for Latin American Studies, University of London. This research has mainly examined the relationship between rural Bolivians and their houses and how changes to the materiality of the house impacts the social relationships of its inhabitants. His interest in social housing developed into an interest in infrastructure more widely, through producing an edited book titled *The Social and Political Life of Latin American Infrastructures.* Since he had no first-hand experience of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, the team fieldwork in September 2021 was useful in broadening his understanding of San Diego and the issues that people face living in the area. This experience enabled him to visualize many of the places that are described in Catherine's fieldnotes and interviews. Coming into the project had its challenges, not only in getting to grips with a new topic, but also a new academic environment (The CRC) and a new place to live (Munich). It has therefore also provided him with great opportunities to appreciate academia from a new perspective and new experiences that come from living in Germany.

Carolin Luiprecht grew up in Northern Italy in a mainly German-speaking region directly bordering Austria. She has thus naturally been interested in borders and border issues for a long time. After finishing school, she went to Munich in Germany to study Social and Cultural Anthropology at LMU, where she completed her master's degree in February 2022. In terms of region, her focus has been on the Americas, especially Colombia and the U.S.-Mexico border. Thematically, she researches migration, activism, and tourism under the rubric of Urban and Border Studies. She also has a special interest in intersectional and post-/decolonial approaches to anthropology. She became part of this project in summer 2019, shortly after completing her bachelor's degree in Social and Cultural Anthropology. Carolin worked for Eveline and Catherine, and later Jonathan as a student and research assistant. This gave her insights into the workings of both a research project and a university. She travelled to San Diego with the whole team in the fall of 2021 to conduct team fieldwork and pursue her own research direction for her master's thesis. For her fieldwork, she carried out digital participant observation on Instagram with a group of self-identifying *brujxs* (witches) and their network. She examined how healing and spirituality relate to social justice activism, particularly concentrating on digital representation of these practices. Interviews with the main group then helped to deepen her understanding of this. During her time in San Diego, Carolin also conducted fieldwork as part of the project team. By assisting within the research project and conducting her own research, Carolin had the opportunity to contribute to this book.

Nanzi Muro has been interested in art ever since she remembers. At just 14 years old, she discovered her passion for photography. So, after finishing high school she naturally began her Bachelor of Fine Arts at the San José State University in San Diego, which she completed in 2019. She currently lives in San Diego where she is studying her master's degree. Since the beginning of her studies, she has been doing professional and independent photography of a variety of subjects. Due to her biographic history (she was born in Los Angeles, raised in Tijuana and lives in the borderland), she identifies herself as *fronteriza.* This special perspective is important for her artistic and activistic work. Thus, her current artistic focus is on culinary photography, bringing out the texture and flavor of food through images and highlighting the variety of typical food and its importance for migrant- or border movements in the borderland. Also, as an artivist she tries to raise awareness of the histories, perspectives, and biographies of the borderland and migrant communities in Mexico and in the U.S. Thus, she organizes and accompanies various social movements and social projects as a photojournalist and an editor. Within her art she advocates for social change and tries to give a voice to the voiceless. She was happy to accept the authors' invitation to provide the art for this book.

This book, then, has been highly collaborative, but not just because of the writing process through which it has evolved. As authors, we would also like to acknowledge the support that we have received, both during the field research and in the writing-up process. We are grateful to numerous people who have helped us to bring this book to fruition. Firstly, we are particularly grateful to the institutions and individuals in San Diego that have oriented us in our understanding of Chicanismo and the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. These include the Anthropology Department of the University of California, San Diego, for acting as host institution during Catherine's main period of fieldwork, and especially Nancy Postero and Rihan Yeh, amongst the faculty of the Anthropology department. We would also like to particularly thank Roberto Hernández and Alex Gomez (both SDSU) for meeting with and sharing their own experiences and understanding with us, Alberto López Pulido for helping us to understand the term *trucha*. We would like to thank Nanzi Muro for enhancing the book by providing her artwork.

In Munich, we are grateful to the Collaborative Research Center on Cultures of Vigilance (CRC 1369) at LMU Munich and the financial support of the German Research Foundation (DFG, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) for supporting the research project through to its production as a book. At the CRC, we acknowledge the insightful comments received within the working group on subjectivation as well as at the CRC's colloquia and workshops. This has included the workshop that we organized titled "Borderland Vigilance: re-conceptualising borders in comparative perspective" held at LMU Munich in July 2022. We are grateful for the stimulating and thought-provoking discussions on vigilance in borderlands that arose both in the workshop and at panels we have organized at the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA), Latin American Studies Association (LASA), and American Anthropological Association (AAA). We would like to thank the panelists of these respective panels for their thoughtful comments, which have furthered our own understanding of vigilance in borderlands. At the CRC we are grateful for the support provided during the publication process, such as copy-editing and indexing. We are also grateful to Daniel Dumas for producing several maps that we have used in the book. We would also like to thank colleagues at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology for insightful comments and ongoing collegial and administrative support, particularly Raúl Acosta for sharing his contacts in San Diego, and Henry Kammler for contributing an analysis of the concept of *trucha* to the CRC blog. We would also like to thank Ana Ivasiuc (Maynooth University) for collaborating with this project, resulting in a special section of the journal *Conflict and Society.*

Finally, this book is the result of a team effort, and, as researchers and writers, we have benefitted considerably from those who have supported and collaborated with us. In particular, we are indebted to Chicanxs who have engaged with our research. With good reason, some people in the Chicanx community can feel uncomfortable with the agendas of researchers they do not know (and even those they do know), for example, Jacob (not his real name), whom we cite in Chapter 2, who was annoyed at what he perceived as researchers building their careers through studying Chicanxs. Others (for example, academics) that the team encountered were interested in and sympathetic to our project. Some people were both interested and skeptical in helping our research apparently because they welcomed inter-racial solidarity. We aimed to be watchful in our writing and were aware of the contradictions in our position, as researchers taking a critical perspective towards structures of coloniality, who ourselves come from an elite university in Europe, and benefit from unequal hierarchies of power. Our privileges as white anthropologists are founded on coloniality, even as we seek to visibilize and destabilize racism and the structures that underpin and perpetuate it, and the ongoing struggles to chip away at the coloniality that Chicanxs and other People of Color face on a daily basis. We have attempted to hold these contradictions in tension, but such contradictions are not easily resolvable – if at all. However, reflecting on our own positionality, and the watchfulness of people in Barrio Logan and elsewhere in San Diego towards us as researchers, has helped us to consider more deeply the watchfulness of Chicanxs and other racialized and migrantized people in the borderlands. We hope that this research may contribute to their decolonization struggles and highlight pathways to healing. We also hope that this work contributes to discussions of vigilance in borderlands, as well as an understanding of the continuing struggles of Chicanxs and other racialized people in the U.S. for equal rights as citizens.

The authors
Munich, November 2022

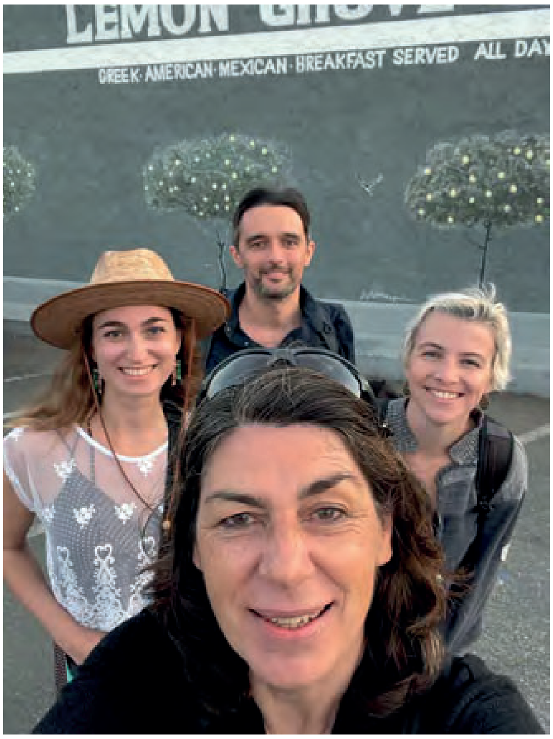
LEMON GROVE
GREEK·AMERICAN·MEXICAN·BREAKFAST SERVED ALL DAY

Figure 1: From left to right, Catherine Whittaker, Jonathan Alderman (back), Eveline Dürr (front), Carolin Luiprecht.

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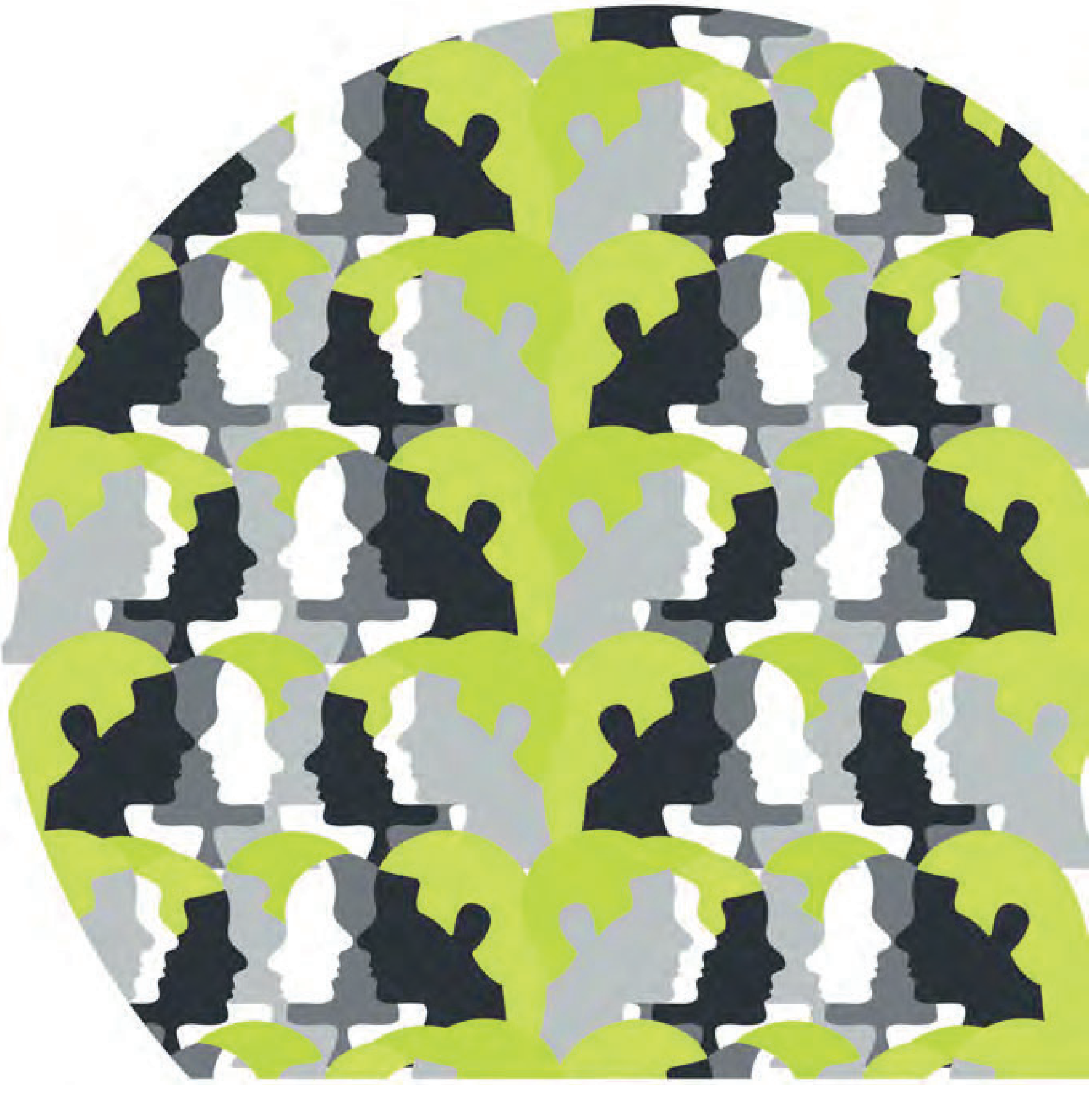

Chapter 1
Introducing Watchfulness in San Diego

“I was wondering if you’re an FBI agent,” Pepe[1] admitted to Catherine some weeks after they first met at a vigil in March 2022. The vigil was commemorating the life of a highly respected and well-loved elder from the San Diegan Brown Berets, who had also been one of the founders of this semi-militant community defense organization. Since the national organization’s beginnings in 1966, the Brown Berets had frequently been under FBI observation,[2] and Pepe had encountered a few himself. Thus, as a white European stranger asking many questions, Catherine had seemed suspicious to him. The twenty-something-year-old U.S.-born son of Mexican parents, a *Chicano*, maintained a serious expression throughout their chat. Yet despite his skepticism, Pepe was willing to connect with the 33-year-old researcher from Germany, telling Catherine about his plans to start a gun club and join the Marines, while fittingly donning a black tactical t-shirt, dark cargo pants, and a brown beret on his black curls. As a Beret, he would often act as security at community events. Yet even before joining the organization at the age of 17, he had learned to be watchful growing up in a neighborhood rife with “violent masculinity” and gangs near several detention facilities and the world’s most militarized border. While cruising in his neighborhood, he pointed to a McDonald’s restaurant in San Ysidro that had been the site of a grisly massacre in 1984. A white Anglo-American man dressed in a military-style outfit, apparently frustrated by U.S. losses in Vietnam and blaming Mexicans for his unemployment, killed 21 mostly Mexican and Mexican American people with a semi-automatic rifle until he was finally shot by a sniper. According to Chicanx Studies scholar Roberto Hernández, who lived two blocks from the McDonald’s at the time of the massacre:

> The trauma of the event was inscribed […] collectively on San Ysidro residents who […] recognized the colonial/racial dynamic that informed the shooting. In this sense, it was arguably reminiscent of the systematic killings of Native peoples that led to the eventual creation of the border and the current globalizing phase of modernity/coloniality, as many Mexican@s knew all too well that numerous frontier massacres had seen more than twenty-one people killed at once.[3]

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[1] All interlocutors’ names in this book are pseudonyms.

[2] Correa, The Targeting.

[3] Hernández, *Coloniality of the US/Mexico Border*, p. 115.

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Since then, a slew of white supremacist mass shootings, including the El Paso shooting in August 2019, in which 23 mostly Mexican and Mexican American people died,[4] as well as the rise of anti-migrant vigilante groups, ongoing police violence against working-class People of Color and militarized reactions to Black Lives Matter protests[5] have contributed to a sense of the U.S.-Mexico border as "a war zone."[6] That is not to mention the violence of the highly-surveilled and patrolled border wall itself, which cuts Pepe off from "the other half of my city," as he conceives of San Diego and Tijuana as one culturally and economically interlinked unit.

Beyond these spectacular displays of violence and threat,[7] less visible forms of state violence and neglect have been no less damaging to Pepe's community. Himself currently an undergraduate student, Pepe recalled that before 2002, San Ysidro did not even have its own high school, so that many students did not graduate and had limited prospects, accordingly, often having to work under exploitative conditions in physically taxing and underpaid jobs. Even after twenty years living north of the border, Pepe's mother struggled financially. Shortly after her third child, Pepe, was born, she was deported as an unauthorized migrant. Years later, she discovered that she had been sterilized in the detention center without her consent – a eugenicist practice that continued in some Californian prisons and detention centers until the prison anti-sterilization bill[8] was signed into law in September 2014.[9]

"We were never meant to survive," Audre Lorde wrote to encourage other Women of Color to speak up against injustice.[10] Who do you become, when the system seeks to surveil, harass, incarcerate you, when it even seeks to prevent you from being born? In the face of such a politics of death, a necropolitics,[11] how do you respond?

Pepe responded by working towards revolution. His preparation for it and everyday anticolonial resistance consisted in training, educating, and arming himself, while looking out for his community. For him, watchfulness was a way of life.

In this book, we show how watched and 'othered' people in the border city of San Diego on the Southwestern edge of the Unites States respond to racism and surveillance with varied practices of watchfulness. As we will show, watchfulness goes beyond counter-surveillance, as it constitutes an integral part of many people's daily lives and shapes their individual and collective subjectivities within contemporary U.S. society. Experiencing racist discrimination often leads to developing a vigilant disposition, which in turn becomes a significant aspect of people's everyday practices and what it means to be living in the borderland around the physically divided twin cities of San Diego and Tijuana. Focusing particularly on Chicanxs (Chicanos of all genders), but also including other disadvantaged and racialized individuals and groups, we explore how individuals intervene against structural inequalities and threats in their lives, such as by re-claiming space, consciousness raising, participating in protests, and engaging in healing practices. As we will show ethnographically, to be Chicanx and San Diegan is intimately connected to the situation of living in a borderland condition defined by inequality and violence, an in-betweenness created by the meeting and mixing of different cultures that is more than the sum of its parts.[12] The borderland character of San Diego emerged through the incorporation of California into the United States as an outcome of the Mexican-American War of 1846–1848. Our ethnography looks at how present-day U.S. citizens, who are Chicanx, Latinx and otherwise watched and 'othered,' deal with being treated with suspicion and as aliens on their own land. We argue that contestations surrounding belonging create particularly watchful selves and that this is more broadly a significant aspect of borderland lifeworlds. Watchfulness is an ambivalent practice that can express anxiety, but also care and contribute to community building. As we will show in this ethnography, watchfulness can represent a way of life.

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[4] Aguilera, Mass Shooting, El Paso.

[5] Whittaker/Dürr, Vigilance, Knowledge, and De/Colonization.

[6] Hernández, *Coloniality of the US/Mexico Border*, p. 109.

[7] Cf. Valencia Triana, *Capitalismo Gore.*

[8] SB 1135. http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/13-14/bill/sen/sb_1101-1150/sb_1135_cfa_20140620_180402_asm_comm.html [last access: 10/07/2022].

[9] Ray, California's central role in the eugenics movement.

[10] Lorde, *Your Silence.*

[11] Mbembe, Necropolitics.

Despite its image of a relaxed vacationland, San Diego is also a highly militarized, conservative border city. As most unauthorized immigration to California took place in the San Diego area in the 1980s, the city responded with different forms of border security and has continued militarizing its border ever since.[13] According to the memoir of Francisco Cantú, a former border patrol agent, the militarization of the border dehumanizes both those trying to cross and those defending the border.[14] Although San Diego is also a "sanctuary city," which means that local police have instructions not to provide information to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and California is a multi-ethnic state famous for its progressive politics, in practice, ICE terrorizes local mixed-status neighborhoods. For instance, Berenice, a student in her late twenties who was born and raised in San

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[12] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera.*

[13] Davis/Mayhew/Miller, *Under the Perfect Sun.*

[14] Dürr/Whittaker, Introduction, p. 5.

Juan, Puerto Rico, grew up having to be attentive because she had to look after her mother, who lives with epilepsy and diabetes. Berenice described sometimes anxiously checking whether her mother was still breathing at night. More recently, she persuaded her mother to move in with her in San Diego, in order to receive better health care than was available to her on the island – a fact which Berenice argues is rooted in structural racism. When her mother was hospitalized the summer of 2019:

> I was just like, why is [this ICE SUV] there – I thought it was just circumstantial, like someone who had just been detained was just taken to the hospital. And then I realized it was in front of the ER all day every day, multiple days in a row. […] I cannot fathom, like, me taking my mom to an emergency in a life-or-death diabetic crisis and not having documents and then there's an ICE thing there and then what do I risk? Being separated from my mom, her dying […] alone without help and me being taken to a freaking detention center?

After picturing this alternative future for her family and the real threat to unauthorized immigrants in her community, Berenice photographed the vehicle and uploaded it to a community advocacy organization's social media page in order to warn others. In this way, Berenice directed her vigilance towards anticipating potential harms to her wider community. By examining this kind of peer-to-peer vigilance beyond top-down surveillance and bottom-up sousveillance,[15] we go beyond previous conceptualizations in Security Studies. Thus, we argue against a unidirectional understanding of vigilance as vertical, horizontal, or lateral, but rather stress the crossovers, crisscross connections and relationality of watchfulness. Our book therefore aims to rethink watchfulness as a multilayered concept, always entangled with its socio-cultural context more broadly. Further, we show the consequences of internalized watchfulness and discuss the practices that result from these processes. In doing so, we advance the theoretical discussion on watchfulness in anthropology, while also refining and expanding the conceptual toolkit of Security Studies.

In the following, we introduce some of the key concepts that we will be using in our ethnographic analysis of watchful responses to contemporary inequalities and discrimination in San Diego. Throughout the book, we pay particular attention to notions of vigilance in the specific context of borderlands and coloniality, and we are interested in understandings of the self- and subjectmaking in relation to temporality and racialized, othered bodies.[16] We also stress the Chicanx "struggle" fighting against injustices and coloniality, its dynamics over time and extension into the digital sphere. Further, we draw on the historical context through which San Diego-Tijuana developed as a borderland and what kinds of subjectivities emerged among racialized people on the U.S. side of the border. Citizens and lawful residents like Pepe, who identifies as "Mexicano," "Chicano," "Indigenous," and "Cholo" (counter-cultural Chicano youth with Indigenous ancestry), often find themselves stereotyped by white Anglo Americans as well as racially profiled and criminalized by law enforcement. This is almost inevitable as already in their training, police recruits learn to perceive and engage with racialized and gendered bodies according to specific "scripts" that ultimately enable racialized police violence.[17] Those whose appearance does not always differentiate them from newly arrived migrants often face disadvantages – even if they have lived in the United States for many generations. This includes invisible threats, such as from environmental pollution and unequal health care provision, which we discuss in chapter 5. As we argue throughout the book, being, in Anzaldúa's terms, borderlanders (*fronterizxs*) and crossers of the border that crossed them (*transfronterizxs*),[18] and the everyday struggles this entails, involves a level of personal and collective vigilance that marks the subjectivity of Chicanxs and members of other similarly racialized and disadvantaged groups. Throughout this book, we extend our analysis to include other non-white, colonized people who experience discrimination in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands and San Diego more specifically. Many of the Chicanxs we worked with identified as *Raza*, which they understood as an inclusive term to describe Latinx, Indigenous, and other People of Color. However, some people argue that the term erases Black people and excludes Indigenous people because it refers to José Vasconcelos' concept of a "*Raza Cósmica*,"[19] which is thought to be created through the mixing of Spanish and Indigenous people in Mexico, producing a superior mestizo subject. This is particularly important for chapter 6, where we ethnographically explore the digital watchfulness of healers and self-identified *brujxs*[20] who do not frame themselves as Raza but rather criticize and reject the term, and where we examine their healing practices addressing the manifold consequences of exclusion. Resistance against coloniality and white supremacy, as well as other experiences of discrimination plays a pivotal role in everyday life for Black and Indigenous activists, as well as other activists of Color.[21]

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[15] Wolverton, "Sousveillance."

[16] See also Dürr et al., *Becoming Vigilant Subjects.*

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[17] Aushana, Inescapable.

[18] See Fránquiz/Ortiz, Who are the transfronterizos.

[19] Vasconcelos, *Raza Cósmica.*

[20] *Brujxs*, from *bruja/brujo* (witch/witcher in Spanish) is a non-gendered self-designation. While it is commonly used in a derogatory and accusatory way, activist Latinx and Chicanx groups and especially women and non-binary people try to reclaim it.

Watchful subjects

“If you see something, say something”: This famous public awareness campaign encapsulates what vigilance is typically about. It was originally introduced in New York City after the September 11 terrorist attacks.[22] Depicted here is a recent bilingual English and Spanish version as seen on a San Diegan trolley in February 2020 (see Fig. 2). Such slogans encourage citizens to support and collaborate with law enforcement by observing their surroundings attentively and reporting anything suspicious. In this way, citizens are made responsible for their collective safety, rather than just leaving safety in the hands of the police. This also means that the state uses its citizens to comply with tasks of the state, such as providing security, and thus turns watchfulness into a form of governance. Appeals to be watchful are made meaningful by tying them to values that point beyond self-interest, portraying them as being of great social concern. However, the state does not always succeed in channeling the effects of observations in the desired direc-

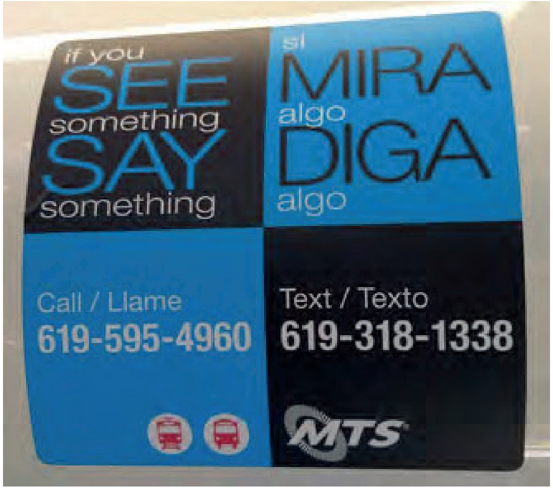

Figure 2: Public Service Announcement on a San Diegan trolley, February 2020.

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[21] We capitalize Raza, Black, Brown, Indigenous and People of Color, following a wider consensus to do so in U.S. scholarship. This spelling highlights the constructedness of these protected categories, thus helping to denaturalize pseudo-biological and discriminatory assumptions about what are, stereotypically and without scientific basis, often considered to be different “races” in popular thought. White, however, is not capitalized in this book, as people racialized as white do not share the same experiences of racism as people who are racialized differently.

[22] Fernandez, A Phrase for Safety. See also Emerson, Vigilant subjects.

tion – rather, individuals may choose actions which can challenge or even oppose state interests.[23]

As Arndt Brendecke and Paola Molino suggest, many fundamental social services like security rely "on observations made and communicated by regular citizens who neither observe 'from above' nor are representatives of any particular institution."[24] Vigilance thus consists in "services rendered by people who willingly report what they have seen, heard or sometimes smelt,"[25] linking individual attention with institutional tasks, such as security. The authors argue that interaction between private attention and broader institutions is mediated by complex cultural, linguistic, and social relations, which shape the ambivalent civic self, a process of subjectivation. According to Jacques Rancière, civil society is thus key to the functioning of "the police," which he conceives not simply as an institution of the state, but as a widespread disposition to maintain a particular social order. In Rancière's sense, the police includes ordinary Anglo-American citizens, some of whom patrol the border area as vigilantes.[26] On the other hand, marginalized U.S. citizens, including working-class People of Color, are often the implicit object of vigilance. As analyses of the "If you see something, say something" campaign have shown, what people perceive as suspicious often is directed by their conscious and subconscious biases, thus drawing on racialized imaginaries of threat.[27] Thus, seeing, which is the privileged sense in the context of vigilance, is not a neutral, universal human sense, but profoundly shaped by our socialization.[28]

Vigilance is a concept deeply associated with racism and vigilantism in the U.S., which in turn inspires watchfulness on behalf of those watched. At the U.S.-Mexico border, patrols of vigilantes known as Minutemen search for anyone who has crossed the border illegally.[29] Vigilantism refers to "taking the law into your own hands without any legal authority."[30] However, it is not just an increase in vigilance, but a premeditated form of action by private citizens who use force or threat to (as they see it) provide assurances of security which they feel are otherwise lacking.[31] Dubbed the "vigilante president" by *The New Republic*, former pres-

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23 Dürr, Beobachter:in.

24 Brendecke/Molino, The Cultures of Vigilance, p. 11.

25 Ibid.

26 See also Hernández, *Coloniality of the US/Mexico Border.*

27 Balme, Hypervigilance.

28 Ivasiuc/Dürr/Whittaker, The Power and Productivity.

29 Walsh, Community, surveillance and border control; Shapira, *Waiting for Jose*; Arfsten, *The Minuteman*, Auf der Jagd.

30 Mareš/Bjørgo, Introduction, p. 1.

31 Johnston, What is Vigilantism?

ident Donald Trump infamously defended right-wing vigilante groups,[32] while warning against immigrants, drugs, crime, and COVID-19, which he called the "China Virus," crossing the southern U.S. border.[33] In response, Trump increased numbers of border patrol agents and ICE raids, while upgrading technological border surveillance measures. The high number of border patrol agents (over 21,000 in total at the time of writing this) means that Mexican Americans living near the border regularly see people looking like themselves being chased by border patrol agents.[34] Unsurprisingly then, many San Diegan working-class Latinxs associate the word "vigilance" with racist vigilantes and hostility towards themselves and (other) People of Color.

Vigilance and its related concepts, watchfulness and attentiveness, and subjectivation are central to our research. To be vigilant describes individually directing condensed attention towards an externally set target either to navigate a situation of heightened uncertainty or to avert a specific perceived danger in the service of an assumed greater good, which may include social, moral, or religious goals.[35] In the case of Chicanxs and other groups mistaken for migrants, the perceived danger may present itself in the form of *la migra*, the immigration agencies of the U.S., as there have been cases in which U.S. citizens have been unlawfully deported for not carrying proof of residence when encountering border patrol officers.[36] In this book, we examine how people living in a cultural and political borderland, particularly people who are not themselves migrants, develop practices of vigilance that help them to navigate daily life. Furthermore, we are interested in the concomitant processes of subjectivation that result, as people anticipate racial discrimination and violence against themselves in order to avoid or minimize it.

Unlike surveillance, vigilance has yet to be examined more closely by anthropologists. The concept has often been used vaguely[37] and been employed interchangeably with alertness, caution, anxiety, fear, and tension.[38] In one of the few articles directly engaging the concept, Henrik Vigh argued that particular environments of uncertainty, where an enemy may not be easily identifiable, produce "a constant awareness and preparedness toward the negative potentialities of social figures and forces."[39] Contrasting the ethnographic contexts of Bissau and Belfast, he observed people constantly employing all their senses to scan their surroundings "for early warning signals, creating a heightened awareness toward the unfolding of social and political life."[40] This heightened awareness can be oversensitive, meaning that in a context of ongoing conflict any perceptible sign of difference, even as mundane as a haircut, can come to be perceived as a threat. In passing, Vigh acknowledges that vigilance represents a "struggle to gain clarity and knowledge of these invisible yet dangerously present" threats.[41] In our work, we draw on the "negative potentialities" highlighted in Vigh's study that may create a hypervigilant self, but we also take it further by showing the flip side to this, by carving out the enabling and empowering potential of watchfulness. This is a characteristic particularly of feminist vigilance, which Sotirin describes as going beyond defensive aspects to combine anger with hope. Thus, feminist vigilance, "fueled by anger and critique"[42] emerges from an "affective landscape dominated by anxiety, fear and suspicion"[43] to create new ways of thinking, of being, and possibilities for change.

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[32] Hurst, The Vigilante President.

[33] Hee Lee, Donald Trump's false comments.

[34] Hernández, *Coloniality of the US/Mexico border.*

[35] Brendecke, Attention and Vigilance, p. 17.

[36] Hernández, *Coloniality of the US/Mexico border,* p. 115.

[37] Wolf-Meyer, Editorial Introduction: Alertness.

[38] Crane/Pascoe, Becoming Institutionalized; Regnier, Forever slaves?, McKenna, "We're Supposed to Be Asleep?"

Watchfulness, as one of the terms we use to describe vigilance by racialized people throughout this book means watching over others as well as oneself. It is not only a "way of seeing," but also "a way of being."[44] In this sense, Daniel Goldstein has defined it as "an alert disposition through which barrio residents hope to protect themselves from harm by spotting it before it strikes."[45] Based on his research in Andean Bolivia, Goldstein argues that such watchfulness is not only reactive but is also "generated by insecurity and a sense of abandonment – of being left outside the law's protections, or out-lawed."[46] Similarly, we are interested in the watchfulness of people who are non-state actors, particularly over their own behavior,[47] in contrast to the surveillance of police or officials representing organs of the state. Rather, we are interested in individuals who have become aware of being under surveillance and practice watchfulness in response. We therefore ask: How do the watched become watchful?

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[39] Vigh, Vigilance, p. 99.

[40] Ibid., p. 104.

[41] Ibid., p. 110.

[42] Sotirin, Introduction to Feminist Vigilance, p. 12.

[43] Ibid., p. 10.

[44] Finn, Seeing Surveillantly.

[45] Goldstein, *Outlawed*, p. 122.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Frekko/Leinaweaver/Marre, How (not) to talk about adoption.

Colonizers have historically observed and inspected the colonized in order to control them. As surveillance conditions shape their everyday actions, the colonized become watchful in turn – not only towards state representatives, who may act friendly or hostile in different situations, but also of their own behavior. Monitoring themselves is an expression of having embodied the “colonial gaze,” a concept popularized by postcolonial authors, such as Frantz Fanon (1970) and Edward Said (1978). According to Fanon, Black people in colonial and postcolonial Algeria came to embody the “white gaze” of the colonizer, as it physically conditioned the ways in which they moved in their environment.[48] Fanon describes this as a process through which attempts to meet colonizers’ expectations alienate people from their own self, which is eventually colonized. In a similar vein, W.E.B. DuBois argued that Black people in early twentieth century U.S. formed a “double consciousness,” as they had learned to anticipate how their appearance and conduct might be perceived by any white people present.[49] However, as we argue in chapter 4, these processes work somewhat differently and produce different consequences in the Chicanx context. Chicanxs see their ancestral homeland as overlapping with U.S. territory, and thus see themselves as colonized people while also acknowledging their own involvement in colonial practices – what Chicana feminist scholar and poet, Gloria Anzaldúa has framed as “new consciousness.”[50]

Nevertheless, these examples demonstrate that over time, colonized people typically come to embody, both in the sense of enacting and subconsciously carrying with them, a sense of being watched by colonizers or other institutional and social forces. This embodiment of the colonizer’s gaze is fostered by colonial institutions and partially replaces state surveillance. Anzaldúa refers to this embodied alertness as *la facultad:* “[…] we are forced to develop this faculty so that we’ll know when the next person is going to slap us or lock us away. […] It’s a kind of survival tactic that people, caught between worlds, unknowingly cultivate. It is latent in all of us.”[51] Cultivating *la facultad* allows people to instantly, intuitively sense “the deep structure below the surface” on a subconscious, pre-verbal level, thereby losing their ignorance and innocence,[52] which finally leads to a permanent state of vigilance.[53] Accordingly, *la facultad* is a multi-sensory, embodied survival tactic that goes beyond mere awareness and preparedness, as it enables Chicanxs to recognize coloniality and resist it, such as by anticipating discrimination or refusing to assimilate into Anglo-American society. Nevertheless, the privileging of *mestizaje* in Anzaldúa's work has been criticized for erasing Black and Indigenous survivance[54]. Anzaldúa drew heavily on the work of Mexican nineteenth century writer José Vasconcelos, whose description of *mestizaje* in Mexico as creating a "cosmic race" privileged whiteness within the mixture of races and assumed the disappearance of native peoples and then placed Black people at the bottom of a cosmic hierarchy.[55] In addition, Anzaldúa has been criticized for not fully acknowledging certain power hierarchies by claiming that through the new mestiza consciousness individuals can resume power by transcending them.[56]

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[48] Nielsen, *Foucault, Douglass, Fanon, and Scotus.*

[49] DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk.*

[50] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, pp. 77–98.

[51] Ibid., p. 39.

[52] Ibid., p. 38.

[53] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, p. 51.

As we show in our work, vigilance is also central to other disadvantaged actors' self-understanding because their multiple cultural affiliations as well as their ambivalent relationship with the past demand a comprehensive, critical awareness of history as well as an intensive examination of their own positionality. This intense reflexivity plays out in particular watchful practices towards the self – for instance, when racialized people engage in shadow work as we show in chapter 6. Here, we describe how traumatic experiences as well as stereotypes are addressed in order to cope with the consequences of coloniality – a process which the actors frame as "healing." The constant negotiation of belonging, living at cultural crossroads, and the never-ending identity work involved can become a continuous mental and psychological challenge in everyday life for some people in the U.S.-Mexico borderland. On the one hand, as Anzaldúa describes, this can trigger stress, worry, and pain, but it can also act as a breeding ground for agency and a capacity to navigate tense situations competently in different cultural contexts.[57]

This multifaceted watchfulness is referred to as "being *trucha*"[58] by our Chicanx interlocutors and framed as "a way of life." We argue that "to be *trucha*" is a significant characteristic of the sense of self of Chicanxs and the condition it describes can similarly be applied to other racialized people living in the borderland. Accordingly, we argue that this kind of watchfulness is key in their subjectivation processes. It describes not just a negative disposition of vigilance, in the sense of avoiding danger, but also vigilance in the sense of taking care not to harm others in one's vicinity. Through ethnography we show the significance of watchfulness as a practice in a process of racialized non-white subjectivation. The concept of subjectivation highlights the process of becoming a subject. Subject formation can become evident through an act of speech by specific actors, or a practice that takes place in a specific location or under specific material conditions. Elenes argues "that it is precisely when Chicanas and Chicanos became speaking subjects who are politically engaged, naming their own realities, and offering truly democratic alternatives that we [Chicanxs] become dangerous."[59] Challenging who has the right to speak and acting as if one already has the rights that have been denied to them is for Rancière one of the fundamental aspects of what he understands by politics.[60] We argue through the book (particularly in chapter 3), that actions on a collective level to assert their rights to make decisions over their own community and neighborhood have been significant in the formation of Chicanxs as political actors.

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[54] Vizenor, *Manifest Manners.*

[55] See Palacios, Multicultural Vasconcelos.

[56] Cuevas, *Post-Borderlandia*, p. 11.

[57] Cf. Hammad, Border Identity Politics.

[58] See Kammler, Trucha, discussing the meaning of this expression from an ethno-linguistic point of view.

It follows that vigilance can have both colonizing and decolonizing effects,[61] as it often arises in response to surveillance and vigilantism: the watched become watchful. As a particularly tightly surveilled city, with "smart lights,"[62] drones,[63] ring doorbells,[64] and neighborhood watch apps[65] producing data for the police,[66] San Diegan infrastructure projects a particular specter of a powerful, all but omniscient state "as imagined, envisaged, anticipated, and ultimately embodied by migrants."[67] Old and new surveillance technologies are key features of borderlands more broadly,[68] collecting footage that is then analyzed with face recognition software. Both the software itself and the databases it draws from have been shown to exhibit racist biases.[69] For Hernández everyday surveillance and harassment through border agents and new technologies are aspects of a larger structure that he refers to as the Civilization of Death.[70] It is an assemblage of oppressive institutions and systems, including Capitalism, Christian religion, Heteropatriarchy, and White Supremacy. Hernández argues that there is a "decolonial imperative" to resist and dismantle this oppressive structure.[71] We are interested in how the specter of this Civilization of Death may be embodied as a state of constant watchfulness by those who are not necessarily themselves unauthorized migrants but are nevertheless treated by representatives of the state as being under suspicion of being so.

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[59] Elenes, Border/Transformative Pedagogies, pp. 258 f.

[60] Rancière, *Dissensus*, pp. 36 f.

[61] See also Dürr/Whittaker, Wachsamkeit als Alltagspraxis.

[62] Marx, San Diego Smart Streetlights.

[63] Zevely, Why a drone may save your life.

[64] Fung, Amazon's Ring.

[65] Makena, Inside Nextdoor's 'Karen Problem.'

[66] Abril, Drones, robots, license plate readers.

[67] Barenboim, The specter of surveillance, p. 80.

[68] Stop LAPD Spying! 2021; Domingo Garcia, I'm a Mother of Four; Couldry/Mejias, Data Colonialism; Browne, *Dark Matters*.

[69] Raji, Data encodes systematic racism.

[70] Cf. Hernández, *Coloniality of the US/Mexico Border.*

[71] Ibid.

Watchfulness against coloniality is key in creating a cognitive and embodied knowledge, or *conocimientos*, in Anzaldúa's terms, to combat these hegemonic powers.[72] For example, knowledge that police violence disproportionately affects non-white people makes many Latinxs and disadvantaged individuals vigilant when interacting with the state and its institutions, such as the police or migration agencies (see chapter 5 and 6). This same watchfulness is on the one hand a product of coloniality, and on the other contains the potential for decolonization, in that it functions as a warning signal and prevents assaults through attentive observation.

In order to understand the impact of historical conditions on vigilance in the borderlands and for Chicanxs and Latinxs as well as other racialized Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, it is necessary to understand their community formation and self-understanding. For instance, Chicanx self-understanding is characterized by heterogeneity, *mestizaje* and resistance to colonialism and its temporalities. Specifically, we show in this book the ways Chicanx emerges as a community by challenging their reality, and the structures of coloniality that had defined it, as well as extending this understanding to other anticolonial subjects.

Understanding of the self and anticolonial subject formation

To acknowledge and uplift these different perspectives and to pay special attention to the multiplicity of experiences, we apply an intersectional lens to our research and throughout this book. As Hill Collins writes, the concept of intersectionality makes intersecting systems of power and their interconnection with equally overlapping social inequalities visible.[73] While intersectionality is criticized for simplifying subjective experiences and differences and for its essentialism,[74] it is credited for bringing along analytical sensitivity for recognizing sameness and difference in relation to power.[75]

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[72] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera.*

[73] Hill Collins, *Intersectionality*, p. 43.

[74] Anthias, Translocational Positionality.

[75] Cho/Crenshaw/McCall, Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies, p. 795.

The people at the center of our research share certain experiences of discrimination – being racialized and subjected to racism, (wrongly) being identified as migrants, due to their legal status, or just in general not being read as belonging to a white, heteronormative society. They would mostly identify as non-white as resistance to the persistence of coloniality. Adding to this, the Latinx community is often the target of anti-migratory rhetoric and the criminalization of migration, which can lead to fear and distrust of public institutions.[76] These experiences lead to differing responses: While some might try to blend into society, others resist discrimination in their everyday lives or as activists. Hill Collins credits individuals particularly affected by the oppression of racism, heteropatriarchy, and colonialism with attempting to make power structures visible and developing alternative critical social theories and resistance projects.[77]

Throughout this book, decolonization plays an equally important role: we and our interlocutors do not use it simply as a buzzword,[78] but to resist the continuation of coloniality,[79] thus aiming at radically reconstructing knowledge, power, being, and life itself: "'decoloniality,' understood as the simultaneous and continuous processes of transformation and creation, the construction of radically distinct social imaginaries, conditions, and relations of power, knowledge."[80] The actors we present in the course of this book are either racialized and face discrimination and stereotyping because of phenotype, or they self-identify as Chicanx and/or Latinx, as Black, Indigenous or other People of Color, or more broadly as Raza, in some way.

The Chicanx subject has emerged out of, and is intimately connected to, the condition of the borderlands, but definitions vary. According to San Diegan Chicanx Studies professor, Alberto Pulido, Chicanx "describes Mexican-origin people from the late 1960s through the 1980s who were activists for civil rights and social justice. Chicanismo is the philosophy to commit oneself to live and uphold the values and vision of the Chicano movement."[81] He distinguishes the term from Mexican Americans and Mexicans, while explaining that these terms are often used interchangeably in the borderlands "and speak to the raíces, or 'roots' of this ethnic

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[76] Chavez-Dueñas et al., Healing Ethno-Racial Trauma, p. 54.

[77] Hill Collins, *Intersectionality*, p. 117.

[78] Tuck/Yang, Decolonization is not a metaphor.

[79] Quijano, Coloniality of Power.

[80] Walsh, "Other" Knowledges, p. 11.

[81] Pulido/Reyes, *San Diego Lowrider*, p. 3. When referring to the political movement, we follow the common usage in the literature of writing "Chicano movement," while using "Chicanx" when referring to present-day people and culture.

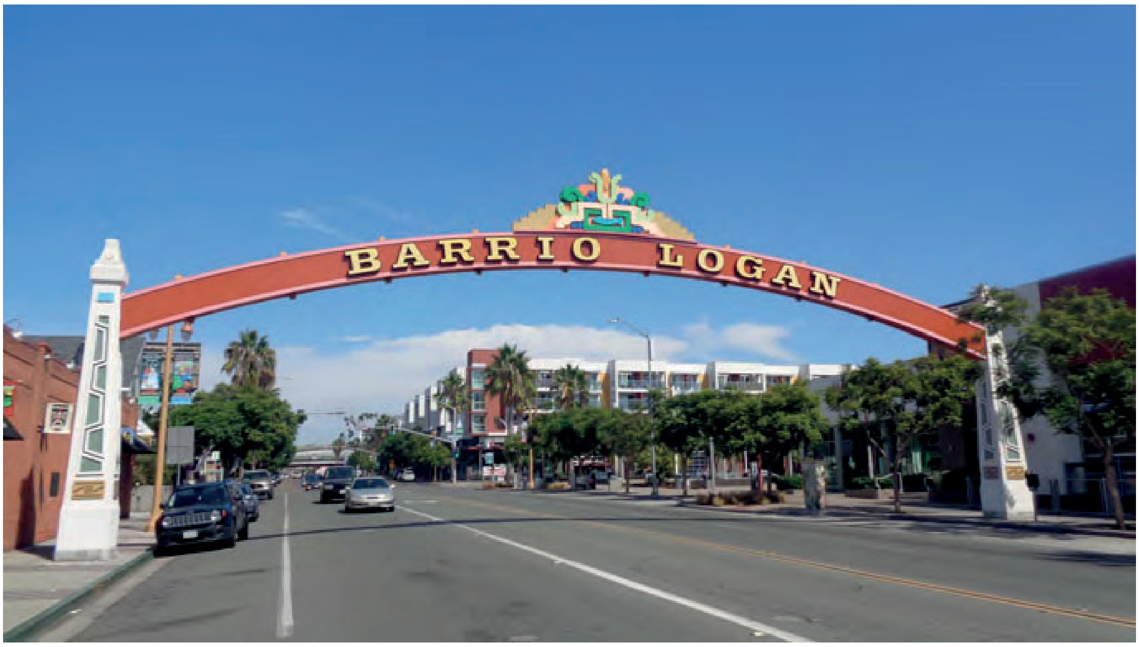

Figure 3: Barrio Logan gateway sign.

community."[82] By contrast, for another San Diegan Chicanx Studies professor, Roberto Hernández, Chicanx refers not to "an ethnic identity but rather [...] to politically self-identified individuals or collectives, in keeping with the politics of self-naming that guided its usage in the Chican@ Movement period."[83] Similar to this latter definition, the Brown Berets de Aztlán of San Diego – who might be described as the Chicanx equivalent of the Black Panthers organization – named their monthly self-published print release "Stay Brown" as a "self-reminder to stay true to ourselves, to our community & to our indigenous ancestors, to decolonize ourselves," as they stated in the first issue.[84] In the process, they defined "Chicano" as a non-racially determined "mindset that we use personally to uplift ourselves and we want to share that mindset with anyone who wants to understand & connect with us."[85] For instance, the Barrio Logan gateway sign (Fig. 3) is meant to "pay homage to Kumeyaay, Aztec, Mayan, and all other cultures" and a mural at the Barrio Logan trolley station displays a revolutionary slogan from the 1970s which is widely used in Latin America, "El pueblo unido jamás será vencido" (a united people will never be defeated, Fig. 4). Similarly, for the Brown Berets,

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[82] Ibid.

[83] Hernández, *Coloniality of the US/Mexico Border*, p. 33.

[84] Brown Beret National Organization, *Stay Brown*, page number unknown. (The photograph of the cited page was shared on the BBNO's Facebook page.)

[85] Ibid.

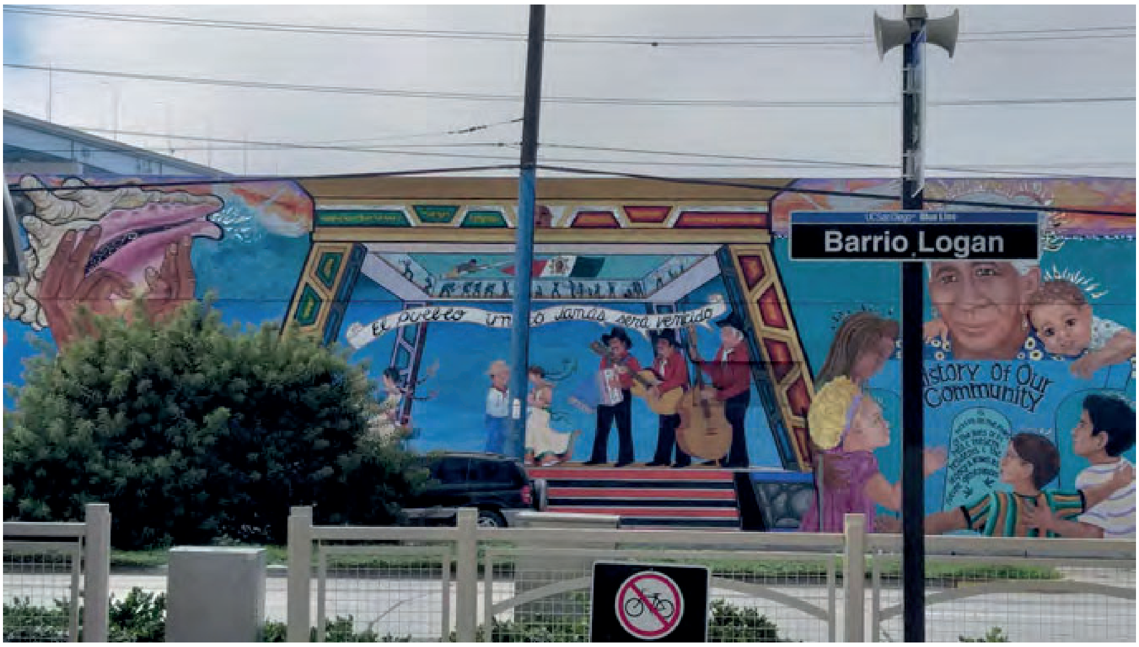

Figure 4: Barrio Logan trolley station mural: *El pueblo unido jamás será vencido* (A united people will never be defeated).

and many others, Chicanx is a non-essentialist identity that is grounded in a history of struggle and obligation to one's community—in never forgetting where one comes from. The word Chicano has also historically been used by wealthier Mexican Americans towards Mexican Americans with indigenous roots; however, particularly since the 1960s, Chicano/a or Chicanx has been used as a self-identifier with positive connotations associated with the Chicano political movement.[86]

Chicanx studies scholars have described the Chicanx subject as forged through the struggles of urban and farmworker unions that from the beginning of the twentieth century fought for improvements in the material basis of their daily work and living conditions and did so in solidarity with other migrant workers.[87] Scholars of Chicanismo (the Chicano movement) have also highlighted the importance of interwoven, cross-border struggles, which have made them "multiply insurgent."[88] These included feminist Chicana movements such as *las Chicanas de Aztlán/Hijas de Cuauhtémoc*, formed at California State University in 1968.[89] Blackwell describes these Chicanas as defining their role as *mujeres de lucha* (women in struggle).[90] We argue that the struggles that we describe in the book, particularly the actions of people local to Barrio Logan in the creation of Chicano Park, have been central in the constitution of Chicanxs as "subjects of struggle" (sujetos de lucha), a term that Gutiérrez has used to define people who are formed as a community through their collective action, in so doing producing new forms of cooperation.[91] Through struggle – including the specific and separate daily struggles that each individual person experiences – not only community is formed out of those who are part of the movement, but, as Jenkins has argued,[92] the subjectivity of each individual person is deeply affected. However, while those self-identifying as Chicanxs play an important role throughout this book, it is not the sole identifier of those cited here and interacted with during our research. San Diego is shaped by its proximity to the U.S.-Mexico border as well as being formed by diverse communities, including Latinx, Mexican American, Chicanx, and immigrant communities. In addition, as we will argue in this section, the Chicanx community is characterized by heterogeneity, and this applies to other identifying 'categories' as well. Latinxs form an especially diverse group in terms of race and ethnicity and their legal status; in addition, experiences of discrimination and marginalization are not universal.[93] Notably, experiences, knowledge, and resistance by queer, Indigenous and Black Latinxs in particular are often rendered invisible in narratives and accounts of the Latinx community.[94]

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[86] Oliver, Race Names.

[87] Acuña, *Occupied America.*

[88] Blackwell, *¡Chicana Power!*, p. 27; Acuña, *Occupied America.*

[89] Blackwell, *¡Chicana Power!.*

[90] Ibid., p. 61.

The term Chicanx emerged as a preferred self-identifier over terms such as Latinx or Hispanic, which are themselves of relatively recent origin, entering the lexicon to describe Mexican Americans and some other Latin Americans in the United States in the 1940s.[95] These latter terms imply a Spanish-speaking hemispheric unity, which erases the diversity of identities among Latin Americans as well as speakers of Indigenous languages, so that many reject these terms as administrative impositions. While Spanish speakers in California had for a long time referred to themselves as Hispanos or Hispano-Americans precisely to assert their own racial superiority, Anglo-Americans transferred the term to refer to include all Spanish-speakers of Mexican and Latin American origin.[96] In his book, *The Latino Threat*, Leo Chavez posits that Latinxs are perceived differently from previous immigrants who ultimately became part of the nation – which is particularly evident in media discourse. The dominant narrative, he argues, is that Latinxs are “unwilling or incapable of integrating” and are therefore portrayed as “an invading force from south of the border that is bent on reconquering land that was formerly theirs (the U.S. Southwest) and destroying the American way of life.”[97] Gutiérrez argues that to be Chicanx is based on an “oppositional consciousness and militant nationalism” that has laid the groundwork for a wider “Latinidad.”[98] The narrative around Mexicans in particular (but also Latinxs in general) has been marked by their characterization as “illegal aliens,” marking them as “illegitimate members of society undeserving of social benefits, including citizenship.”[99]

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[91] Gutiérrez, What's in a Name?

[92] Jenkins, *Extraordinary Conditions.*

[93] Chavez-Dueñas et al., Healing Ethno-Racial Trauma, p. 51.

[94] García, The Politics of Erased Migrations, p. 3.

[95] Gutiérrez/Almaguer, Introduction, p. 2.

[96] Gutiérrez, What's in a Name?, pp. 31–38; cf. Aparicio, (Re)Constructing Latinidad; Sánchez, *Homeland*; Gracia, *Hispanic/Latino Identity.*

As Chavez notes, citizenship is a key concept in American culture, which can involve incorporating immigrants into society through a transformation from “other” to “us.”[100] However, as we will show in this book, Chicanxs contest this process of incorporation, and instead propose a citizenship that recognizes rather than erases difference. Chavez calls this cultural citizenship.[101] This resonates with Renato Rosaldo’s framing of cultural citizenship including the right to be different and yet the same,[102] demanding social justice regardless of origin, phenotype, and status. This is a citizenship which involves active subject-making as a legitimate U.S. citizen in the face of the dominant discourses that portray Latinxs as illegitimate.[103] As we will show, Chicanx subject-making occurs through many practices, including aesthetic ones, that make public statements of belonging, and through which Chicanx subjectivity develops as an oppositional consciousness.

It was in the 1960s that people of Mexican American origin and those with families with a long history in the south-west region of the United States began to identify as Chicanxs. The Chicanx political commitment has its foundation in civil rights movements that protested social inequality, racism, imperialism and violence, including the Vietnam War. It was in the wake of these protests that “Chicano” emerged recognizably as a collective. Anzaldúa describes this process with these words:

> Chicanos did not know we were a people until 1965 […]. With that recognition, we became aware of our reality and acquired a name and a language (Chicano Spanish) that reflected that reality. Now that we had a name, some of the fragmented pieces began to fall together – who we were, what we were, how we had evolved.[104]

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[97] Chavez, *The Latino Threat*, p. 3.
[98] Gutiérrez, What’s in a Name?, p. 43.
[99] Chavez, *The Latino Threat*, p. 4.
[100] Ibid., p. 12.
[101] Chavez, *The Latino Threat*, p. 12, citing Flores and Flores.
[102] Rosaldo, Cultural Citizenship in San José.
[103] See also Flores-Gonzáles, *Citizens but not Americans.*
[104] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, p. 85.

Gutiérrez writes that Raza communities, including Chicanxs and Boricuas (the self-designation for people from Puerto Rico), took inspiration from the Black Panthers when founding community defense organizations, such as the Brown Berets in the Chicanx case, that embraced the color categories that their grandparents had deliberately avoided.[105] Chicanxs promoted inclusive self-help and supported César Chávez's and Dolores Huerta's unionization campaign for better wages and working conditions for workers of every nationality.[106] The ideals of Chicanismo were expressed spiritually and spatially in the notion of Aztlán, which refers to a presumed region in the Southwest from where the Aztecs are understood to have migrated prior to Spanish colonization (see chapter 4). The *Plan Espiritual de Aztlán*, written in 1969, called for "unity among all racially oppressed groups," community control over local institutions, and the development of institutions that would protect Chicanx civil and human rights and guarantee fair wages.[107] Thus, the Chicano movement particularly championed the rights of the mostly Mexican-born harvesters, but also formed alliances with other groups and was in general open to all segments of society.

To this day, the Chicano movement's heterogeneity has increased through the integration of several generations with very different experiences and challenges. For some members of the younger generation, for example, the "struggle" of the 1970s, which built on the farmworker struggles of the 1930s,[108] is largely alien to their experience. Catherine's conversations with young Chicanxs suggest that, while some come from farmworker families, most relate to agricultural workers' issues in more abstract terms. Nevertheless, they reflect social inequality and institutionalized racism as structural features of their society, even if they themselves are affected by them in different ways than their elders were in their day. Class and educational positionality must similarly be viewed in a differentiated way, since, for example, numerous Chicanx intellectuals are socially mobile in U.S. society.[109]

"Chicanx" is thus not to be understood as a description of a closed community, but rather as individuals of mostly Mexican American descent who form various alliances. Many generally identify with U.S. society – albeit from a critical perspective. Others, like Evelya Rivera, express: "we have experienced alienation, ni de aquí ni de alla, not here nor there. We are not Mexican because this land is no lon-

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[105] Gutiérrez, What's in a Name?, p. 38, p. 41.

[106] Acuña, *Occupied America*, pp. 301–310; Gutiérrez, What's in a Name?, p. 41; Garcia, *From the Jaws of Victory.*

[107] Gutiérrez, What's in a Name?, p. 43; see chapter 4.

[108] Acuña, *Occupied America.*

[109] Gutiérrez/Almaguar, Introduction; Sánchez, *Homeland.*

ger Mexico and we are not American because our heritage, our blood, is not American."[110] She explains that it is not through assimilation, but through "reclaiming their history, learning about their heritage, and recognizing their own cultural roots, [that] Chicano/as could become part and parcel of the United States."[111] *Community* is significant not only as a community of solidarity, but, like family, it is a highly politicized and also anti-assimilationist concept in the Chicano movement that promotes resistance to Anglo hegemony. At the same time, with the emphasis on community and family, there is both dissent and consensus with the values of the Anglo-American population, which, however, from Chicanxs' point of view, is more oriented toward individualistic values. When we use the notion of community, therefore, we are not referring to a homogenous group of individuals, but to people connected principally by common values, as well as affect, loyalty and involvement in one another's lives[112] – which, however, does not exclude frictions and conflicts amongst them. This lack of uniformity is also apparent when looking at the Spanish-speaking population segment of the statistical categories Hispanics and Latinos.[113] Here, too, multiple fault lines exist, especially regarding migration from the South. Conflicts between migrants and long-established Mexican Americans fearing for their jobs were reported as early as around 1945 during the *Bracero* program.[114] Even today's middle-class Hispanics who are represented in political office do not necessarily support liberal migration laws,[115] but rather harbor resentment against Mexico as a conservative constituency, advocate tighter controls on the southern border and show themselves to be distinctly "American" in their values.[116]

A borderland city

Our research is situated within what Anzaldúa calls a "borderland"[117]: a space where "two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy."[118] Someone growing up in a borderland may therefore be forced, to place themselves in relation to vague and constantly moving boundaries.[119] It is a space of ambiguity, where national sovereignty is put on display and challenged at once, where people are separated and classified, but also constantly cross borders that are made to keep them apart. Therefore, if "being a settler society structures all American lives,"[120] this is particularly evident in a borderland, where people's lived experiences draw attention to "epistemological and political issues of location."[121]

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[110] Rivera, "Chicanismo," p. 11.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Brint, Gemeinschaft Revisited.

[113] In the U.S. Census, Hispanics are defined as Spanish-speaking persons, regardless of origin or phenotype. Latinxs, on the other hand, include the non-Spanish-speaking population from Latin America, such as from Brazil.

[114] De Léon/Griswold del Castillo, *North to Aztlán*, p. 136.

[115] Ibid., p. 207.

[116] Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper and Beyond*, p. 104.

[117] Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera.*

In the U.S.-Mexico borderland, people who are differently racialized, with different languages, religions and histories occupy overlapping geographical space. This is linked to the history of the U.S.-Mexico border itself. Prior to the Mexican-American War (1846–1848), and the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), San Diego had been part of the Mexican state of California, and had belonged to New Spain before that. The Spanish arrived in the San Diego area and created a settlement (of mostly Indigenous, Mestizo and African people, with few Spanish settlers)[122] in 1769. Following the relocation South of the U.S.-Mexico border, people who had only recently before become Mexicans with the country's independence from Spain in 1821 found themselves caught in a space of ambiguous belonging. Likewise, the imposition of the border separated the Indigenous Tipai-Ipai nation between the U.S. and Mexico. To the South they came to be known "as *Kumiai*, following the Spanish pronunciation, while those in the English-speaking north came to be known as *Kumeyaay*."[123] The culture of Spanish- and Indigenous language-speakers grated against that of incoming Anglophones who regarded them as Mexicans and Indians. By the time that San Diego had been incorporated into the U.S., those local families who might have been able to trace their residency in the area back more than eighty years would already have experienced one new social and political regime overlaid over another, as well as the concomitant intermixing. The borderland was created by the relocation of the political boundary between the two states, one that would become more physically concrete with time. As we will discuss in chapter 4, this territory overlapped with the presumed ancestral land of Chicanxs, Aztlán. Claiming a pre-colonial heritage and Indigenous belonging through their connection to Aztlán and their relations with other local Indigenous people, including Kumeyaay people, lends legitimacy to political Chicanismo and its fight for self-determination and sovereignty.[124]

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[118] Ibid., p. 19.

[119] See Casaglia, Interpreting the Politics of Borders; Laine/Casaglia, Challenging borders; Van Houtum/Van Naerssen, Bordering, ordering and othering; Scott, *Agenda for Border Studies.*

[120] Cattelino, Anthropologies of the United States, p. 275.

[121] Gupta/Ferguson, Discipline and practice, p. 39.

[122] Hernández, *Coloniality of the US/Mexico border*, p. 6.

[123] Ibid.

The outcome of the Mexican-American War did not initially lead to demographic change (from 1840 – 1880, the average migration from Mexico to California was no more than 3,000 – 5,000),[125] but by the time of the Mexican Revolution (1910 – 1920) migration had begun to transform the city of San Diego. In particular, the neighborhood of Logan Heights, in the San Diego Bay area, became a heterogeneous, but predominantly Mexican-American neighborhood.[126] Those whose families had lived in the area for generations began to be joined by more recent migrants, some of whom were encouraged to move to the area by employment in the tuna canning industry, and Logan Heights came to be composed of Mexicans and other Raza whose families had been living in the neighborhood since before the Mexican-American war. Due to its strategic location, San Diego also became a permanent location for the U.S. Navy, whose personnel and infrastructure came to dominate the bay area. Following the First World War, in 1919, a naval contract awarded the Navy 98.2 acres of land in San Diego.[127]

Nationally, although around 350,000 – 500,000 Mexican immigrants to the U.S. were pressured or forced to leave the country during the Great Depression, as a response to labor shortages due to conscription, the Emergency Farm Labor Agreement of 1942, dubbed the *Bracero* program meant that migration from Mexico increased once again.[128] Indeed, through the *Bracero* program, the United States actively encouraged migration.[129] However, the agreement prohibited workers from forming unions and collectively bargaining for increased pay, obliged them to leave the country after harvest season and excluded them from citizenship.[130] This led to a national decline in farm wages from 1942 to 1959.[131] Chacón calls the *Bracero* program the prototype for what became “undocumented migration."[132] While between 1942 and 1946 4.6 million Mexicans became braceros, those excluded from the program became the first unauthorized laborers. Unauthorized migration of those deemed ineligible for the *Bracero* program continued alongside the growing legal migration of Mexicans to the U.S. from the 1940s to 1960s.[133] A large number of people that had entered the U.S. legally did not return to Mexico after the program ended and thus went from being legal workers to "illegal aliens." At the same time, the U.S. feared the intrusion of enemy agents across the southern border. In this context, the issue of border security[134] was declared a national security problem.[135]

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[124] Rodríguez, *Rethinking the Chicano Movement.*

[125] Gutiérrez, Historic Overview of Latino Immigration, p. 109.

[126] Migration from Mexico to California as a whole was only on average 3,000 – 5,000 people per decade from 1840 – 1890, but this number increased significantly in the final decade of the 19th century. By 1900 around 100,000 Mexicans had migrated, and this doubled to 220,000 when the Mexican Revolution began in 1910 and doubled again to 478,000 by the end of the Mexican Revolution in 1920, see Gutiérrez, What’s in a Name?, p. 109.

[127] Galaviz, *Expressions of Membership and Belonging*, pp. 25 f.; Norris, Growth and Change.

[128] Gutiérrez, Historic Overview of Latino Immigration, pp. 109 f.; McCaughan, *The Border Crossed Us.*

[129] Saldívar, Border thinking, p. 275.

[130] Chacón, *The Border Crossed Us*, p. 70.

[131] Ibid.

Until the present day, migration policies have fluctuated with legal measures to stem its flow, and measures to legalize the status of long-time unauthorized workers in the U.S. would be accompanied by the sanctioning of contemporary unauthorized workers. Towards the end of the twentieth century, for example, the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) conferred citizenship on 2.7 million unauthorized workers while also criminalizing labor migration.[136] At the same time the IRCA doubled the budget for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) from $577m to $1.5 billion between 1986 and 1995 and placed greater emphasis on stopping migrants at the border itself, for example through the militarization of the border in Operation Blockade (1993) and Operation Gatekeeper (1994).

The border, however, is highly dynamic and is made more permeable or more hermetically sealed off as needed, accompanied by corresponding discourses that are fueled by the media. While the armament and militarization of the border was advanced in 1994 during Operation Gatekeeper, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into force at the same time, establishing a close economic link across the border.[137] Following 9/11, the PATRIOT Act was passed to allow immigration agencies to deport anyone deemed a security threat without a hearing. More recently, the creation of the migration enforcement agency ICE and the expansion of the border wall have made life more difficult both for migrants attempting to cross the border, and those wishing to remain in the U.S.[138]

San Diego was chosen as a research site because of the nature of its history and contemporary character as a borderland city, and its present-day demographics, with a significant "Hispanic" (the category used in the census) population,

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[132] Ibid.

[133] Gutiérrez, Historic Overview of Latino Immigration, p. 110.

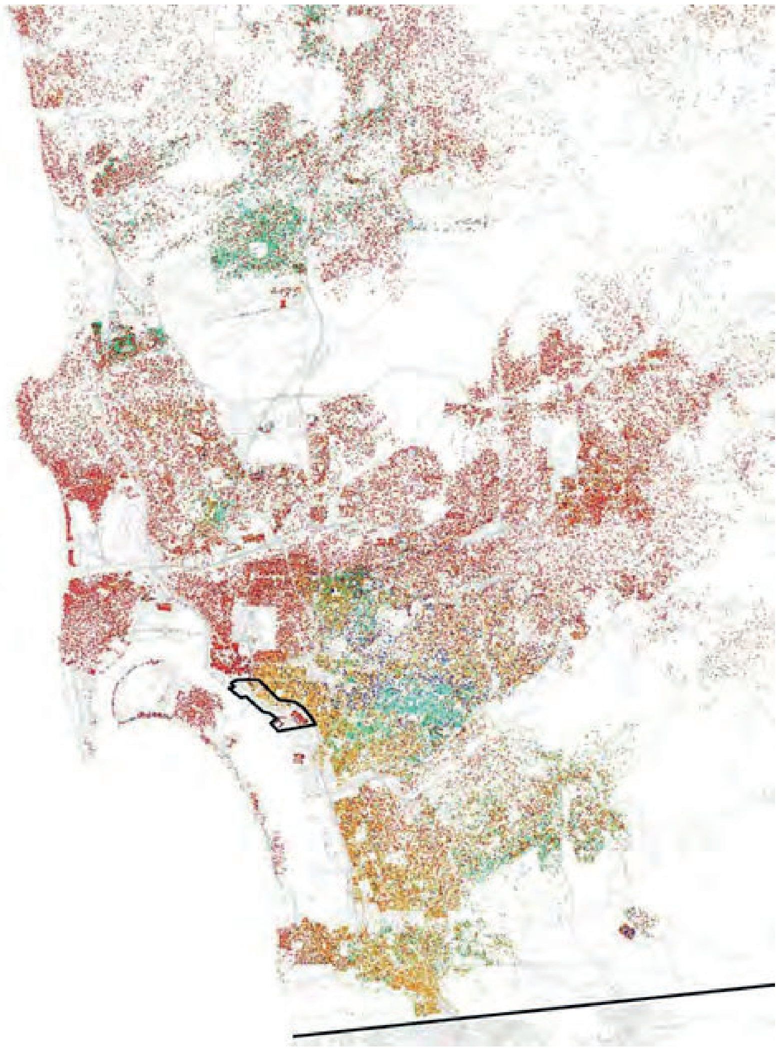
[134] Arfsten, *The Minuteman*, pp. 63 f.

[135] Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper and Beyond*, p. 38.

[136] Chacón, *The Border Crossed Us*, p. 178.

[137] Arfsten, *The Minuteman*, pp. 66 ff.; cf. Hernández, *Coloniality of the US/Mexico border*, p. 182.

[138] Chacón, *The Border Crossed Us*, pp. 188, 193 f.



Map 1: Red represents white, blue represents Black, green represents Asian, orange represents Hispanic, yellow represents other. Each dot is 25 people. Data is from census 2010.

alongside a majority "white" population. The city of San Diego has a population of 1.387 million people as of the census of April 2020.[139] 30.1% of the San Diegan population is identified in the census as "Hispanic," with "White Hispanic" being the second biggest category in the census adding up to 19.7% (see chart 1, p. 25). 88.6% of residents of San Diego, California are U.S. citizens.[140] As map 1 shows, the pop-

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[139] Source: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/sandiegocitycalifornia/PST045221.

[140] Source: https://datausa.io/profile/geo/san-diego-ca. The census categories are problematic from an anthropological point of view, not least because although they ask respondents to self-identify according to a particular category, the categories themselves are already given, and arbitrary. The census categories include Hispanic, for example, but not Latinx or Chicanx (and as chart 2, p. 26 shows, "Hispanic" encompasses a broad range of identities). There are also many administrative

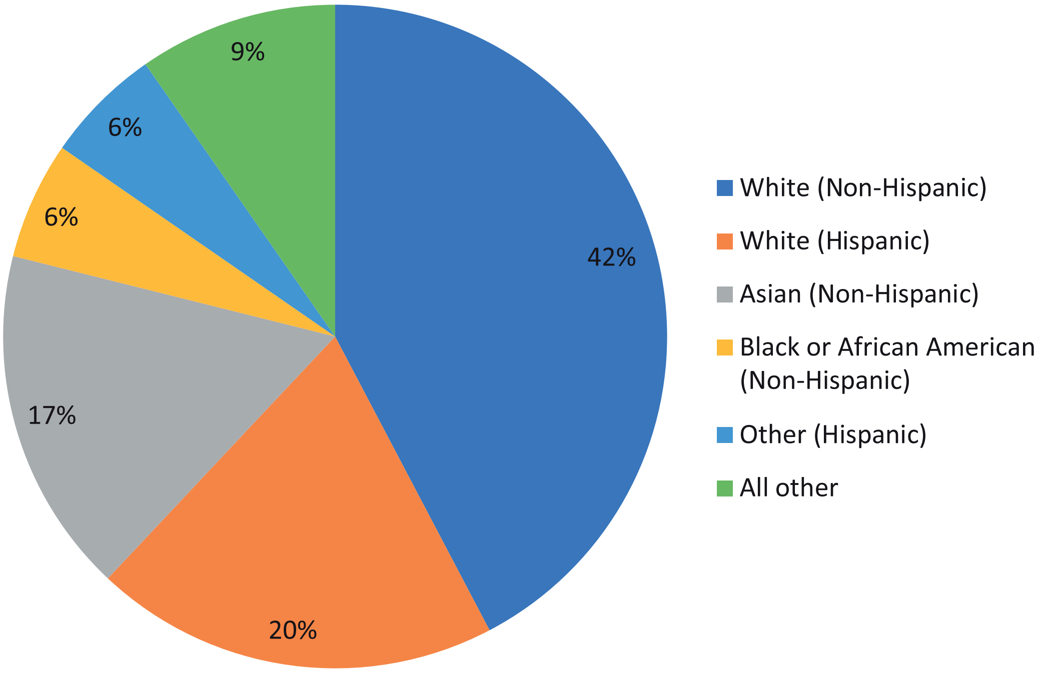

Chart 1: Five largest ethnic groups in San Diego according to census 2020.

ulation categorized as Hispanic tends to be concentrated in the neighborhoods south of downtown and close to the border, while the white population is spread around neighborhoods along the northern beaches and suburbs of San Diego.

The San Diego-Tijuana region has been framed as a "hybrid" border space, as a contested identitarian space but also as a circuit of exchange and crossovers.[141] Pablo Vila argues that it is differences rather than hybridity that is a prominent feature of the border region.[142] According to Herzog and Sohn, this border zone is shaped by debordering and rebordering mechanisms – debordering emphasizing interaction and flows and rebordering focusing on hardening the border for security reasons.[143] An initially non-existent border became first a porous and over time increasingly impenetrable one.[144] While historically existing in the "shadow of San Diego" and functioning as a city to fulfill the needs of its northern twin neighbor,[145] Tijuana's development is closely linked to the debordering and

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hurdles to overcome in order to be included in the census in the first place, thus limiting its inclusivity.

141 Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures*; Kun/Montezemolo, The Factory of Dreams.

142 Vila, The Polysemy of the Label "Mexican."

143 Herzog/Sohn, The co-mingling of bordering dynamics, p. 184.

144 St John, *Line in the Sand.*

145 Sparrow, San Diego–Tijuana, p. 76.

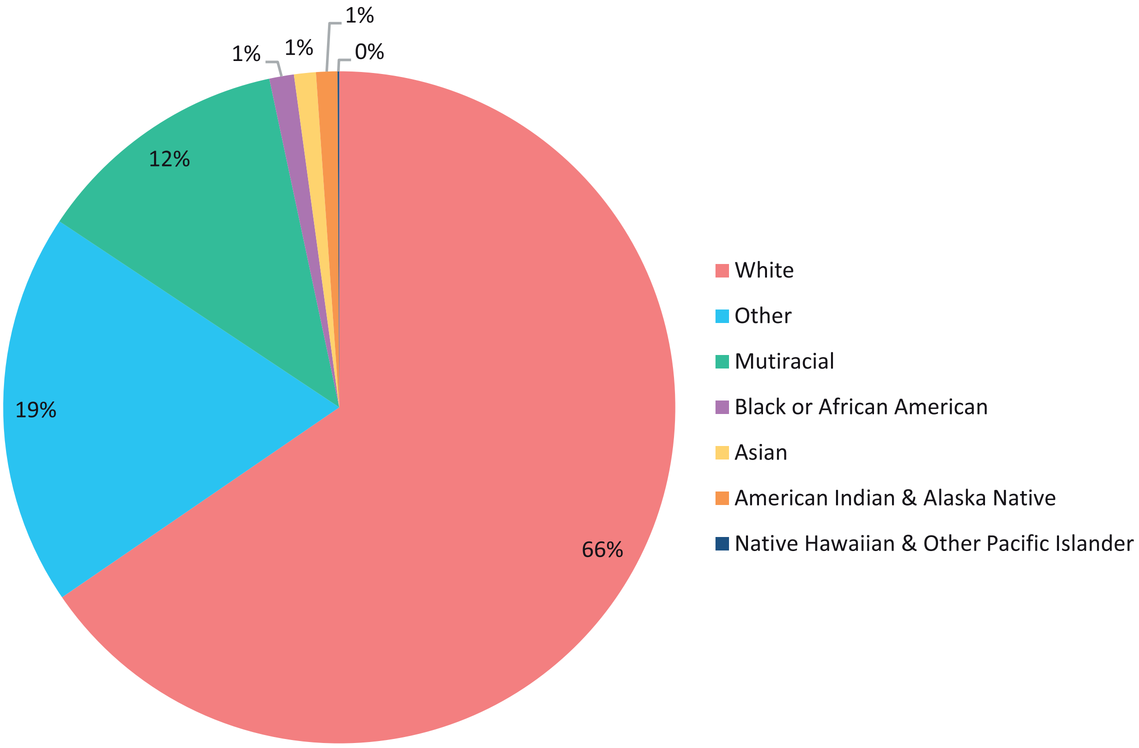

Chart 2: Hispanic population in San Diego according to census 2020.

rebordering forces.[146] Crossing the border from Tijuana often happens daily and more permanently for work purposes,[147] as well as for more affluent families for their children's education and shopping in San Diego.[148] Border crossing from north to south is often motivated by the desire for activities, goods and services that are cheaper in Tijuana than in San Diego (or even prohibited there), such as prostitution, bull and cock fighting or gambling. Thus, while Tijuana is attractive for some with an almost romantic connotation as the "happiest place on earth," it is frightening for others, who describe it as a "drug capital."[149] Tijuana is also an environment that offers low-cost employees, as well as lesser environmental and worker regulations for companies from the North, along with being a tourist destination for the U.S.[150] It is common, for example, for people in San Diego to see doctors and dentists in Tijuana at a fraction of the cost that they would pay at home. However, there are also many white San Diegans who have never been to Tijuana. The border is often mentioned as a source of fear (citing drug cartels

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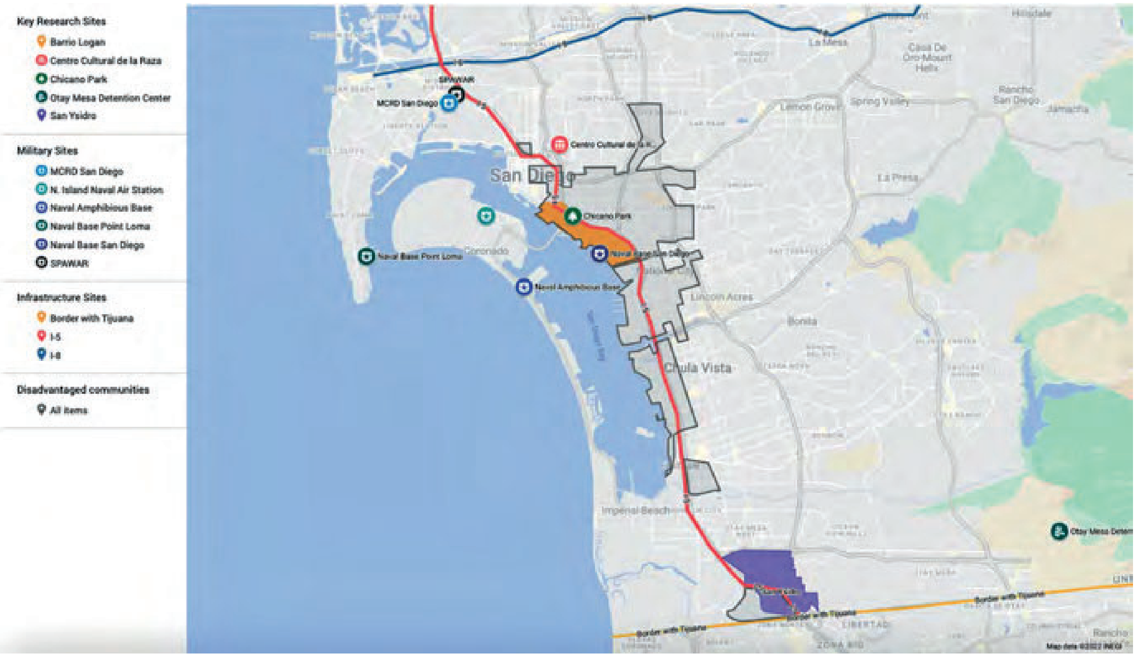
[146] Herzog/Sohn, The co-mingling of bordering dynamics, p. 194.
[147] Yeh, *Passing*.
[148] Sparrow, San Diego–Tijuana, p. 79.
[149] Kun/Montezemolo, The Factory of Dreams, p. 3.
[150] Sparrow, San Diego–Tijuana, p. 76.


Key Research Sites
Barrio Logan
Centro Cultural de la Raza
Chicano Park
Otay Mesa Detention Center
San Ysidro
Military Sites
MCRD San Diego
N. Island Naval Air Station
Naval Amphibious Base
Naval Base Point Loma
Naval Base San Diego
SPAWAR
Infrastructure Sites
Border with Tijuana
I-5
I-8
Disadvantaged communities
All items
San Diego
Chula Vista
Coronado
La Mesa
Lemon Grove
Spring Valley
La Presa
Lincoln Acres
Bonita
Imperial Beach
Rancho San Diego
Jamacha
Hillsdale
Casa De Oro-Mount Helix
Map data ©2022 INEGI

Map 2: Map of the main research locations in the city of San Diego.

and violence), when people remark: "We are only 15 minutes from the border," as you can read on the motorways. Tijuana is known for its high levels of crime and violence and "has broken all of the most brutal records of national violence,"[151] however, while poverty is commonly attributed to the southern side of the border, more people are unhoused in San Diego than in Tijuana.[152] The twin cities San Diego-Tijuana are thus heavily shaped by the border and border practices and while their relationship is uneasy, the economic interdependence between the two has increased since the 1970s.[153] In this book, we focus on the U.S. side of the border.

Map 2 shows our main research locations in San Diego. Mostly, our research took place in Logan Heights and Barrio Logan, as well as the Centro Cultural de la Raza, a Chicano Cultural Community Center located in Balboa Park. Another important site was Chicano Park in Barrio Logan, which is a community park created in an act of resistance to the building of Coronado Bridge in the late 1960s. Chicano Park's famous murals, which were painted on the pillars of the bridge, narrate Chicanx history and identity, as discussed in chapter 3 and 4. In chapter 5 we extend our description of San Diego by looking at different neighborhoods in comparison.

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[151] Aviña Cerecer, The Dispossessed of Necropolitics, p. 7.

[152] Ibid., p. 4.

[153] Sparrow, San Diego–Tijuana, p. 77.

We also reference these sites' virtual existence in the digital sphere throughout the book. In chapter 6, however, social media becomes the main focus – as a research site and as a space where watchfulness and "borderlands" expand into.

In Logan Heights, from the 1930s onwards, the Mexican-American character of the neighborhood would be further reinforced through the practice of redlining, a discriminatory practice of categorizing neighborhoods according to the supposed risk that they posed to insure.[154] This practice developed following the 1934 Housing Act, part of President Roosevelt's New Deal, through which the Federal Government reshaped housing finance to stabilize housing markets and support lenders following the Great Depression.[155] Although not officially a categorization according to race, those neighborhoods deemed as safest to insure were always those that were exclusively white, as opposed to mixed ethnicity or Black or Hispanic neighborhoods.[156] Redlining came to determine people's abilities to get loans and mortgages (and therefore the type of housing and areas they could live in), and public services provided. As Valenzuela-Levi shows in relation to the provision of internet services in Santiago Chile,[157] redlining can mean that neighborhoods are not taken into account equally in the provision of necessary infrastructure and services (so that those excluded have to take matters into their own hands to access them). While the 1958 Fair Housing Act was supposed to encourage fair housing opportunities regardless of race, religion or national origin, by then the practice of redlining had set up the conditions for largely ethnically homogeneous neighborhoods across the U.S. Redlining defined the areas where Hispanic people could live: in San Diego these were Logan Heights, Lemon Grove where Mexicans picked Lemons, Little Italy, and a tiny spot in La Jolla (where maids lived). Though Spanish-speaking people had long lived in these areas, they became second-class citizens.

Neighborhood organizations in Barrio Logan draw parallels between current discriminatory practices and displacements that people living there have faced since the U.S. won the war with Mexico, but also since colonization of the area by the Spanish. Logan voices are hardly taken into account in local decision-making, such as the construction of the Coronado Bridge, which divided Logan Heights and created the neighborhood of Barrio Logan in 1969. At a monthly meeting of the Unión del Barrio's *Noche de Resistencia in Chicano Park* in February 2020, one of the presenters showed the group a map of early Logan Heights (which included

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[154] Areas were graded A (least risky) to D (riskiest), and the term redlining was thought to derive from the red shade demarcating the D neighborhoods (Aaronson/Hartley/Mazumder, 'Redlining' Maps, p. 7).

[155] Aaronson/Hartley/Mazumder, 'Redlining' Maps, p. 34.

[156] Rothstein, *The Colour of Law.*

[157] Valenzuela-Levi, "Somos Zona Roja."

Barrio Logan) as a redlined district. Discriminatory urban planning practices transformed the neighborhood officially from a residential to a mixed-use (residential and industrial) zone, and as a consequence, between 1940 and 1970, the population of Barrio Logan would drop from a high of 20,000 to 5,000.[158] A series of rezoning ordinances in 1957 led to further heavy industry entering the neighborhood, and the construction of the I-5 freeway to the community losing their previous easy access to the bay and the beach.[159] Because of their lack of political capital, the losses of the Mexican Americans displaced from the neighborhood were not taken into account prior to its construction. Current residents of Barrio Logan continue to push back against changes to the character of the neighborhood. We will argue in chapters 5 and 6 that the struggle that the 1960s Chicanx movement engaged in against the construction of intrusive infrastructure, finds echoes in current struggles against the gentrification and "gentefication" (a Chicanx slang word for the replacement of working-class Chicanx culture with its middle-class equivalent) of Barrio Logan, which has seen the Chicanx struggle become commodified through the appearance of cafés, art galleries and other shops that are drawing tourists to the neighborhood.[160] As the population of Barrio Logan grows more diverse, its struggles become more fragmented, often pursuing separate, sometimes competing, or conflicting goals.

Coloniality in San Diego

By creating ethnically homogeneous neighborhoods, practices such as redlining are a clear example of what Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano has called "the coloniality of power."[161] That is, the formal or informal replication of colonial practices of discrimination and inequality in post-colonial societies over new institutional bases. Roberto Hernández has referred to the "socially produced and contested space" of the border as "coloniality incarnate."[162] The effects of the border are felt by Chicanxs through the U.S. cultural imagery of the border itself protecting Americans from racialized undesirables[163] who are a "threat" to U.S. society.[164] The border is also felt through legal practices that do not separate people at the physical border, but create “borders of belonging”[165] within the United States itself. Coloniality is felt in the way that decisions made at city level are more likely to adversely affect Chicanx neighborhoods such as Barrio Logan. This has resulted, for example, in Barrio Logan becoming the most polluted area of the city (see chapter 5).

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[158] Rosen/Fisher, Chicano Park.

[159] Galaviz, *Expressions of Membership and Belonging*, p. 30.

[160] Delgado/Swanson, Gentefication in the Barrio.

[161] Quijano, Coloniality of Power.

[162] Hernández, *Coloniality of the US/Mexico Border*, p. 5.

[163] Ibid., p. 44.

[164] Chavez, *The Latino Threat.*

Discriminatory policies regarding pollution reinforce assumptions about whose voice does and does not count locally, whose voices are able to be heard, and taken into account, and which groups “have no part.”[166] The dominant social paradigm in the United States privileges Anglo-American perspectives on what it means to be a citizen, how one is expected to look, behave and to speak. This allocation of ways of being, doing and saying is what Rancière calls the “police.” The “police” order of the United States is one in which coloniality is taken for granted as a “symbolic construction of the social”.[167] Rancière calls the division of the world into parts, the “distribution of the sensible.” This finds its physical expression in infrastructure projects such as the Coronado Bridge, built through Barrio Logan, which will be discussed in chapter 3, which makes coloniality manifest by the very fact that the people of Barrio Logan were given no say in its construction.[168] Rancière contrasts the concept of the “police” with “politics,” which makes “what was unseen visible.”[169] In this ethnography we highlight how the Chicanx organizations that emerged in San Diego from the 1960s have shone a light on the daily structural inequalities that they face and how they have challenged them.

The coloniality of the borderland condition requires Mexican Americans and Chicanxs and other racialized people to justify their own citizenship. This is because the structural inequality that many people living in San Diego must deal with includes the Anglo-American assumption that they are (possibly illegal) migrants with less right to live in the United States. This sentiment is made manifest, for example, when Mexican American protesters are told “Go back to your country!” by Anglo-American political opponents, or when a Mexican American cleaner is expected to work under the table at a low cost with the assumption that she is living in Tijuana and not paying U.S. taxes. The desire to avoid such suspicions, we argue, results in a watchfulness of being, which was particularly accentuated by the political climate during which the main part of this research took place between February and December 2020. This was the period leading up to the end of Donald Trump’s period in office as U.S. president, whose rhetoric and policies, i.e. emphasizing the need for a “big beautiful” border wall, constantly stoked the fears and suspicions of Anglo-Americans towards migrants, and Mexicans in particular.

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[165] Castañeda, *Borders of Belonging.*

[166] Rancière, *Dissensus.*

[167] Ibid., p. 36.

[168] Alderman/Whittaker, A Bridge that Divides.

[169] Rancière, *Dissensus*, p. 36.

This politicized debate influences the subject positions of the Spanish-speaking population and largely constructs them as “foreign” and as not belonging per se to the imagined nation. The perceived intrusion of foreign bodies into U.S. society is countered with biopolitical measures of disciplining and governance in the sense of Foucault, which manifests itself in sophisticated surveillance apparatuses and protective walls from the state side, but also in specific practices exercised by the non-state side. This includes, for example, vigilante groups that have formed in the border region along the lines of the patriotic militias of the War of Independence and, as Minutemen, seek to protect the U.S.A. from the invaders. Even if these developments are being discussed particularly virulently in the aftermath of Donald Trump’s presidency, they point to a certain historical continuity.[170]

This increased the need for Latinxs and Chicanxs to be watchful in their everyday behavior, particularly in encounters with representatives of state agencies, such as the police, which shape them as vigilant subjects. However, suspicion can be discerned differently throughout the city: in the middle-class neighborhoods to the north, defined primarily as white, the border loses its salience and plays only a minor role in the daily lives of residents there. In these districts, where white, middle-class neighborhoods dominate, residents of Mexican origin are more conspicuous than in southern districts, which tend to be populated by non-whites – as is the case in Barrio Logan.

The biopolitics of the state is combined with a necropolitics that finds expression in various forms of health injustice, including elevated levels of asthma and cancer in Barrio Logan as a direct result of the heavy industry and infrastructure that city authorities have chosen to place within the neighborhood. Necropolitics is defined by Achille Mbembe as “the power and capacity to dictate who may live and who must die.”[171] This can include both the active decision to place polluting industries and infrastructure in locations where they will affect specific communities, and the inaction of regulating authorities who do not sufficiently and equally consider the lives of different sets of people. As we argue in chapters 5 and 6, the effects of being on the receiving end of unequal political decisions are felt physically through health problems that are a direct result of the low-quality air that people have to breathe and other discriminatory conditions and the way that the struggle against coloniality becomes itself imprinted physically on their bodies. However, their continuing survivance,[172] involving contemporary resistance against the designation of the neighborhood as a mixed-use zone (where heavy industry can operate alongside residential homes) appears to be bearing some fruit. In chapter 6, we look at how these health issues as well as the underlying discrimination is addressed through healing practices that are inextricably linked to a call for social justice. In this part of the book we argue that reclaiming ancestral forms of healing is not only a way towards the decolonization of the self, but also a source of empowerment and social justice activism for those who are especially affected by discrimination in the U.S. health care system, as well as throughout all of society.

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[170] Arfsten, Auf der Jagd; Shapira, *Waiting for Jose.*

[171] Mbembe, Necropolitics, p. 11.

Structure of the book

We trace the formation of vigilant subjecthood among migrantized San Diegans in the following five chapters:

In chapter 2 we outline the methodological approaches we took during different stages of research. We describe how the principal fieldworker in the group, Catherine Whittaker, entered the field, and then how we approached a later period of joint fieldwork in San Diego. We reflect on the particular challenges related to the place and time in which fieldwork was conducted. As a borderland city, where, we argue, watchfulness is central to people's everyday lives and subjectivities, some of the people that Catherine and later the whole team met in San Diego are suspicious towards researchers, whether local or from further afield. We examine the challenges that had to be confronted in overcoming this watchfulness, as well as describing some of the relationships with people who were more open to assisting and collaborating with our research from the beginning. Conducting field research during 2020 and 2021 was also challenging because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We describe how the fieldwork evolved to take into account the resulting restrictions, but also to include unexpected events such as the Black Lives Matter protests.

In chapter 3 we take the construction of the Coronado Bridge in 1969 as an inflection point in the history of the neighborhood of Logan Heights and what became Barrio Logan that was significant in the development of Chicanx subjectivity in San Diego. We look at how local people responded to the construction of this unwanted infrastructure by establishing a community space below the bridge, Chicano Park. Chicanx subjectivity developed partly through the struggle to assert control over this space, and because the murals that were painted on the supports of the bridge reflect the local Chicanx vision of their history, with both local and wider Latin American aspects to it.

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[172] Vizenor/Lee, *Postindian Conversations*, p. 82.

In chapter 4 we continue to examine Chicano Park as a site of subject-formation and quotidian watchfulness.[173] Through murals that depict Aztlán, the Chicanx spiritual homeland, the temporal aspect of the Chicanx decolonial struggle is emphasized. We describe Chicano Park as the center of this homeland. Through the example of Joaquín, we show that Chicano Park is not a safe space for Chicanxs by default, but one that the community has to struggle for continuously and individuals have to move through watchfully.

Chapter 5 looks at the way that coloniality becomes imprinted on the body itself. The heavy industry that has developed in Barrio Logan since the early twentieth century, combined with the construction of polluting infrastructure described in chapter 3 has directly resulted in Barrio Logan becoming one of the neighborhoods with the worst air quality in the city and California as a whole. As a consequence, residents of Barrio Logan have a higher-than-average incidence of health problems such as cancer and asthma. We reflect on the intersectional nature of health and how this is reflected in experiences of the pandemic and of gentrification among people in different neighborhoods across San Diego. Chicanx activists therefore express their survivance through environmental justice campaigns that highlight continuing coloniality.

Chapter 6 examines how watchfulness of the self and others can extend into the digital sphere. Here, a group of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color – self-identifying as *brujxs* – combines their healing practices with a call for social justice. Watchfulness is shown through practices that are understood as part of healing from injustice: one's constant self-reflection as "shadow work" as well as publicly "calling out" those who are perpetuating harm. In this chapter, we show the role that social media plays for watchfulness against social injustice, especially for racialized and disadvantaged people.

In our conclusion, we trace how we arrived at our main arguments and acknowledge the limitations of our work. In particular, we highlight the book's contribution to the theoretical literature alongside which we place our work. We suggest that our analysis of Chicanx watchfulness through the concept of being "trucha" advances studies of vigilance and subjectivation by highlighting how watchfulness incorporates resistance – in the Chicanx case, resistance to coloniality. This alert resistance in terms of being *trucha*, we argue, has powerful subject-forming effects. To be watchful – *trucha* – is a significant aspect of what it means to be Chicanx.

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[173] Amit, Rethinking Anthropological Perspectives.