

ANNETTE L. RUKWIED

PROTEST – PITCHING – CROSSOVER DREAMING:

**CALIFORNIAN LATINO/A FILM FESTIVALS
AND THEIR PROMOTION OF LATINIDAD**



Soweit nicht anders angegeben, wird diese Publikation unter der Lizenz CC BY-NC-ND (4.0): Creative Commons Namensnennung - Nicht kommerziell - Keine Bearbeitungen 4.0 International veröffentlicht.

Weitere Informationen finden Sie unter:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/deed.de>

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode.de>

This work has been published under the Creative Commons license BY-NC-ND (4.0): Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International.

More information:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/deed.en>

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode>



C/S

Cover images (all private).

Top:

Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival 2011: Billboard advertising the festival, Regency Academy 6 Cinemas, Pasadena, California

Bottom, left to right:

San Francisco Latino Film Festival 2012: Q & A at the premiere of *Sin Padre* (USA 2012, Jay Francisco López), at Victoria Theatre, San Francisco, California

San Diego Latino Film Festival 2010: Box Office, Ultra Star Cinemas at Hazard Center/Mission Valley, San Diego, California

Street view, Mission District, San Francisco, California, featuring a poster advertising the San Francisco Latino Film Festival 2010

Gedruckt auf alterungsbeständigem Papier nach ISO 9706 (säure-, holz- und chlorfrei).

Protest – Pitching – Crossover Dreaming:

**Californian Latino/a Film Festivals
and Their Promotion of *Latinidad***

Dissertation

zur Erlangung des Titels
Doktor der Geisteswissenschaften (Dr. phil.)
der Fakultät Linguistik und Literaturwissenschaft
der Universität Bielefeld

Gutachter

Professor Dr. Wilfried Raussert, Universität Bielefeld
Professor Dr. Sebastian Thies, Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen

Vorgelegt von

Annette L. Rukwied, M.A.
Bielefeld, November 2018

Let the credits roll...: Thank you, gracias, danke!

Germany, academic realm:

To my thesis advisors, Professor Dr. Wilfried Raussert (Bielefeld), and Professor Dr. Sebastian Thies (Tübingen), for all their support, serenity, valuable guidance, and continued interest in my project. Thank you for traveling this long and sometimes rocky road with me.

To Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez, for her generous and inspirational mentorship in conjunction with and well beyond *movement*, Bielefeld University's mentoring program for women in academia, including the invitation to participate in the International Symposium "Selling Ethnicity and Race" (November 2012, Leipzig University).

To fellow members of the Special Research Center 584, Bielefeld University, "The Political as Communicative Space in History." SFB speakers Professor Dr. Willibald Steinmetz and Prof. Dr. Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey. SFB assistants Dr. Meike Vogel and Claus Kröger, M.A. SFB administration, Martina Fronk, Marcus Wöhrmann, and in particular Özlem Tan. Fellow researchers, Dr. habil. Jochen Kemner, Dr. Naveen Dubey (B-13), and Dr. Lukas Rehm (C-5). The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) for their very generous financial assistance.

To the Inter-American Research Group "E Pluribus Unum," Center for Interdisciplinary Research (ZiF), Bielefeld, where I was an associated fellow. Convenors Prof. Dr. Josef Raab (Duisburg-Essen, † 2019), Prof. Dr. Olaf Kaltmeier (Bielefeld), and Prof. Dr. Sebastian Thies. Research group assistants, PD Dr. Astrid Haas and Dr. Daniela Noll-Opitz. Fellows Prof. Sarah Corona Berkin, PhD (Guadalajara), Prof. María Herrera-Sobek, PhD (Santa Barbara), Prof. Ruth Hsu, PhD (Hawai'i-Manoa), Adrián Tovar Simoničić, M.A. (Bielefeld-San Luis Potosí), and Prof. David Wood, PhD (México D.F.).

For stimulating discussions on my project throughout various stages of its completion, to Beate Kaebel M.A., Dr. Nadja Lobensteiner, Bond Love PhD, Dr. Daniela Noll-Opitz, Tobias Reu PhD, Adrián Tovar M.A., Dr. Sarina Schnatwinkel.

To Yulika Ogawa-Müller M.A. and my fellow mentees at *movement*.

A special thank you to Mr. Dirk Lehnen Dipl. Psych., Studienberatung der Universität Bielefeld, for all his sound professional advice, empathy and unswerving optimism.

USA – outside California:

To Margarita de la Vega-Hurtado, PhD (Houston Cinema Arts Society) for kindly helping me to connect to the Flaherty Seminar and for her networking assistance. Both to Ilisa Barbash, PhD (Harvard/Peabody Museum) and Prof. Faye Ginsburg, PhD (New York University), for kindly taking the time for our respective background talks. To organizers and fellow participants of Flaherty Seminar 2009 "Witnesses, Monuments, Ruins"; Colgate University, Hamilton, NY, June 2009.

To José (Pepe) Vargas (Chicago), for our telephone interview on the Chicago Latino Film Festival.

To Ray Santisteban (San Antonio) for our background conversation via Skype on Cine Acción and CineFestival. To Prof. Hilaria Cruz PhD (Austin / Louisville) for all her advice.

Los Angeles, CA:

To Yolanda Cruz, who introduced me to her circle of fellow filmmakers and to her lovely familia.

Thank you for all your help and for your friendship.

To Prof. Chon A. Noriega PhD, for his generous sponsoring of truly rewarding stays as Visiting Researcher at the University of California-Los Angeles' Chicano Studies Research Center (2009, 2010) and for meeting up with me again (2011, 2012); for pointing me to Prof. John Ramirez (RRAFF) and Ethan van Thillo (MACSD / SDLFF). To the marvelous, dedicated CSRC staff, past and present. Thank you for all your help and for making me feel welcome: Darling Sianez, Crystal Roxana Pérez, Lizette Guerra, Connie Heskett, Javier Ibarren, and Luz Oroczo; and particularly both to Christopher Best for enlightening me about his involvement with RRAFF during his time with the California State University-Los Angeles's Development Department, and to Michael Stone, CSRC library.

To my gracious hosts on the Eastside: Liaa Raquel Cruz & Lobito of Silverlake; Iris Pineda of Atwater Village; Cindy Bebout and Rafael Vicente Velasquez, of Echo Park and, later, Highland Park.

To Jesús Salvador Treviño and Bobby Murray for all their help, input, the invaluable access to private archives and not least of all their gracious hospitality.

For inspirational exchanges and their hospitality, to Jesse Lerner, Sara Harris, Ed and Minerva.

To all at Reel Raquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF): Prof. John Ramirez, PhD, for all his great help and enlightening exchanges. Bel Hernandez Castillo, Ángela María Ortiz Sinclair, Lorena Alvarado, Valentín Durán, Ashalee Fann, Anselmo Ortiz Sinclair, Anabel Reyes de Gonzalez, Miguel Torres; as well as to Sandra Mastroianni, Patricia Krebs, and Margaret Garcia.

To RRAFF sponsors for their precious time and input: Josefina López (CASA 0101), Collette Rocha (California State University-Los Angeles), Dr. Efaín Fuentes Garza (The Walt Disney Company, Burbank).

Of the Cinemateca Los Angeles Student Film Festival: Harry Ortiz Liflán, Patricia Nava, Emelda Gutiérrez.

Of the Los Angeles Latino Film Festival (LALIFF): Marlene Dermer.

Of the East Los Angeles Society of Film and Arts (TELASOFA): Juan Escobedo.

Of the National Association of Independent Latino Producers (NALIP, Santa Monica): Kathryn F. Galán.

The Borderlands: San Diego, CA – Tijuana, BC, Mexico:

To Prof. Norma Iglesias-Prieto, PhD (SDSU), whom I cannot thank enough not only for introducing me to Tijuana but also to Adriana Trujillo (BorDocs, Tijuana Foro Documental) and Sal Ricalde (Imaginería Audiovisual de la Frontera), both of whom I wish to thank as well. Moreover, muchísimas gracias to yourself and your husband, Prof. Jorge Carillo for your kind hospitality during SDLFF 2010.

Of the Media Arts Center San Diego and the San Diego Latino Film Festival: Ethan van Thillo, Lisa Franek, Patric Stillman, Helen Guzmán, Morgan Sully.

To SDLFF sponsor, Luis González (Neighborhood House Association, San Diego).

Santa Barbara, CA:

To Prof. María Herrera-Sobek, PhD and Prof. Francisco Lomelí, PhD.

San Francisco, CA-Bay Area:

Of Cine Acción: Prof. Rosa Linda Fregoso PhD, Maureen Gosling, Lourdes Portillo, Jennifer Maytorena Taylor, Deanna Pachinger, José Torres.

At Cine + Mas / San Francisco Latino Film Festival (SFLFF): Gracias, Lucho Ramirez, for all the insights into the wonderful and important work you all do. Jeremy Bartlett, Gladys Rocha, Laura Ramirez, Damián Díaz, Vivienne Dipeolu, Jesús Contreras, Mario Verduzco, Juliana Mojica, Joan McCarthy, and everyone else.

Of International Latino Film Festival San Francisco (ILFF): Gracias, dear Sylvia Perel, for serving as the first point of connection to John Petrovsky Carvajal and Gloria López-Gutiérrez, whom I want to thank for all their time, kind hospitality and invaluable input.

To SFLFF collaborators: Fara Akrami (Artists' Television Access), Adrián Arias (Mission Cultural Center for the Latino Arts), George Iacone (ATA), Professor Dr. Susana Kaiser (University of San Francisco), Yo Ann Martínez (KQED), Jason Wallach (MCCLA).

At Stanford, a huge thanks to Dr. Adán Griego and the team of Stanford University's Greene Library / Special Collections as well as to Prof. Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano PhD for our background talk.

And to my gracious hosts in the Bay: Maureen Gosling & Mr. Putter; Marlita Kahn, Tatiana, Luis Delgado-Qualtrough; Lisa Ryers: Dankeschön.

To the filmmakers, producers, actors, and activists for your time, patience, candor, and generous sharing of networks and other resources:

Maritza Alvarez, Cruz Angeles, Yareli Arizmendi, Alberto Barboza, Richard Bracamonte, Denisse Bon, Kimberly Nuvem Bautista, Joe Camareno, Danielle Camastra, Yolanda Cruz, Marivel Danielson, Myriem Despujoulets Frankel, Paul Espinosa, Yovani Flores, Lyn Goldfarb, Ramón Hamilton, Dorian Iribe, Diana Lesmez, Ramsess Letrado, Claudia Mercado, Carolina Moraes-Liu, Richard Montes, Sylvia Morales, Miguel Mouchess, Marita Murphy, Nicole Ortega, Andrés Pardo, Patrick Perez, Richard Ray Perez, Anayansi Prado, Jade Puga, Kathryn Smith Pyle, Theo Rigby, Sally Rubin, Ariel Soto-Paz, Lourdes Portillo, Jesús Salvador Treviño, Laura Varela, Stephanie Wiand, Carlos Zelaya, Esteban Zul.

“There is something lost when you see a film on TV that was made for a movie screen, and I feel that’s watching it with strangers.” – Cruz Angeles

In a similar spirit, a big thank you to my Offkino Bielefeld folks for letting me be part of the tremendously rewarding experience of bringing the films we love to the big screen, and to strangers and friends.

For their manifold moral support, encouragement as well as sense of humor:

My friends, for their encouragement and guidance in more ways than I can name: Beate Kaebel. Daniela Noll-Opitz y familia. Nadja Lobensteiner. Özlem “The Godmother” Tan. Sigrun Günther. Adriana Bustamante Dominguez & Adrián Tovar Simončič. Ping-Heng Chen & Tobias Reu. Katharina Schaumburg, Bond Love & family. Nil Avdić and family. Brenda Kreis. Anja Nonnenmacher-Staib & family. Nadine Guttmann. Mirta María Peralta y familia. Petra (Sarah) Gröner & family. Ina Rubbert. Martina Schulte. Stuart Marlow. Phil Newman (d. 2015). Dr. Annemarie Grimm. Jörg Buddenberg. Daniel Baron.

Family, who supported my mother, sister-in-law, Suse, and myself when tragedy struck. My aunt, Rosemarie Grimm & family. My uncle, Dr. Helmut Schäfer & family. Martine Jünginger & family.

My very competent feline assistants: Bella von Salzkotten & Frodo V.

In loving memory of Omi Isolde Schäfer, my father, Dr. Armin Rukwied, Jacqueline (Jackie) Violeta Faille. Andreas, my brother, who, in the wee hours of a September morning in 2012, made me a cup of tea and drove me to Frankfurt Rhein-Main airport for my last research trip. You all are dearly missed.

I dedicate this book to my mother, Christel, who never lost faith in me and supported me all along the way.

Danke, Mutti!

Bielefeld, November 2018

Contents

I. Introduction	1
1. Latino/a film festivals	1
1.1 Identity, politics of place and commerce	4
1.2 Promotion of <i>latinidad</i>	9
1.2.1 The festivals	11
1.2.2 Research questions	12
1.3 Situating my project	12
1.4 Contents	15
II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research	19
1. Emergence of the film festival	19
2. De Valck and Loist's "six axes of film festival research" (2009) and Peranson's business / audience film festival paradigms (2009).	23
2.1 Festivals as discursive constructions (axis one)	24
2.2 Economic dimension (axis two)	28
2.2.1 Festivals as arenas for film markets vs. trading centers for symbolic and economic capital	28
2.2.2 Difference classic and alternative distribution.	29
2.2.3 Nurture	30
2.2.4 Star power and premieres.	31
2.3 Institutionalization (axis three)	37
2.3.1 Film festivals as "field-configuring events" (Rüling)	37
2.3.2 Festival identity vs. stakeholder interest/s: Competition vs. cooperation and solidarity.	38
2.4 Reception	40
2.4.1 "Making time matter" (Harbord): The urgency of the festival event	41
2.4.2 Festival atmosphere: Cultural performance and "festival communitas" (Cadaval).	43
2.5 Politics of place (axis five)	45
2.6 Festival circuits and history (axis six)	48
2.6.1 Festivals: "Networks for solidarity" (Torchin)	48
2.6.2 U.S. Latino/a film festivals: Overview	51
III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival	54
1. First film activist generation: Los Angeles area and beyond	56
1.1 Public affairs shows (1968-77)	58
1.2 Rocky road towards professionalism (1974-84).	59
1.3 Professionalism at the crossroads: The Chicano Cinema Coalition (CCC, 1978-80)	60
1.4 Impact of New Latin American Cinema: Repository of language, empowering alliances.	61
1.4.1 Convergences, diverging paths	63
1.5 The location of Chicano Cinema, or: "Notes on Chicano Cinema" (Johansen 1979)	66
1.6 CineFestival (since 1976). Challenges of professionalization	67
1.6.1 Profile: Beginnings and politics of place	67
1.6.2 Organizational development	68

1.6.3	Negotiation of festival identity: Ethnic, pan-ethnic, and transnational repercussions.	70
1.6.4	Early CineFestival: Arena for filmmakers	71
1.6.5	Turning point cultural affirmation / commerce: Going “Hispanic International” (1980-82). . .	72
1.6.6	Lessons from CineFestival (1981-82): Festival identity and the stakeholder perspective . . .	74
1.7	The Chicago Latino Film Festival (since 1985)	76
1.7.1	Profile.	76
1.7.2	CLFF 1990: Solidarity and crossover challenge	79
2.	Eyes on the prize: Marketing <i>latinidad</i> and the formation of Latino/a Hollywood	81
2.1	Towards “Hispanic Hollywood”: Changing media landscape and film markets	83
2.2	Hispanic Hollywood Boom.	86
2.3	The pioneering force of Luis Valdez’s <i>Zoot Suit</i> (1981).	88
2.4	Creating a habitat for Latino/a cinema	91
2.5	Edward James Olmos: Broker of “Hispanic Hollywood” to <i>pater familias</i> of Latino/a feature film	94
2.5.1	The man, the myth	95
2.5.2	As media activist	99
2.6	LALIFF: The Hollywood festival (since 1997)	102
2.6.1	Profile.	102
2.6.2	Commitment to filmmaking constituencies	104
2.6.3	Edward James Olmos’s welcome editorial	107
2.6.4	Awards politics: Bridging difference; advancing an international agenda.	108
2.6.5	Diversity through the years	110
2.6.6	Outlook: Disruptions, continuances, and 2018 reinvention.	112
3.	One step beyond? U.S. Latinos/as at Sundance	113
IV.	The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)	124
1.	Core Facts	124
1.1	Location in the Latino/a film festival network	124
1.2	Legacies	125
1.3	Key points.	126
1.4	Restaurant trope	127
2.	History of SDLFF and MACSD	129
2.1	Cine Estudiantil (1994-1997). Incubation on campus, gradual transnational orientation	129
2.2	Cine ’98 to SDLFF (1998-99). Growth and commercialization in the Gaslamp Quarter	130
2.3	SDLFF and MACSD (2000-2014). Consolidation: Chula Vista to Mission Valley.	133
3.	Engine behind SDLFF: Media Arts Center (MACSD, since 1999)	134
3.1	Naming and inclusivity.	135
3.2	Business logic	135
3.3	Staffing: Continuity and professionalization	137
3.4	Programs: Education, nurture, entertainment	138
4.	Border as resource.	140
4.1	The border’s “polyvalence” (Fox): “Place” vs. “space”.	142
4.2	SDLFF’s “underserved” border communities.	145
4.3	Border lessons: SDLFF’s advocacy of diversity.	145

4.3.1 Diversification of programs and sponsorship relationships	148
4.3.2 Borders, bridges: Programming diversity	150
4.3.2.1 National diversity and border theme.	152
4.3.2.2 Showcases of diversity: <i>Cine Gay</i> , <i>Cine Mujer</i> , and Jewish Latino	152
4.3.2.3 Challenging the semantic boundaries of <i>latinidad</i> : “Guest Director” slot	155
4.4 Foil and Hollywood alternative: Tijuana’s “ <i>cultura de la necesidad</i> ” (Monsiváis)	157
5. Resources: Education, nurture and atmosphere	162
5.1 Education	163
5.1.1 “Youth Visions”	163
5.1.2 Educational sponsor: Neighborhood House Association.	164
5.1.3 Educational sponsor: The Walt Disney Company	165
5.2 Professional enhancement and nurture	166
5.2.1 Nurture	167
5.3 Festival atmosphere: Identity, branding and community-building	169
5.3.1 Festival atmosphere as resource: Between identity and brand	170
5.3.2 Tapping the festival community: <i>La Mission</i> (2009) and <i>El Estudiante</i> (2009)	172
V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)	175
1. Core facts	175
1.1 Profile	175
1.2 Premises, goals, and strategic resources	177
1.3 Relationship with the U.S. Latino/a film festival network	178
2. History of RRAFF: Campus to Latino/a arts organization	178
2.1 Campus festival (2004-2009): California State University-Los Angeles	180
2.2 Transformation as filmmakers’ festival (2010/11): Regency Academy 6 Cinemas	181
2.3 “Home for the Future” and <i>gentefication</i> (2012-14): CASA 0101	182
3. Focus on U.S. <i>latinidad</i> : RRAFF’s strategic essentialism	184
4. <i>Lo rasquache</i> as performative resource	187
4.1 <i>Rasquachismo</i> : Validation of marginality; link to first wave Chicano/a cultural activism.	188
4.2 <i>Lo rasquache</i> and RRAFF’s community-building project	191
5. Resource: Hollywood. RRAFF’s awards politics	196
5.1 Career film awards	199
5.1.1 Ethnic-cultural and regional diversity	200
5.1.2 Industry vs. independence	202
5.1.3 Awards politics according to their synchronic constellations	208
5.1.3.2 “ <i>Raíces</i> (roots)” (2006): RRAFF’s dialectic building of community and genealogy project	210
5.1.3.3 “ <i>Latino Next</i> ” (2010): Focus on immigration and challenging strategic essentialism.	213
5.1.4 Education as goal and symbolic capital	214
5.2 Competitive awards: Tapping Hollywood proximity, championing education	215
5.2.1 Competitive award winners 2011 and 2012.	216
5.2.1.1 Best Features: <i>Revenge of the Bimbot Zombie Killers</i> ; <i>Smuggled</i>	218
5.2.1.2 Audience Awards: Searching for the “Latino/a formula.” <i>Food Stamps</i> ; <i>Lola’s Love Shack</i>	220

5.2.1.3 Best Short: <i>In Times of War / En Tiempo de Guerra; Botes al Amanecer / Cans at Dawn</i>	221
5.2.1.4 Best Documentary: <i>The Calling; TRUST: Second Acts in Young Lives</i>	222
5.2.1.5 Web based genres: Focus on nurture and new technology	224
5.2.1.5.1 Best Webisode: <i>Police Chicks: Life on the Beat</i> [episode one]; <i>Fixing Paco</i>	225
6. Resource: Education and nurture	228
6.1 Relationship triangle RRAFF – CSULA – sponsors	228
6.1.1 Close-up: Examining CSULA’s support of RRAFF	229
7. RAAFF: Home for the Future?	232

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción’s festivals, the International Latino Film Festival San Francisco, and the San Francisco Latino

Film Festival	235
1. Cine Acción.	239
1.1 Core facts	239
1.2 Beginnings: 1980-1990.	239
1.2.1 <i>Latinidad</i> : Non-essentializing, diverse, and intersectional	241
1.2.3 Intersectional <i>latinidad</i> in practice: “Women of the Americas in Film & Video” (festival, 1988) and “Cruzando Fronteras” (conference, 1990).	242
1.3 1990s: Increased cinematic exhibition: From Cineteca to ¡Cine Latino!	247
1.3.1 Resource: Cine Acción’s “networks for advocacy”	249
1.3.2 Academic and artistic cross-validation: Curation and festival catalog articles	251
1.4 Challenges: Facing a changing organizational environment	253
1.4.1 ¡Cine Latino!’s reinvention and demise in the 2000s	256
1.4.2 Discontinuation of Cine Acción.	258
2. The International Latino Film Festival San Francisco (ILFF)	259
2.1 Core facts	259
2.1.1 Profile.	259
2.1.2 Resource: Education	260
2.1.3 Envisioned situation in the film festival network / circuit.	261
2.1.4 Cross-validation: 1997’s endorsement by Edward James Olmos.	262
2.1.5 ILFF’s success formula: Celebration and marketing of <i>latinidad</i>	263
2.1.6 Conclusion: Leadership and brand preservation as strengths and weaknesses	269
3.1.1 Key points: Strategic alliances and the Bay’s unique atmosphere and politics of place as main resources.	271
3.1.2 Key issue: Empowering locality and community	273
3.1.3 Beginnings and organizational composition	274
3.1.4 Legacies, continuities, and solidarity: Relationships with ILFF and Cine Acción	275
3.1.5 Festival identity: Cultural affirmation, bridging and putting down roots	276
3.2.1 Consistent corporate image	279
3.2 Strategic relevance of Cine+Mas / SFLFF’s wide net of partnerships	281
3.2.2 Partnerships: Formation of cross-audiences and the sharing of resources	283
3.2.2.1 Media Sponsor: KQED.	285
3.2.2.2 Cultural organizations: Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts and Artists’ Television Access.	287

3.2.2.3 Academia: University of San Francisco	290
3.3 Resource: Tapping the Bay’s atmosphere: Filmmakers and their films	291
3.3.1 <i>Ebony Goddess: Queen of Ilê Aiyê</i> (2009). Celebrating Afro-Brazilian identities and Afro-Latina femininity.	291
3.3.2 A reportage in search of outreach and validation: <i>Voices of Chile</i> (2012).	293
3.3.3 Social justice documentaries: <i>Children of Memory</i> (2012) and <i>Justice for my Sister</i> (2012). Outreach, education, and empowerment	294
3.3.4 Spotlight on urban Latino/a communities: <i>Sin Padre</i> (2012) and <i>La Vida Loca</i> (2012).	298
VII. Concluding remarks	302
References	305
Index: Selected associations, organizations, and institutions	337
Eigenständigkeitserklärung	341

I. Introduction

1. Latino/a film festivals

In his classic morphology of the festival, Italian folklorist Alessandro Falassi (1987) has pointed to how both its etymological and cultural roots attest to the enduring function of the festival as an arena not only for cultural affirmation but for commerce, two aspects frequently entwined, and two functions that continue to characterize today's notion of the festival, including the film festivals investigated in my study.

While the term's etymology goes back to *festum*, "originally Latin had two terms for festive events: *festum*, for 'public joy, merriment, revelry,' and *feria*, meaning 'abstinence from work in honor of Gods'" (1987: 2). Often used in the plural, as *festa* and *feriae*, pointing to their cumulative nature as these festivities often encompassed more than one day and more than one event, their employment was also increasingly as "synonyms, as the two types of events tended to merge" (ibid.). Over the course of time, and from classic Latin to modern Romance languages, *feria* also came to be associated with a break of routines, "ha[ving] the semantic implication of lack, intermission and absence" (ibid.) either for religious or, as is more important in the line of today's festival's cultural and commercial repercussions, secular reasons¹: In fact, Falassi argues that while *feria*'s association with "empt[iness]" suggests a meaning as a "resounding cage of culture," this association was "later joined and overshadowed by the festival events that progressively filled such days of 'rest from.' Thus *feria* became the term for market and exposition of commercial produce" (ibid.). These commercial connotations are reflected in multilingual examples including "the Portuguese *feira*, the Spanish *feria*, the Italian *fiere*, the Old French *feire*, then *foire*, and the Old English *faire*, then *fair*" (ibid.).

At the same time, I argue that Latino/a film festivals also use the festival's traditional association with a "break of routines," their overall "time out of time" (Falassi 1987) in conjunction with their activism. In ways I will look at more closely in my film festival theoretical chapter, British film scholar Janet Harbord (2009) has pointed to today's world of individualized film consumption – first via video and DVD, then cable and streaming – resulting in the filmic text's being "less assured as a unit" (44) as it can be segmented in ways befitting our conflated work/leisure habits. She has argued that it is in this context that the film festival event derives a particular "urgency" from the fact that it "make[s] time matter" (44).

Taking these observations as a point of departure, I argue that both the required commitment to a predefined festival schedule and the communal and (the gods of projection technology willing) uninterrupted film viewing experience potentially also enhance the film text's narrative authority and reinstate something of its artistic "aura" (Benjamin 1978/1936). Both qualities, authority and aura, are key considering the festivals considered in my study, all continuing in the tradition of the first Latino/a film festivals such as San Antonio's CineFestival (since 1976) and its aim to promote underre-

¹ Falassi's examples from modern Italian include *feria*, which he translates as "abstinence from work in honor of a saint," and *ferie*, "time away from work" (1987:2).

I. Introduction

presented filmmaking and marginalized subjectivities² namely: films primarily made by U.S. Latinos/as, speaking to their realities, as well as Latin American and other “international” Latino/a³ cinemas. Thus, the stories told on screen derived an added timeliness, even obligatoriness; all the while, not only the narrative content but also the films themselves were validated. Early film festivals thus also responded to the concerns of an emerging U.S. Latino/a cinema in search not only of audiences but also markets – concerns, I argue, which have endured to this day. These potentialities of the “festival time-event” (Harbord 2009) have lent themselves to what Bulgarian-British film festival scholar Dina Jordanova (2012) has defined as the domain of the activist film festival, namely, “to correct the record, to enlighten, to mobilise” (14; BrE). At the same time, Latino/a film festivals’ promotion of *latinidad* is further qualified by the way the organizers themselves identify with the pan-ethnic designation Latino/a – despite the rare case when they do so as cultural insiders only. This identification also impacts Latino/a film festivals’ imagined audiences and is frequently negotiated with festival organizers’ ambitions to more widely establish their agendas of disseminating Latino/a film and vistas; to engender solidarity; and to support their filmmaking constituencies’ crossover ambitions. In this respect, Latino/a film festivals depart from the scope and visions of advocacy festivals with a more general focus such as (often top-down) human rights film festivals which may entail, but do not necessarily presuppose, this high degree of identification with the causes promoted.

Thus, in regard to their activist drive and educational ambitions, today’s Latino/a film festivals, including those examined more closely in my study, follow in the footsteps of early Chicano/a film festivals. They started out in the 1970s as what Chicano/a studies-film scholar Chon A. Noriega (2000) has described as “community and university-based exhibitions” (147). Regardless of size, they usually have retained their ties to localized ethnic (and other) activism. And despite the availability of streaming and cable, today’s Latino/a festivals have remained “important alternative circuit[s]” (147) not only for Latino/a film and video; in fact, many have responded to the Digital Turn by way of creating sidebars dedicated to new audio-visual formats, such as webisodes, thus acknowledging the fact that such formats may provide stepping stones for beginning filmmakers. Lastly, in their non-essentializing take on *latinidad*, their outreach ambitions and marketing of Latino/a film culture, today’s Latino/a film festivals also respond to what Noriega has characterized as early Chicano/a film festivals’ “need for a pan-ethnic, if not hemispheric, framework for public exhibition in order to reach non-Chicano audiences as well to imbue the public consumption of ethnicity with national and international resonances” (Noriega 2000: 147).

All the while, like the festive rites of old, today’s film festivals are by definition communal events revolving around a specific locale and time, a “film festivals-time-event” (Harbord 2009). Both continuing in and interrogating the festival’s traditional role as a “resounding cage of culture,” the events that figure in my study are intended to celebrate *latinidad*. The latter is at once a strategic group building concept appealing to imagined communities (Anderson 1983) and stands for a vision of a

² Interestingly, they also share this aspect with the very first U.S. film festivals of the 1960s which were showcases for independent, political and avant-garde film mostly from abroad and emphatically outside Hollywood; this point will be further discussed in the film festival theoretical chapter.

³ For purposes of clarity, when referring to films/cinema(s) and persons/groups, my study will use the attribute “Latino/a” to describe a person of Latin American heritage living in the U.S., irrespective of citizenship status. Wherever necessary, I will distinguish between U.S. and international (Latin American/Caribbean; Iberian) Latinos/as. That said, individual festivals’ promotion of *latinidad* more often than not has transnational repercussions.

I. Introduction

culture that is flexible and non-essentializing rather than deterministic and monolithic. Both aspects, imagined communities and vision, are reflected in each festival's more overt discursive constructions of itself, its goals and purposes, in its mission statement and festival practices. However, festivals are also arenas for stakeholder relationships – from organizers to filmmakers, audiences to sponsors. As my study will show, these interest groups sometimes cooperate, sometimes compete. A festival's identity is made up of all these different factors.

Based in three Californian metropolises – Los Angeles; San Francisco and its surrounding Bay Area; and San Diego, the festivals analyzed in this study are catering to and stand in solidarity with the needs of local (if not necessarily exclusively Latino/a identified) communities. In so doing, their commitment is informed by the Americas' collective memory of multiple conquest⁴; the existence both of long-standing local Latino/a communities and the immigrant experience, and the civil rights struggles and social activism of ethnic and other minorities. In addition, due to their relative proximity to the mighty Hollywood film and television industries, their commitment to a distinctive politics of place involves an increased obligation to address the underrepresentation of Latino/a experiences and professionals in the film and television industries; this has been done by the festivals investigated in very different ways.⁵ Here, the communities imagined in conjunction with these above localized politics of place as well as their translocal counterparts all resonate with the “relational, dialogic, performative” such concepts (Pisarz-Ramírez 2005: 216, my trans.)⁶ that American / Minority studies scholar Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez has observed in conjunction with more recent (1990s-2000s) Chicano/a cultural production (as opposed to its earlier, monolithic and ethno-nationalist stages) – concepts of community she has likened to the idea of an “Inoperative Community” (1991) proposed by French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy. Such strategic and “temporary” communities, Pisarz-Ramírez argues, “constitute themselves along the lines of a shared goal or a partially shared perspective while not precluding difference” (216, my trans.).

Thus, while all film festivals are arenas that promote cinema, I argue that Latino/a film festivals are special interest festivals which, despite their many differences in regard to organizational factors (such as level of consolidation; size; long-standingness; persons associated with the festival), their geopolitical situation (in the case of the five Californian festivals figuring in my analysis: Bay, border,

⁴ The most important example is the situation of Mexican Americans / Chicanos/as due to the annexation of formerly Mexican territories in the 19th century; however, due to the U.S.'s massive political involvement in Latin America, in the 20th century, a somewhat similar sentiment is shared by other communities in the Americas. This also includes the situation of Puerto Ricans and their commonwealth linkage to the U.S., defined by neither independence from the U.S., nor complete equality with other U.S. citizens regarding political participation, such as voting rights.

⁵ With its logic revolving around U.S. Latino/a localized activism, my study does *not* include festivals exclusively focusing on Latin American cinema, such as the long-standing Providence Latin American Film Festival, a campus festival founded in 1993 (plaff.org), or more recent Cinema Tropical, hosted by eponymous New York City based organization (since 2001) and an important distributor of Latin American film in the U.S. (cinematropical.com). Neither is my project concerned with festivals having branched out from Latin America into the U.S., such as the very successful Hola Mexico (since 2011), “the largest festival of Mexican cinema outside Mexico,” hosted in a number of countries and supported by the Mexican government (holamexicoff.com).

⁶ “Eine Gemeinschaft, die sich nicht über homogenisierende und Differenz ausschließende Mechanismen konstituiert (wie im nationalen Diskurs), sondern relationalen, dialogischen, performativen Charakter hat, eine Kommunität, die Nancy formuliert, die ‚Gemeinschaft nicht begrenzt‘ (Nancy 1988: 130). Es sind temporäre Gemeinschaften, die sich über ein gemeinsames Anliegen oder eine partielle Perspektivengleichheit konstituieren, dabei aber Differenz nicht ausschließen” (Pisarz-Ramírez 2005: 216).

I. Introduction

or in Hollywood proximity), or their primary audiences, all promote *latinidad*. My definition of this role is intentionally wide: They promote *latinidad* in that they serve as an arena for cinema made by Latinos/as and / or films revolving around aspects of Latino/a culture. For all their internal differences, these festivals are activist events which constitute a “counter-publics” and “offer interventions into hegemonic representational regimes (Loist & Zielinski 2012:50). All the while, their notion of *latinidad* is flexible and situational and corresponds to organizational factors such as those named above, and, importantly, to the ways these festivals engage with the frequently intersecting logics of identity and commerce as well as with their situation in a specific politics of place.

1.1 Identity, politics of place and commerce

In his now classic explorations as to “who needs ‘identity,’” Stuart Hall (1996) has argued that

[t]hough they seem to invoke an origin within a historical past with which they continue to correspond, actually identities are about questions using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we came from,’ so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might present ourselves. Identities are therefore constituted within, not outside representation. (4)

In ways I will further qualify throughout my study, Latino/a film festivals’ promotion of *latinidad* engages with a logic of identity that regards the latter as non-deterministic, and “not an essentialist, but a strategic and positional” concept (Hall 1996:3). This strategic notion of identity is constantly negotiated along with the other two factors (commerce and place); with individual organizational aspects and their “changing environment” (Rüling 2009:60), such as the privatization and globalization of the U.S. media and communications landscape ever since the 1980s; and furthermore, with its individual stakeholder dynamics and the needs and demands of its imagined communities. In fact, Latino/a film festivals’ frequent (yet not uniform) embrace of the designation Latino/a provides an example for one such strategic usage. Historically, statistic data has given important impetus to a growing public awareness of Latinos/as as a coherent and rapidly growing group. As Scott M. Baugh (2012) has pointed out, “population growth rates topped 50 percent in the 1980s and set a steady climb in subsequent decades according to Pew Hispanic Center reports” (127).⁷ Recognition of this development was mirrored by the U.S. Census’s step-by-step consideration of Hispanics as a distinct category, which led to the eventual introduction of the category denoting a “Hispanic/Spanish” pan-ethnic origin in

⁷ An important factor was immigration from Latin America in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s as a result of the political upheavals in many South and Central American countries. A sizeable proportion of those who had come to the U.S. as undocumented immigrants were able to legalize their status as naturalized citizens as a result of the Reagan administration’s amnesty program, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. In his prescient editorial on behalf of the then soon to be ending “Hispanic Decade” in the *Los Angeles Time*, Frank del Olmo called this “the biggest political opportunity Latinos got in the 1980s [even though it] did not involve U.S. citizens” (del Olmo 1989, no pag.). He pointed out that “more than half of the three million people who took advantage of that so-called ‘amnesty’ program [were] Latinos” and thus eligible not only for citizenship but also for the right to vote, thus being able to bring on more long-term change (ibid.).

I. Introduction

the 1980 census.⁸ Statistic data not only captured Latinos/as' fast demographic growth; it also led to predictions of their soon-to-come outnumbering of African Americans as the largest racial-ethnic minority in the U.S.; this became a fact in the 2000 Census.⁹ In their aim to claim political rights and to obtain resources, but also to build community, social actors strategically donned group designations such as today's more widely embraced "Latino/a" as well as "Hispanic," two terms each carrying the weight of their individual histories; and both being criticized for their multiple limitations in that they eclipse the imagined group's actual heterogeneity in key points including national-cultural matters, race-ethnicity, social and citizenship status, and geographic dispersal.¹⁰ Furthermore, George Yúdice (2004) has pointed to how such identity political moves resonate with a uniquely U.S. cultural political tradition rife with "a range of governmental (in the Foucauldian sense) mechanisms" (48) that has enabled historically underprivileged groups to declare their "'alternative' identities" (48) in order to claim access to certain rights and resources; this strategy, however, comes with an obligation, namely, "the social imperative to perform" (and thus, conform to) these identities.¹¹ Yúdice's own conceptualization of performativity draws on Judith Butler's (1993)¹² deliberations as to the iterative nature of social and cultural roles; here, Yúdice has defined performativity as being predicated upon an underlying "assumption that the maintenance of the status quo (i.e., the reproduction of social hierarchies of race, gender, sexuality) is achieved by repeatedly performing norms" (47). Yúdice claims that

[t]he overarching social fantasy that compels us to perform conformity with and rejection of a series of roles and identities that give U.S. cultural politics its particular flavor is a product of a conjuncture of conditionings by the media, the market, the welfare state and the political and juridical systems. (51)

In agreement with the above, I claim that the way these strategic performances of identity have been means to carve out possibilities for agency by negotiating between necessary cooperation with these rules and, whenever possible, using or even bending them to the advantage of one's group. In regard

⁸ As the U.S. Census reports, "It was not until the 1970 census that the concept of reporting on Hispanics as a distinct group existed and then only in a 5 percent sample of the census questionnaires distributed. The 1980 Census was the first to use the "Spanish origin or descent" question on 100 percent of the questionnaires. The 1990 census attempted to provide Hispanics in the United States with a more detailed identity. In the 1990 census, those surveyed were asked to classify themselves as Hispanic if they fit into one of the following categories: Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or Other Spanish/Hispanic origin. The category was broken down further by providing a write-in line for subgroups." ("Hispanic Heritage Month"; www.census.gov/) The entry has been discontinued as of 2018; more information on the history of the U.S. Census' "Hispanic" count and its more ambivalent repercussions can be found in D'Vera Cohn's report for the Pew Research Center (Cohn 2010, no pag.).

⁹ According to *Migration News* (2001)'s report on the 2000 Census findings, "Hispanics were not expected to surpass Blacks until 2005; the fact that it happened in 2000 has been termed 'the biggest surprise yet to emerge from the 2000 census'" ("Census: Hispanics Outnumber Blacks"; migration.ucdavis.edu).

¹⁰ The term "Hispanic" was more obviously limiting both due to the semantic ties to the colonial past (while also excluding non-Spanish speaking nations in Latin America and the Caribbean, indigenous but also Portuguese or French speaking). However, "Latino/a," too, points back to origins which are ambivalent at best; Luz-Angelica Kirschner (2012) reminds us of Walter D. Mignolo's observation according to which *latinidad* or *latinité* came with imperialist baggage of its own and had been "proposed by French intellectuals and politicians" (19, Fn. 35) to these ends while also "'confront[ing] the United States' continuing expansion toward the South'" (Mignolo 2005: 58, quoted in Kirschner 2012: 19, Fn. 35).

¹¹ A straightforward example for this is that of affirmative action.

¹² In *Bodies that Matter* (1993). I will discuss her concept of the citational, repetitive nature of such performative identities in the analytical chapter on the Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF) in conjunction with RRAFF's usage of the term *rasquache*.

I. Introduction

to the Latino/a film festivals examined in my study, and here, in accordance with Yúdice's observation that all members of society are obliged to perform their respective identities, the "social imperative" also applies to all festival stakeholders, from organizers to sponsors, for instance in conjunction with the festivals' roles as a marketplaces for the promotion (marketing) of difference and the bestowal of symbolic capital to sponsors in need of a validation of their diversity agendas. Thus, while my study is ever aware of how the "acceptance of the identitarian ticket to negotiate for respect and resources is caught in the process of governmentalization, in the Foucauldian sense of the management of populations" (Yúdice 2004: 49), I have also paid attention to the manifold ways how such performances of identity have been used in empowering ways, thereby, to reiterate Stuart Hall's claim, "using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being" (1996:4).

Thus, and as I will discuss in the film festival theoretical and historical overview chapters, Latino/a film festivals have situated themselves vis-à-vis first wave traditions of 1960s and '70s Chicano/a-Raza and Puerto Rican identified film activism when, as Chon A. Noriega (2000) has argued, "Latino" was only hesitantly used as one of the "necessary fiction[s] for engaging the national," then intended to challenge the state into recognizing underrepresented, minority film productions. In this context, Noriega claims that these labels had been neither "identity markers nor de facto political categories" (155) but provided a "bumpy road of coalition building among diverse groups unable to achieve a national representation in their own name or in their own image" (155). In its ambivalent, tentative appraisal of such early strategic usages, this assessment resonates with the historical knowledge of how such "coherentist" (Yúdice 2004: 48) group labels had often been used in conjunction with control mechanisms exercised by public broadcasting or Census agencies.¹³ Nevertheless, filmmakers and, ever since the late 1970s and early 1980s, the earliest Chicano-/Latino/a film festivals were quick to acknowledge the need to engage in more encompassing community building projects, thus reflecting the aforementioned "the need for a pan-ethnic, if not hemispheric, framework for public exhibition" (Noriega 2000: 147) – projects which, in their contestation of the monolithic, ethno-nationalist conceptualizations of identity and community in early Chicano/a-Raza and Puerto Rican film production, promoted *latinidad* as diverse, intersectional, and "not the so-called return to roots but a coming to terms with our 'routes'" (Hall 1996:4). Such processual, flexible notions of identity are closely linked to conceptualizations such as "new citizen[ship]" (W. Flores 2003) with its link to social movements, based on the idea that for historically marginalized and underrepresented groups such as Latinos/as, "citizenship rights are not bestowed by the simple act of birth but must be fought for and achieved" (W.

¹³ The case of the Latino Consortium (LC, 1974-89), the first such minority consortium for Latino/a [sic] media in the U.S. public broadcasting system and one forerunner of today's Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB) is a telling example from early film activism. LC shines a light on activists' reservations against group labels as they had frequently been used from the outside in ways that were problematic not only as they risked conflating the histories and experiences of a culturally-nationally, socio-economically and ethnically-racially vastly heterogeneous group but also because their deployment was frequently opportunistic and self-serving. Back in the day, as Noriega (2000) has pointed out, the choice of designation, Latino Consortium, had not come from the producers themselves as a way to build community; rather it served as a "homogenizing measure imposed from outside, namely a consortium amongst stations seeking to cut the cost of their Chicano public affairs programming" (152). Noriega has shown how LC's impact was marred by the apparent lack of commitment on behalf of the participating PBS stations and their umbrella organization, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB); and he has described LC's development over the one and a half decade of its existence as "[going] from being a syndicator of locally produced programs packaged into regular series to becoming a 'weak access point' for independent producers" (155). Furthermore, LC never lived up to its implied pan-ethnic scope: With only few exceptions, such as the show *Realidades* (1975-77), neither did LC develop a "nationally broadcast series (154)," nor did it manage to draw in Cuban American or Puerto Rican producers and audiences (153).

I. Introduction

Flores 2003:83). These interpretations of citizenship arguing for what San Francisco Latino Film Festival's (SFLFF) chief organizer Luis (Lucho) Ramirez has called "taking ownership" also tie in with Chicano cultural anthropologist Renato Rosaldo's (2003) more widely established concept, "cultural citizenship," which includes "formal" as well as "vernacular" aspects of citizenship, the latter of the two including "contexts [such as] the interactions in everyday environments, such as the workplace, churches, schools, and friendship and family networks" (3). In conjunction with Latino/a film festivals, such conceptualizations shine a light on how aspects of identity and place are constantly negotiated since festivals, too, provide a platform enabling to "claim space and social rights" (W. Flores 2003:89; emphasis mine)." I argue that on the one hand, such a performative claiming of space restores power to "place" in times that have seen both "the loss of community" (Castells 1999:365) and "place-based relationships" (ibid.). On the other hand, more vernacular conceptualizations of citizenship – which again correspond to the aforementioned "performative" and "strategic" (cf. Pizarz-Ramirez 2005: 162) conceptualizations of community – may include a wide range of experiences, from individuals whose family trees feature generations of formal citizens to so-called "DREAMers"¹⁴ and other more recent immigrants with or without legal residency status but each with a personal investment in "place." This more open definition of citizenship acknowledges what Juan Flores (2003) has called the "globalization" (J. Flores 2003) of the Latino/a experience happening ever since the late 1970s, due to the increased mobility of Latino/a communities both within the U.S. but also transnationally, forever changing a cultural-national landscape traditionally dominated by a Southwestern Chicano/a presence and encompassing Puerto Rican and Cuban communities to the East.

Finally, the activist festival's role as a "counter-publics" (Loist & Zielinski 2012:50) also ties in with how Latino/a film festivals may serve as an arena of another discourse on citizenship, that of consumer citizenship as part of their negotiations of a logic of commerce and its attending strategic marketing of ethnicity. In her analysis of what she calls the "Consumers' Republic," Lizabeth Cohen (2001) has reminded us that historically, for civil rights groups, and starting with the pioneering African American cohort of the 1950s and '60s, the very faith of a post-World War II U.S. American society in an "elaborate ideal of economic abundance and democratic political freedom, both equitably distributed" (214) had elevated the public sphere to an arena where to it was possible to fight for "access" to its commercial institutions (216) and thus, more encompassing civil rights. Cohen has argued that the introduction of privately operated shopping malls in the 1970s and later to some extent reversed this trend when

[s]pace that had been public in the urban centres became legally the private property of shopping-centre-owners, and hence constitutional rights once guaranteed in the town square – such as freedom of speech and assembly – were not automatically protected unless state courts upheld them, and even then the poor, black [as well as, one is to infer, other minorities, A.R.] and the young were often marginalized. (219; BrE)

¹⁴ **Development, Relief and Education of Alien Minors Act**, popularly known as the **DREAM Act** is a legislative proposal [first introduced in 2001] drafted by both Republicans and Democrats. It was created to **help undocumented immigrants in the United States**, who meet certain requirements, **have an opportunity** to enlist in the military or go to college and **have a path to citizenship**, first by being granted **conditional residency** and then **permanent residency** ("**Dream Act**"; www.usimmigration.org; emphasis in the original).

I. Introduction

In the light of these more recent trends of a privatization and de facto segregation of public commercial space, Latino/a film festivals have continued to provide arenas for a “public consumption of ethnicity” (Noriega 2000: 147). At the same time, and as I will discuss in conjunction with the film festival theoretical axis dedicated to a “politics of space” and in all three analysis chapters, Latino/a film festivals must engage with the many ways trends of so-called urban regeneration, attending developments of gentrification and the displacement of poorer urban constituencies frequently have impacted these very arenas and with them, their activist agendas.

Latino/a film festivals’ embrace of a consumerist logic can be seen in a positive and a negative light. A key moment was the advertising industry’s detection of the Latino/a consumer in the early 1980s, hailed as “Decade of the Hispanic,” also concurrent with the increased visibility due to the introduction of the eponymous U.S. Census category and increased immigration. On the one hand, we can see this trend in conjunction with marketers’ “discover[y of] the greater profits to be made in segmenting the mass market into distinctive sub-markets based on gender, class, race, ethnicity, age, and life-style” (Cohen 2001: 219), characteristic of the U.S.’s enduring belief in “the potential of the private mass-consumption marketplace to deliver opportunity rather than in expanding state provisions or redistributing wealth, [thus] contribut[ing] to growing inequality and fragmentation” (ibid.). On the other hand, in her investigations of Latinos/as both as targets and actors in advertising, Arlene Dávila (2001) has pointed to “the multipurpose and dual nature” of such culturally specific marketing “at the level of both production and reception” (9). She has argued that such a focus on cultural specificity

simultaneously serves the multiple interests of those who profit from difference as well the interests of subordinate populations whose attainment of representation is essential to contemporary politics. As such, these initiatives can be experienced in contradictory ways as a medium of marginalization or, alternatively, as a repository of language, culture, and traditions by its target publics. (9)

In fact, I argue that Latino/a film festivals’ reliance on a logic of commodification is manifest in how even though the earliest Latino/a film festivals were bottom-up, grassroots events, it was out of necessity and due to their educational goals that they were usually based at university spaces, where they served as outreach and thus, marketing tools. I argue that both Latino/a film festivals’ cultural specificity and their educational orientation as part of their activist DNA have continued to provide key incentives also in regard to the bigger film festivals across the board operating beyond the campus arena, frequently providing the basis for their relations to corporate and other sponsors. Here, I argue that Latino/a film festivals function as marketplaces for symbolic capital in conjunction with these sponsors’ philanthropic or multicultural agendas. As I will show in various parts of this study, Latino/a film festivals’ usage of star power – a traditional vehicle for business driven festivals – has also been impacted by their culturally affirming and educational goals.

Historically, ever since the early 1980s, Latino/a film festivals’ resorting to a commercial logic was also informed by the way they functioned as arenas for professionalization trends – such as their own and that of their filmmaking constituencies, coupled with the emergence of more commercially viable feature film formats in the 1980s; moreover, among their audiences and sponsors, they were also accommodating the emergence of a Latino/a identified middle class in pursuit of social distinction or, to use Marilyn Halter’s (2000) coinage, “shopping for identity.” To some extent, festivals were also

I. Introduction

able to tap the media hype surrounding this marketing fabricated “Hispanic Decade.”¹⁵ From today’s perspective, it is safe to assume that even though public attention for Latino/a cultural production was often erratic and again tied to reductive, mainstream palatable images of *latinidad* such as predicating Latinos/as’ citizenship status on conditions such as meritocracy and “sacrifice” (cf. Newman 2001; as will be discussed in the historical overview chapter), the “Decade” nevertheless helped generate an interest in Latino/a cultural production.¹⁶ This interest was further supported by shifts in the media landscape that enabled – in the transition from “New Hollywood” to the “indies” – a temporary prospering of auteur-driven, small budget film formats in the 1980s, coinciding with and supporting Latino/a filmmakers’ aforementioned embrace of more expensive feature film formats. In my historical overview chapter and analysis chapters, I will look at how Latino/a film festivals have continued to address such professionalization issues.

1.2 Promotion of *latinidad*

I argue that the Latino/a film festivals that form the core of my analysis are activist festivals. As I will discuss at more detail in the festival analytical chapter, their special time-space structure, their “time out of time” (Falassi 1987) and the “festival time-event” (Harbord 2009) privileges the community building experience; it enhances the authority of the films shown and lends itself to the festival’s educational goals, providing all these aspects with a unique urgency. This predisposition plays a particular role in regard to how the festivals analyzed in my study are situated in relative proximity to Hollywood, given the traditional underrepresentation of Latino/a film and experiences in the industries. At the same time, as California based festivals, they resonate with the state’s Mexican history and its gateway function for immigrants from south of the border, which emphasizes their transnational leanings and individual bridge-building solidarity projects.

I argue that Latino/a film festivals enable what Mexican American cultural anthropologist Olivia Cadaval (1998) has called “cultural performance” in her study of the multi-genre street festival Fiesta D.C. She defines the former as “a dynamic area where interrelationships and identities are generated, experienced, communicated, and altered” (10). Cadaval draws attention to the underlying activist nature of such performances as they “manipulate collective symbolic expressive forms to reflect, interpret, and influence society” (10). I argue that such cultural performances happen discursively and by means of the festival’s practices, namely, by way of a celebration and contestation of the images of and discourses on *latinidad* on screen and beyond, such as in the surrounding festival space, including also other non-filmic sidebars (such as art showcases), but also in conjunction with festival publications and other types of promotion. At the festival event, a key factor is the unique distinctive reception environment and atmosphere generated. As events that recognize the diversity of the Latino/a experience, events emphatically intended for cultural insiders and outsiders, the festivals also act as “contact zones” (Pratt 1991). Canadian literary scholar-cultural anthropologist Mary-Louise Pratt has defined the latter as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other”

¹⁵ The phrase had its origins in a commercial launched by the Coors Brewery in the early 1980s. Today, the term and its success in promoting Latino/a cultural production is regarded with much more sobriety, as is also reflected by Chicano/a comedy troupe Culture Clash’s often quoted quip, according to which the “Decade” turned out to be “a weekend sponsored Coors” (Baugh 2012: 128).

¹⁶ Scott M. Baugh (2012), for instance, has pointed at a “greater accessibility to literary and popular work by Latina and Latino authors, [...] newfound opportunities for entrepreneurs of Latino heritage, [...] and] stronger pull as voting blocs in local, state and national elections, and similar markets and contexts” (127).

I. Introduction

(34); they facilitate debate and exchange yet are ever aware of the uneven power relationships that define them. Latino/a film festivals' utopian goal is to enable the formation of a "festival communitas" (Cadaval 1998, drawing on Turner 1964), where "unity in diversity" (ibid.) is possible and mutual understanding, solidarity and social change are engendered.

Furthermore – and in ways that set them apart from traditional business film festivals such as Cannes, TIFF¹⁷ or Berlin – Latino/a film festivals function as primarily symbolic marketplaces. Here, a transfer of symbolic capital happens on the basis of Latino/a film festivals' activism which is predicated upon their special interest nature, in other words, their cultural specificity and educational agenda; and often also on the basis of their nurture of filmmakers. In this context, the constellational nature of film festivals is a crucial point; namely, the fact that all film festivals are sites where the needs and demands of different stakeholders intersect. The latter include audiences, filmmakers, sponsors, the media etc., and, of course, the festival organizers themselves; each of these groups, and their individual members may have individual, and sometimes diverging, interests at heart and thus may compete over defining the festival's identity, or brand. Furthermore, as I will show, the different festivals considered in my study each have a different relationship with the element of competition, which figures so dominantly in the field theory developed by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. This means that they negotiate their identity predominantly along the lines of "network[s] for advocacy" (Torchin 2012:1) not only in terms of their filmmaking and audience constituencies but also from one festival edition to the next, yet occasionally also in terms of "exclusivity" and "distinction" discourses associated with competition-driven bigger film festivals "in the business of cultural prestige" (de Valck 2007: 106).

All the while, I argue that the prestige and recognition that serves as the main currency, the capital, exchanged at the Latino/a film festival market is inextricably linked to their activist nature. My definition of capital¹⁸ is loosely based on that of Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992)¹⁹; for purposes of simplicity, I have restricted my usage thereof to its traditional economic variant and subsumed cultural and symbolic capital under the heading of "symbolic capital" (even though symbolic capital, strictly speaking, is also part of all the other three kinds). Accordingly, I define symbolic capital as a concept revolving around recognition (Rehbein & Saalman 2009: 138): the kind of recognition

¹⁷ TIFF: The Toronto International Film Festival. For these abbreviations and other short titles, please see the respective appendix.

¹⁸ Considering the fact that Bourdieu's conceptualizations of capital are part of his more encompassing field theory, it is unfortunate that these theorizations were by and large not adaptable to my approach. If we use Bourdieu's own game metaphor (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:98ff) in order to describe the "stakes" in the field (of film production, with festivals "consecrating" institutions), this would have presupposed a focus on the competition between festivals as different as Sundance and SDLFF. Here, the competition element is not consistent enough.

¹⁹ As part of his "economy of practices" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992), Bourdieu's concept of capital goes beyond its economic dimension; he argues in favor of "grasp[ing] capital [...] in all of its different forms, and [of] uncover[ing] the laws that regulate their conversion from one into another" (118). Bourdieu recognizes "*three fundamental species* [...], namely, economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital" (119; reference to Bourdieu 1986; italics in the original). Moreover, there is "symbolic capital, which is the form that one or another of these species takes when it is grasped through categories of perception that *recognize* its specific logic or, if you prefer, *misrecognize* the arbitrariness of its possession and accumulation" (119; italics in the original).

I. Introduction

associated with the other kinds of capital yet also goes above and beyond them,²⁰ and whose related concepts are esteem, status, and singularization.²¹ In ways that also underline their dependency on a the film festival's a priori constellational nature, these mostly symbolic transactions happen, for instance, in conjunction with filmmakers' needs to have their films validated by the festival, a point that is particularly meaningful considering the function of Latino/a film festivals' role as arenas of alternative distribution for underrepresented cinemas and their situation in California, in proximity of Hollywood's film and television industries²²; Latino/a celebrities bestowing their renown to the festival and to the sponsors; audiences in need of a validation of their experiences; corporate sponsoring agendas subscribing to philanthropic, educational and multicultural agendas; universities reaching out to minority students; and the festivals' need to have their educational mission further recognized by way of associating themselves to educational organizations. Another crucial aspect this study investigates is the way festivals, as symbolic marketplaces, draw on different resources. My definition of resource revolves around that of Bourdieu, as "all entities that enable agency and the preservation or improvement of a social position"²³ (cf. Rehbein & Saalman 2009:134). While for all the festivals considered in my analysis education and cultural specificity are important such resources, each festival also draws on individual resources such as their geographic situation or their uptake with audiences.

1.2.1 The festivals

The California based festivals considered in the analytical part of this study are, ordered by chapters (and, incidentally, from south to north): In the border region of Greater San Diego-Tijuana (Baja California), the San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF, since 1994) and, after the creation of the Media Arts Center San Diego (MACSD) by SDLFF director Ethan van Thillo in 1999, organized by MACSD; in the metropolitan Los Angeles region, the Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF, 2004-2013)²⁴; and in the Bay Area, the festivals of Cine Acción: "Women of the Americas in Film and Video"²⁵ (1988) and ¡Cine Latino! (1993-2004); the International Latino Film Festival San Francisco (ILFF, 1997-2008), associated with a backing organization, the International Latino/a Film Society (since 2006), and the San Francisco Latino Film Festival (SFLFF) organized by Cine + Mas (since 2009). I attended the following festival editions: SDLFF in 2010; SFLFF in 2010 and 2012; RRAFF in 2011 and 2012. The other two Bay Area festival organizations had been terminated when I started my fieldwork, but in regard to all five festivals, I was able to conduct qualitative interviews with more than sixty individuals involved as stakeholders. Festival catalogs also formed an

²⁰ "Die Anerkennung, die diese Arten [des Kapitals] verschaffen, gehört zu ihnen und geht doch über sie hinaus" (Rehbein & Saalman 2009:138).

²¹ "Wertschätzung, Status, Hervorhebung und eben Anerkennung sind *symbolisches Kapital*" (138, emphasis in the original).

²² A particularly important aspect is also awards politics, considered in the film festival theoretical chapter and in the analysis chapters.

²³ Resources are part of Bourdieu's extended usage of "capital." Rehbein & Saalman write: "Bourdieu's erweiterter Kapitalbegriff bezieht sich auf alle Entitäten, die Handlungsmöglichkeiten eröffnen und eine Bewahrung oder Verbesserung der sozialen Position ermöglichen" (134).

²⁴ Having seen its last edition in 2013, there have been efforts to revive RRAFF in 2018. Owing to this, I have chosen to regard the festival as a "stalled" rather than "terminated" event.

²⁵ Put in quotation marks as this was a one-time festival.

I. Introduction

important part of my research.²⁶ Since the first of my research visits took place in June 2009 and the last in September 2012, my special attention is devoted to this period with regard to the three festivals I was able to visit; that said, I also gained important insights by establishing their respective histories, particularly with regard to SDLFF (since 1994) and RRAFF (since 2004). All the while, I came to realize that it is indefinitely harder to assess the identity and development of a festival one has never personally attended. This is why I consider both Cine Acción's festivals and ILFF predominantly in regard to their cultural historical relevance than in terms of subjecting them to an analysis.

1.2.2 Research questions

My study revolves around the following research questions:

In its promotion of *latinidad*, what are the resources each festival is drawing on, and how?

And: In its promotion of *latinidad*, how does each festival's identity reflect its dedication to its principal stakeholders (imagined communities)? For instance: in terms of its discursive construction; its usage of metaphors? How does a festival's identity adapt to its changes as an organization and its changing environment?

How does each festival accommodate its stakeholders, such as in terms of programming, atmosphere, nurture, etc.? Where is conflict?

1.3 Situating my project

My study pursues a focus on five Latino/a film festivals in California and seeks to situate them in a more general history of the Latino/a film festival and in conjunction with some of the more impactful trends in U.S. Latino/a film production between the late 1960s and the first decade of the 2000s (the historical overview chapter). It thus continues in the footsteps of Latino/a (and Chicano/a) cinema / film / media studies, a field inaugurated by Gary D. Keller's *Chicano Cinema* (1985); further chartered by Rosa Linda Fregoso's *The Bronze Screen* (1993), Keller's *Hispanics and United States Film* (1994) and Chon A. Noriega's *Shot in America* (2000) and an unfolding canon of essays and monographies dedicated to various aspects of Latino/a cinema; a body of work which long has included

²⁶ Festival catalogs were gifted by festival associates / directors John Petrovsky (ILFF), John Ramirez (RRAFF), and Ethan van Thillo (SDLFF); kindly lent and / or gifted, from his private archives, by Jesús S. Treviño (CineFestival and Cine Latino); and accessed, thanks to the intervention of Stanford University's Adán Griego, Curator for Latin American, Iberian & Mexican American Collections, at Greene Library's Special Collections. I also received research copies of some key films from the Chicano Studies Research Center (CSRC) at UCLA through the help of Chon A. Noriega, who sponsored my status as visiting scholar in 2009 and 2010, and through the help of CSRC librarian, Michael Stone; through filmmaker-festival curator Jesse Lerner, and not least of all RRAFF director, John Ramirez.

I. Introduction

international contributions as well. My work is an important contribution since within this field, work on the festival has been scarce.²⁷

My study also continues in the vein of “*E Pluribus Unum? Ethnic Identities in Transnational Integration Processes in the Americas*,” the Inter-American research group at Bielefeld University’s Center for Interdisciplinary Studies (ZiF),²⁸ particularly its Media Phase and the conference “Mediating Ethnic Identity in the Americas: Ethnic Filmmaking and Film Politics in Globalizing Markets”; the work of the Inter-American Studies Association (IAS), which came out of the work of the research group; and, not least of all, given the identity political and commercial bent of my study, a conference at Leipzig University’s American Studies Department, “Selling Ethnicity and Race. Consumerism and Representation in 21st-Century America,”²⁹ in which I participated with a paper. All the while, I started work on my study as member of Bielefeld University’s Collaborative Research Centre (SFB 584), “The Political as Communicative Space in History.”³⁰ In this regard, and despite the necessary metamorphoses involved in the process of defining my project, my study continues to address the main focus of the research center subdivision it grew out of (B-13, “Shifting the Boundaries of the Political”). The activist film festivals researched in my project promote *latinidad* in accordance with their negotiations of politics of identity, commerce and place; and their promotion thereof can be viewed along the lines of the SFB’s own definition of the political; particularly in regard to how these negotiations, too, “ai[m] at having [...] a broad impact, sustainability and obligatoriness” and “refe[r] to imagined collective entities either explicitly or implicitly” as, too, they address imagined communities (“Research Programme,” SFB 584; 2008: 9; BrE).

All the while, as the first comparative study dedicated to selected U.S. Latino/a film festivals, my project establishes them in current film festival research, thus building on, interrogating and complementing contributions to a relatively new and rapidly growing discipline, up until the end of the

²⁷ Even though they have rarely been the object of study themselves, the key role of Latino/a film festivals for an emerging Latino/a cinema in the U.S. had been recognized early on, such by Johansen (1979 / 2001). Furthermore, Latino/a film festivals were considered valuable resources for the emerging Chicano/a-Latino/a film scholarship and, as I will argue in more detail in the historical overview chapter, frequently featured the involvement of academics from the field in terms of curation and catalog contributions whose works they thus helped to disseminate. In this context, a notable fact is that the pioneering *Chicano Cinema: Research, Reviews, Resources* (1985), edited by Gary D. Keller, drew on the one-time Chicano film festival Keller had organized in 1982 at the University of Michigan. Otherwise, festivals figured mostly as backdrop in the emerging conversation on Latino/a cinema and its dominant issues of representations; opportunities; and reception; here, Yolanda Broyles’s (1983) essay on 1981-82 CineFestival is a notable exception and an important early critique of Latino/a film festival practice. Noriega (2000) casts a brief glance on the Chicano/a film festival; Toby Miller (2010) has considered them in conjunction with the international distribution of Mexican cinema; and, more recently, Laura Isabel Serna (2017) contributed an essay on Angeleno/a Latino/a film festival culture to *From Latin America to Hollywood: Latino Film Culture in Los Angeles 1967-2017* (ed. Lourdes Portillo & Ellen M. Harrington), a project of the Getty Foundation’s Pacific Standard Time arts grant program.

²⁸ Organized by Prof. Dr. Josef Raab (University Duisburg-Essen), Prof. Dr. Sebastian Thies (Bielefeld University), and Prof. Dr. Olaf Kaltmeier (Bielefeld University). The conference phase happened 2008-09 (“InterAmerican Research Group *E Pluribus Unum*,” www.uni-bielefeld.de).

²⁹ International Symposium, Leipzig University, 6-8 Nov., 2013. Organized by Prof. Dr. Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez (Leipzig University), Dr. Frank Usbek (Technical University Dresden), Dr. Anne Grob, and Dr. Maria Lippold.

³⁰ Collaborative Research Centre [BrE] / Sonderforschungsbereich 584 (SFB 584), “The Political as Communicative Space in History,” at the Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology. Speaker: Prof. Dr. Willibald Steinmetz (Bielefeld University). I was a participant in the SFB’s phase III, 2008-2012. “Collaborative Research Centre (SFB) 584.” ([www.uni-bielefeld.de/\(en\)/geschichte/forschung/sfb584](http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/(en)/geschichte/forschung/sfb584))

I. Introduction

last millennium a “blank spot of cinema scholarship” (de Valck & Loist 2009; see also Porton 2009, Iordanova 2009).³¹ As to map out film festival research vis-à-vis traditional film criticism, festival scholars Marijke de Valck and Skadi Loist (2009) have argued that while the latter concerns itself both with the coverage of the festival and individual films, the former has “scholars [...] work[ing] out of sync with the imposing festival rhythm and offer[ing] meta-views for understanding festivals in broader and more specific contexts.” (180) An “inherently interdisciplinary field” (180, my emphasis),³² film festival studies have been conducted in the humanities, the social sciences, and beyond. My study’s mixed methodology approach thus fits in with this interdisciplinary orientation, situated as it is in cultural and social studies, Latino/a / (Inter) American studies, and social anthropology. With its focus on festivals revolving around Latinos/as as an ethnic minority within the U.S. and as a more encompassing, transnational group, my study thus engages with film festival scholarship’s investigations into “the role of [...] festivals as sites of self-identification and community building” (de Valck & Loist 180, my emphasis). Even though U.S. Latino/a film festivals have tended to be minor players in the overarching field of film production and exhibition, they have continued to challenge the traditional status of underrepresentation characterizing Latino/a film productions as well as Latino/a experiences and promoted the careers of Latino/a filmmakers. My project thus corresponds to recent film festival scholarship in that it offers new perspectives onto “the political and economic context of film production and distribution,” where festivals may act “both as players in the film industry and, conversely, as events in which various stakeholders are involved” (de Valck & Loist 180). To repeat, it is U.S. Latino/a film festivals’ very focus on a pan-ethnic minority, Latinos/as, which makes them the desired partners for sponsors and collaborators seeking to reap the symbolic capital that comes with their support according to their respective agendas of “diversity,” “multiculturalism,” “community” or “philanthropy”; this is one important aspect distinguishing them both from generalist-mainstream festivals in the U.S. and festivals all around the world in countries with a long tradition of state support of film production and exhibition, festivals in Europe, Latin America, or Asia.

Also within film festival studies, my study fits in with discipline’s key concern to assess the festival phenomenon in all its cultural, national and thematic diversity. Bigger and more widely known festivals have been more long-standing objects of media scholarly inquiry (cf. de Valck & Loist 2009)³³ even though they only constitute a tiny fraction of the approximately 3,000 film festivals in operation in the new millennium’s second decade (Follows 2013, no pag.).³⁴ Here, my study’s relevance is also underscored by the fact that two early volumes of the pioneering, thematically organized Uni-

³¹ In fact, de Valck & Loist (2009) have argued with regard to future research opportunities in the discipline of film festival studies that “[w]hile there has been substantial attention for film festivals in relation to processes of self-identification and community-building (in particular for queer festivals), the relation between programming and identity politics remains of the key fields in film festival research that needs to be further defined. Studies have not yet been synthesised in an overarching theory, and more case studies need to be conducted, especially on festivals in Africa and South-America [sic]” (214, British spelling; henceforth abbreviated as BrE).

³² Here, de Valck & Loist cite a range of scholarly disciplines including film and media studies, organizational, business, and gender studies, history, anthropology, urban and tourism studies and regional studies (cf. 180).

³³ De Valck (2007) has pointed out that most early publications focused on individual festival histories, frequently “in cooperation with a festival organization – for example, on the occasion of an anniversary – or are dedicated to influential festival directors and / or tend to focus on the glamour, scandals, and stars [...]” (16)

³⁴ To illustrate their amazingly growing numbers, back in 2007 Marijke de Valck’s estimate was somewhere between 1,200 and 1,900 (de Valck 2007:105).

versity of St. Andrews, Scotland's *Film Festival Yearbook* were dedicated to key aspects of my own research – festivals' imagined communities (2010) and, in particular, activist festivals (2012).³⁵ Even though Latin American themed and other specialized festivals have come to be part of this growing body of international film festival scholarship³⁶, work on U.S. Latino/a film festivals has remained sketchy at best; my study thus fills an important research gap.³⁷

1.4 Contents

Since research on the Latino/a film festival is so limited both in current film festival and Latino/a cultural studies and related academic fields, I have found it necessary to include two chapters that precede the analysis of the five festivals analyzed. The film festival theoretical chapter locates the place of Latino/a film festivals in the realm of film festival studies. A discussion along what de Valck & Loist (2009) have called the five axes of festival research and Marc Peranson's taxonomy (2009) of "business" and "audience" festivals will show that the critical vocabulary established in festival research is helpful in locating their role as culturally specific and activist festivals; yet these parameters often remain fixated on film festivals as vehicles for national/global film markets and for more established taste cultures, and on the attending "task division" (de Valck & Loist 2009: 187; de Valck 2007: 214) existing between bigger, industry driven and smaller, special interest festivals, thus continuing in the vein of established hierarchies. They fail to capture the way Latino/a film festivals have continued to challenge the dominant regimes of representation and the lack of opportunities for Latino/a filmmakers.

Following that, after a short overview of the most important U.S. Latino/a film festivals, in the historical overview chapter, I have set out to identify what, in organizational theory, would be called the "environment" (Rüling 2009) of the emerging Latino/a film festival. The overview identifies some of the key developments, turning points and significant actors in U.S. Latino/a film production, from Chicano/a-Latino/a film's early platforms, public affairs television shows, to Latino/a film activists' usage of the vocabulary of New Latin American Cinema, the emergence of Latino/a feature film and the so-called "Hispanic Hollywood" of the 1980s, and discourses on "new," "cultural," and "consumer" citizenship and the presence of Latinos/as at Sundance. Since the chapter has its own, exhaustive introduction, let it me only add at this point that I have chosen to focus on aspects that are of importance to the California based festivals analyzed in my study, and that the three Latino/a film festivals

³⁵ The thematic anthology is published by the University of St. Andrews, St. Andrews, Scotland (since 2009). The existing volumes have been dedicated, respectively, to *The Film Festival Circuit* (2009; ed. Iordanova & Rhyne), *Film Festivals and Imagined Communities* (2010; eds. Iordanova & Cheung); *Film Festivals and East Asia* (2011; eds. Iordanova & Cheung); *Film Festivals and Activism* (2012; eds. Iordanova & Torchin); *Archival Film Festivals* (2013; ed. Marlow-Mann); and *Film Festivals and the Middle East* (2014; Iordanova and van de Peer).

³⁶ Despite works such as the volume by U.S. American film scholar Jeffrey Ruoff (2012), the U.S. still figure at the periphery of film festival research, a greater proportion of which to date has been dedicated to European and Asian festivals, as well as to Australian and African festivals, which resonates with the fact that the field emerged out of a tradition of European based scholarship and the intersecting research field in post-colonial studies.

³⁷ The *Film Festival Yearbook's* (2009) pioneering and otherwise exhaustive overview of festival research, in its Trans/National Cinema category, only lists research dealing with Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and South America (featuring an article by U.S. scholar Julianne Burton on a European festival dedicated to Latin American cinemas). Even more telling is that the related entry dedicated to research on identity based festivals does not include a category on ethnicity based festivals (de Valck & Loist 2009: 198ff; 295 ff.).

I. Introduction

which will be considered represent important nodes in the Latino/a film festival network, namely: the oldest such event in the U.S., CineFestival San Antonio, Texas (since 1976); the Chicago Latino Film Festival (CLFF, since 1985), and the Los Angeles Latino Film Festival (LALIFF, since 1997).

Subsequently, the analysis section takes off with the San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF). SDLFF is a particularly gratifying object of study because of its development from the university based Cine Estudiantil (students' festival) with a focus on Chicano/a and Native American Film in 1994 to today's eleven day event, featuring a program of more than one hundred films from all genres, U.S. and international Latino/a cinemas – a festival until recently (2014) hosted at an unpretentious shopping mall at the outskirts of the city and then relocated to a somewhat more upscale yet accessible commercial area in a neighboring district. SDLFF is the yearly highlight of the year-round calendar or events created by its backing organization, the Media Arts Center San Diego (MACSD, s. 1999). MACSD features media arts, media literacy and cinematic programs and also provides nurture and resources for local filmmakers from both sides of the border. Doing so, the organization has identified the region's "underserved" communities as its imagined community. This definition is wide enough for the festival to appeal to the city's wealthy constituencies and attract them as clients, patrons and sponsors to the festival and MACSD but also to attract the region's substantial poor, often immigrant constituencies, who benefit from low-cost or free of charge programs at MACSD and at the festival. Thus, a mix of education and entertainment is tapped as resource that brings sponsors and audiences to the festival. That way, the organization has not only created a way to sustain itself but also to cater to these poorer communities. All the while, the festival's promotion of *latinidad* is rigorously non-essentializing; in fact, MACSD's lack of ethnic designation creates a productive tension. Another resource is the border, which serves as a sponsor incentive (wishing to target the festival's bilingual communities, as is the case concerning communications providers or the media); SDLFF has tapped the border as a symbolic resource in its programming (the Mexican-U.S. border serves as a point of departure both for the national diversity of its programs and, given the heightened sense of hybridity experienced at the border, for its diverse and intersectional programming foci). One last resource is the festival atmosphere. Founder Ethan van Thillo has likened the festival to a restaurant and thus film consumption to a gratifying and community building experience.

The next chapter revolves around the Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF). The festival started out as a campus-based festival (2004-09), saw a two year transitory phase (2010-11) when it was held at a repertory cinema in a suburban shopping area and then once again relocated to its final home (2012-14)³⁸ at a Latino/a theater and cultural arts organization on the Eastside. Organized by Dr. John Ramirez, a tenured professor from the Television, Film and Media Studies Program (TVF) at RRAFF's native California State University-Los Angeles (CSULA), the festival's imagined communities over time changed from students to filmmakers, with an addition of overwhelmingly middle class patrons of *gentefied* Boyle Heights. RRAFF's promotion of *latinidad* as diverse and multifaceted on the one hand and the strategic essentialism of its programming that would limit the former to film and other audiovisual media dealing with and / or made by U.S. Latinos/as was conducive to attracting many locally based Latino/a filmmakers, mostly the enclave working in entertainment formats, "Latino/a Hollywood," and it went hand in hand with the sheltered workshop atmosphere that characterized the festival, a spirit of solidarity that most of the time, but not always, held in check the

³⁸ RRAFF is currently halted, but there are plans to continue the festival.

I. Introduction

competition that marked Hollywood. I will also discuss RRAFF's usage of a performative resource, namely, *lo rasquache*, a designation that situates the festival in a specific politics of place, namely, a Chicano/a social and film arts activism that was particularly prevalent in Los Angeles, and the festival organizers' usage of the term in order to build community, a strategic "fail[ure] to repeat loyally" (Butler 1993: 220), appealing to Latino/a filmmakers from all across the nation. Lastly, I will also discuss the festival's function as a symbolic marketplace. This includes a strategic usage of its proximity to Hollywood that makes it possible to bestow and receive symbolic capital in conjunction with its awards politics; and its educational orientation, which RRAFF uses to transfer symbolic capital and, in turn, to receive support from its sponsors.

The last analytical chapter is dedicated to Bay Area festivals. The two older, terminated ones that I was not able to visit in person, out of necessity, tend to fall into the cultural historical category. One organization is Cine Acción (1980-2008), a film board dedicated to Latin American and U.S. Latino/a cinema. Its resource – and challenge, in terms of sustaining the organization – was that throughout the altogether twenty-four years of its active existence³⁹ it had been shaped by many different cultural workers – filmmakers and film activists (increasingly Latino/a identified, but some "just" cultural insiders), academics and arts administrators. This fluctuation of people and ideas gave new impetus to its promotion of *latinidad* – in the 1980s, through screenings, exchanges, a film and video archive, and a newsletter; later, through a pioneering three-day film festival dedicated to "Women of the Americas in Video and Film" (1988); later, from 1993 on, by means of their annual film festival ¡Cine Latino!. Cine Acción's promotion of *latinidad* was always politically inflected: Its very name was a reference to the *éngagé* New Latin American Cinema. Cine Acción tapped the Bay's unique politically liberal-progressive-radical political climate and its multiple role as a hub for independent filmmaking, academic excellence, and the arts as resources. I argue that ¡Cine Latino!'s imagined communities were these fellow artistic and filmmaking communities.

In 1997, the First Annual Latino Film Festival of Marin was founded and later renamed International Latino Film Festival-San Francisco (ILFF). ILFF's promotion of *latinidad* rested on the pillars of education (such as its Youth in Video program) and star power. Like many festivals founded in the 1990s, ILFF used these resources as sponsor incentives as well as in order to attract audiences, both with considerable success. As a result, the festival expanded throughout the Bay. With the dwindling success of ¡Cine Latino!, ILFF more and more reshaped its identity in terms of intensifying its ties to mainstream / education oriented Latino/a Hollywood. After the demise of Cine Acción's festivals ILFF became the Bay's only Latino/a film festival. I argue that ILFF's target audiences changed from the Bay's "cultured" and wealthy constituencies to a more inclusive group. However, the preservation of its image, revolving around parties and celebrities seemed more important than continuing the festival in the Bay after the 2008 financial crash that curtailed sponsorship.

Finally, there is Cine+Mas, the film club that emerged out of a handful of associates of terminated ILFF united by their shared goal to preserve a Latino/a film festival in the Bay. Accordingly, they created the San Francisco Latino Film Festival (SFLFF) in 2009, working hard to identify its own identity. On the one hand, it created a consistent branding. Furthermore, it did so by creating strategic

³⁹ Cine Acción was formally discontinued in 2008 (J. Torres Interview 2012) but had hosted its last festival in 2004.

I. Introduction

partnerships with many community arts organizations, in San Francisco and beyond, as well as with more established institutions. These partnerships are an important resource in its promotion of *latinidad*. While its target audiences are encompassing as well, Cine + Mas emphatically privileges the immigrant experience and “taking ownership.”

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

1. Emergence of the film festival

As frequently noted – for instance, by Argentinian film critic and festival director⁴⁰ Eduardo “Quintín” Antín (Quintín 2009: 40) – it is ironic that the U.S., home of the world’s most impactful film industries, joined the international film festival arena relatively late. A case in point is the nation’s oldest continuing such event, the San Francisco International Film Festival (SFIFF) in the late 1950s. In fact, as this short overview will show, the late emergence of film festivals in the U.S. already points at a fundamental difference to the many film festivals outside the U.S. and their historical function as trajectories of national culture and economies. As events created apart from the industry, the first U.S. film festivals differed from the top-down, state-supported festival organizations in other parts of the “festival galaxy” (Quintín 2009:38) seeking to promote national film industries and national film cultures. This means that their late emergence may have been the result of a cultural policy that has traditionally more strictly separated the cultural industries and the state.⁴¹ In this light, the relative absence of U.S. festivals from the events accredited by the venerable FIAPF (Fédération Internationale des Associations de Producteurs de Films,⁴² since 1933) also makes sense, even though with the globalization of film markets, FIAPF membership has long ceased to be a primary distinction marker for successful players in the industry. FIAPF is chiefly concerned with the regulation of its accredited film festival members, which includes their business transactions. Among its members are the world’s oldest continuing festival, Italy’s Venice (*La Mostra*, founded in 1932 as an addition to the *Biennale di Venezia*); France’s Cannes (s. 1946, generally considered the world’s most prestigious film festival) and Berlin (created in 1951 in the city’s Western sector); as well as newer events, such as South Korea’s Busan (BIFF, founded in 1996). In the Americas, more long-term FIAPF membership has only been bestowed to festivals in Latin America and Canada, namely, Mar del Plata (Argentina, founded in 1954), Cartagena (Colombia, 1959), Canada’s Toronto or TIFF (1976) and Montréal (1977), and the more recent Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic, 2006) (www.fiapf.org); events which, however, occupy vastly different hierarchical positions in the festival galaxy.

It is also in the light of U.S. film festivals’ late arrival on the scene that the pronouncement made by Dutch film festival scholar Marijke de Valck does not come as much of a surprise. Calling film festivals “a European phenomenon” (de Valck 2007: 47), she has compellingly delineated film festivals’ beginnings, which include the first-ever such event, held in Monaco, on January 1, 1898; other early festivals in Italy (Torino, Palermo, and Milan), Germany (Hamburg) and Czechoslovakia (Prague),

⁴⁰ Former director of the Buenos Aires Festival Internacional de Cine Independiente / Buenos Aires International Festival of Independent Cinema (BAFICI).

⁴¹ With the off and on exception of the American Film Institute’s (AFI) Film Fest, to be discussed later.

⁴² As de Valck and Loist have explained, the association “keep[s] the number of so-called A-level festivals limited to assure the hierarchy of the circuit” (183); however, the overwhelming number of festivals that are not FIAPF accredited also speaks to the way the idea of one, central regulating such institution has grown out of the idea of national bounded markets, being challenged by ever-changing and globalizing markets. Today based in Brussels, 2017 saw a total number of 47 accredited festivals, the largest number of which being comprised of specialized competitive feature film festivals (28). (www.fiapf.org)

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

and the first competitive festival organized by the pioneering Lumière brothers in Italy in 1907 (de Valck 2007: 47). Even in those early days, film festivals were important marketplaces for symbolic and cultural capital, resembling “a world fair or the Olympics” (Quintín 2009: 4). Quintín argues that “[f]estivals were conceived as an opportunity to show off the power, real or symbolic, of the host country as opposed to that of the other countries” (ibid.). He reminds us that

[i]t’s not by chance that the first important film festival, Venice, was created by Mussolini; nor was it by chance that Cannes was invented to counterbalance it. Nor that here, only hundred miles from [Buenos Aires], Perón founded the festival of Mar del Plata in 1954. (ibid.)

Indeed, Cannes, the undisputed queen of film festivals, had already been waiting in the wings in the late 1930s but could only be realized after the war, in 1946. Like other festivals in mid-century Europe on both sides of the Iron Curtain, the French Riviera based festival was then drawing on “historical discourses of reconstruction and urban regeneration” (Harbord 2002:63), at a time when festivals began to function as vehicles for individual national film industries, distinctive political agendas, and the celebration of national culture(s) through the medium of film.

Furthermore, in the context of festivals in the West, a commercial logic played a key role that reached back to the times before and during World War Two, and which also paved the way for Hollywood’s conquest of European film markets after the war⁴³. Even though Quintín dismisses festivals of the 1930s and ‘40s as “irrelevant in terms of film commerce apart from their contributions to publicity and glamor” (2009: 5), I argue that these very qualities in fact were to lay the groundwork for what has today been widely recognized (cf. de Valck 2007: 7) as major international film festivals’ powerful symbiosis of star powered media attention and economic interests. In this respect, Cannes has mockingly been called “Hollywood’s licentious French mistress” (Sarris 1982: 29), despite its staunch self-promotion as an arena for Europe’s film artistic and cultural diversity in opposition to Hollywood’s formulaic studio system. With its location in a picturesque, seaside holiday resort, the festival is famed for its frequently imported star power, using “its transatlantic connections, somewhat opportunistically, to put itself on the map as the most important cinema event of the year” (de Valck 2007:7).

Much in contrast, the first U.S. film festivals had grown out of college film societies, museum contexts, and other emerging fora for film culture such as the Robert Flaherty Film Seminar (since 1955).⁴⁴ The country’s oldest continued such event, the San Francisco International Film Festival (SFIFF, since 1957) was followed by the New York Film Festival (NYFF, since 1963) (Ruoff 2012: 1). Rather than prioritizing on the masses via entertainment fare, these early festivals provided exhibition arenas for

⁴³ The very fact that Venice’s first ever edition in 1932 opened by way of a U.S. production, Rouben Marmoulian’s *Dr Jeckyll and Mr Hyde* (1931), is also highly symbolic of Hollywood’s long-standing presence in the European festival circuit (de Valck 2007:47).

⁴⁴ Named for the pioneering U.S. documentary director (*Nanook of the North*, 1922; *Moana*, 1926) and founded by his widow, Frances Flaherty. A forum for filmmakers, cinephiles, and academics, “the Flaherty” is open only to registered participants and usually held in a remote college setting as to encourage exchange. Patricia Zimmerman (2012) has drawn attention to the Flaherty’s deliberate break with Hollywood’s commercial tendencies and division of labor philosophy of film production. This is signaled by its strategic “propos[ition of] the term ‘filmmaker’ [...]. The term harboured an activist intention: it suggested an artisanal difference from the division of labour in studio films” (177; BrE).

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

the international avant-garde and political film, often independent productions which usually were not distributed elsewhere in the U.S. Accordingly, instead of investing in the emerging U.S. film festivals as platforms that would garner an interest in new film productions, studios regarded them as too elitist and non-profitable. With regard to the early days of NYFF, a festival that has served primarily cineaste audiences to this day, Daryl Chin (1997) has noted, “the Hollywood studios were very suspicious of artiness; in the first year, no major studio release was represented” (61).

Thus, contrary to the European film festival circuit, the earliest U.S. film festivals featured only limited involvement of the Hollywood industries. And contrary to the push European film industries were receiving from their respective governments, in the U.S., the state never committed itself to its own national film industries in a similar manner. The comparatively late foundation of the American Film Institute⁴⁵ in 1967 attests to this, as does the fact that the only U.S. based festival to receive FIAPF accreditation was the AFI Film Fest (founded in 1986), and only temporarily so.⁴⁶ Hollywood’s own long time lack of interest in national film festivals, in turn, revealed the industry to be primarily geared towards conquering international markets, particularly after the so-called Paramount Case ruling in 1948, “curtail[ing] the oligopolistic control of distribution and exhibition of the major studios” (Harbord 2002: 63).⁴⁷

In the 1970s and 1980s, a number of festivals were founded which continued in the U.S. film festival tradition of alternative showcases, among them Telluride (since 1973, Telluride, Colorado), the Mill Valley Film Festival (MVFF, s. 1977, San Rafael, California) and Sundance (s. 1985, Park City, Utah⁴⁸). They were created by film distributors, archivists, and scholars (Telluride) or by independent filmmakers and disenchanted film industry insiders (MVFF and Sundance). One could argue that it was both Telluride and Sundance’s geographical distance from the coastal élites and their Europhile tastes that further (U.S.) Americanized the film festival event; at least in their early days, each infused their entire hosting towns with a unique festival atmosphere. Missions varied: MVFF was located right in the Bay Area’s arts and budding independent film scene; Telluride was to make a name for itself through spectacular retrospectives such as a tribute to controversial German filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl (1973) and to Abel Gance’s momentous, split screen classic, *Napoléon* (France 1927; restored 1980 version) (Ruoff 2012:137; 140). In the 1980s, a time that saw rapid changes in the nation’s media landscape, all three festivals were among the key showcases for the rise of independent or “specialty films” – films thriving on artistic freedom, having been made with limited at best involvement by industry and serving as an antidote to Hollywood’s blockbuster formats. At a time

⁴⁵ AFI, the American Film Institute, is a state founded non profit association supported by the NEA (National Endowment of the Arts) and the Ford Foundation (www.afi.com).

⁴⁶ The Los Angeles based festival was accredited in 2006 (“FIAPF accredits the LA based AFI FEST in 2006”; filmfestivals.com) but at some point along the way lost membership again (www.fiapf.org). It had emerged out of the FILMEX festival, 1971-1983 (Slide 2013:72).

⁴⁷ This meant the end not only for studio-owned cinemas but also of the hitherto ubiquitous practice of block booking; for film exhibitors, the latter had involved compulsory package deals of films (cf. Slide 1998:25). Together with a number of other distribution practices, block booking was ruled illegal by a court decision which was confirmed in 1948 by the Supreme Court (cf. *ibid.*) Though never entirely overturned (Slide cites the example of pioneering blockbuster *Star Wars* in 1978, also part of a package deal), the official end to block booking curtailed the power of the studios and was one important milestone as to the demise of the traditional studio system.

⁴⁸ In fact, today’s festival was the result of the incorporation of a local film festival by Park City, Utah’s Sundance Institute; it called “Sundance Festival” only later, in 1991 (Perren 2012: 31). The Institute had been founded by Robert Redford in 1981.

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

when there were still few Latino/a festivals around, the above three festivals were also among the first showcases for a number of Latino/a cinema, sometimes providing a minimum of networking possibilities and nurture for number of Latino/a film professionals; here, Sundance had a particularly important role.⁴⁹ Later on, selected other festivals followed suit.⁵⁰

In January 1989, the phenomenal and surprise success of Steven Soderbergh's Sundance-premiered low budget drama *sex, lies and videotape* (1989),⁵¹ generally considered to be a watershed moment both in the history of Sundance and the history of independent film, ushered in Sundance's renown as "flagship of the burgeoning American independent film movement and a dream factory for the modern age" (Turan 2002: 31). *sex, lies and videotapes* put Sundance on the map of the international film festival circuit, not least of all because it made it compatible with the circuit's marketplace logic, if for ancillary, "indie" markets.⁵² At home, too, the 1989 festival edition ignited the industry's interest in U.S. film festivals both as talent pipelines and marketplaces. What started then was part of a more encompassing trend that led to a considerable commodification of independent film as an subsidiary market for art house and other specialty audiences; the rise of so-called "indiewood"; and, ultimately, to an increased blurring of boundaries between "independent" and "mainstream" film; for film festivals, this has meant that their self-promotion as an "indie" arena to some extent has become a branding strategy.⁵³

While Sundance has remained the most visible film festival in today's U.S., a number of more recent festivals have also gained in prominence, often using celebrities in order to attract audiences and the media, while frequently serving the end of urban regeneration and city tourism efforts. One example is New York City's rapidly growing Tribeca, co-founded by Jane Rosenthal and actor-director Robert de Niro in 2002. Its creation had in part been inspired by the goal to revitalize the city's financial district after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (Desta 2018). The festival has capitalized on its location in New York City and on its star power, also involving celebrities as festival jurors (cf. Ruoff 2012:6).

⁴⁹ The role both of the Sundance Institute and Festival in regard to nurturing three generations of Latino/a filmmakers will be considered at more length in the later historical overview chapter.

⁵⁰ Here, more prominent film festivals also include FilmFest D.C. (since 1987; filmfestdc.org); Austin, Texas's South by Southwest Festival (SXSW, since 1987; <https://www.sxsw.com>); and the Miami International Film Festival (MIFF, since 1984; <https://2018.miamifilmfestival.com>). In California, they include the AFI Fest (<http://www.afi.com/afifest>); the Santa Barbara International Film Festival (SBIFF; since 1986; sbiff.org), and San José's Cinequest (since 1990; <https://cinequest.org>). In Canada, there is AluCine, Toronto, with its focus on Latino/a and Latin American film (since 1995; <http://alucinefestival.com>). A particularly interesting case is CineSol (since 1993; cinesol.com). Based in South Texas's Río Grande Valley border region, the festival straddles both sides of the border and features Latino/a independent film alongside other low budget productions.

⁵¹ The film received Sundance's Audience Award and was nominated for Grand Jury Prize (Drama); this was followed by national and international accolades and prizes, including Cannes' Palme D'Or; the FIPRESCI Award for director Soderbergh and Best Actor for James Spader; four Independent Spirit Awards and one such nomination; one Academy Awards nomination, and many more. The entertainment website [imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com) lists a total of 15 awards and 22 nominations ("*sex, lies and videotape: Awards*"; www.imdb.com).

⁵² This development was anticipated by *sex, lies and videotape* director Soderbergh himself upon his return to the festival one year later in 1990, when he expressed his fear that the festival "could become more of a film market than a festival" (quoted in "Stakes up at the Sundance Film Festival," San Diego Union-Tribune; <http://www.signonsandiego.com>; quoted in Perren 2012: 37). For a more detailed, critical appraisal of Sundance and the more "expansive industrial shift" (37) that helped build the market power of the "indies," see Perren (2012) and Biskind (2004). For a critique of its role alongside other, bigger, festivals in the international circuit, see Peranson (2009).

⁵³ For a book-length discussion on Indiewood, cf. King 2009.

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

Today's U.S. boast a multitude of festivals of all sizes and foci all around the country, including local community, campus and industry events, and general as well as special interest film foci. Among the latter group are so-called identity themed festivals, the oldest of which having been around ever since the 1970s and '80s, some with their own backing institutions. The Newark Black Film Festival (NBFF; s. 1974; www.newarkmuseum.org/nbff) is considered to be the oldest continuing African American and African Diaspora film festival in the U.S. and hosted by the Newark Museum. The oldest Native American showcase is the American Indian Film Festival (AIFF, s. 1975, San Francisco, CA www.aifisf.com), hosted by the American Indian Film Institute (AIFF). Frameline, the oldest continuing LGBTQ festival, is also located in San Francisco, which was to emerge as the nation's leading film festival hub (s. 1977; www.frameline.org). Finally, the longest continued women's film festival is Rocky Mountain Women's Film Festival, organized by the Rocky Mountain Women's Film Institute (RMWFF, s. 1988; rmwfilmstitute.org). In fact, in 2013, British film industry data specialist Stephen Follows estimated that of the approximately 3,000 festivals active at the time, the U.S. made up to 63 per cent (Follows 2013, no pag.). The numbers are impressive when compared to Europe's 18.1 per cent and 1.8 of festivals located in South America.⁵⁴ Naturally, these figures also reflect the status of the U.S. status as one of the world's most populous nations and the world's largest economy (Bajpai 2018). These more recent statistics attest to the changed role of film festivals: vehicles for the aforementioned commodification trends of the cultural industries; tools for city tourism; arenas for a range of "tastes of cinema(s)", from generalist to special interest and underrepresented; and a democratization of media production ever since the Digital Turn. Not least of all, these numbers convey an interest in a consumption of cinema beyond the blockbuster and streaming fare; and they attest to the high demand for the unique and communal experience provided by the festival's "time out of time."

2. De Valck and Loist's "six axes of film festival research" (2009) and Peranson's business / audience film festival paradigms (2009)

In this chapter, I will situate my research on U.S. Latino/a film festivals within the context of contemporary film festival scholarship, taking Marijke de Valck and Skadi Loist's overview (2009:180ff.) as point of departure. Their altogether six axes of film festival research – some of them modified by me to fit the subject of U.S. Latino/a film festivals – attest to a view of film festivals as "sites of intersecting discourses and practices." They are, respectively:

- Axis One – Film as Aesthetic Discourse; changed by me to "Festivals as Discursive Constructions";
- Axis Two – Economic Continuum: From Production to Distribution;
- Axis Three – Festival as Institution;
- Axis Four – Reception⁵⁵;
- Axis Five – Politics of Place;
- Axis Six – The Film Festival Circuit and History. (de Valck & Loist 182-88)

⁵⁴ It is unfortunate that similar estimates for Mexico and for Central American and Caribbean nations were left out of the estimate (ibid.).

⁵⁵ Original title: Reception: Audiences and Exhibition (de Valck & Loist 185)

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

Moreover, I would also like to invoke the somewhat polemic taxonomy devised by Canadian film journalist and festival curator⁵⁶, Marc Peranson (2009):

Table: Two models for understanding film festivals (Peranson 2009: 27)

BUSINESS FESTIVAL	AUDIENCE FESTIVAL
High budget, operating revenue not primarily audience/ ticket sales	Low budget, a good deal of operating revenue comes from attendance
Premiere oriented (world or international)	Not concerned with premieres
Major corporate sponsorship	Limited corporate sponsorship
Guests present for most films	Limited number of guests
Market / business presence	Little business presence
Large staff	Small staff
Major corporation	Minor competition
Film-fund / third world investment	No investment in films
Retrospectives	Few retrospectives
Most films are submitted	Most films are seen at other festivals or solicited
Hollywood studio involvement	Little Hollywood studio involvement
Always expanding	Content to remain the same size

As I will show, while Peranson’s classification offers crucial insights when assessing the overall dynamics that characterize bigger and smaller film festivals, it fails to give credit to smaller festivals’ primacy on nurturing relationships and community – especially between audiences and film professionals. Furthermore, his model does not acknowledge the substantial transfer of symbolic capital happening at these smaller festivals in conjunction with their activism, despite the limited revenue made.

2.1 Festivals as discursive constructions (axis one)

In her study of film cultures, Janet Harbord (2002) has described the mechanisms according to which film festivals are discursively constructed:

[F]estivals produce a regularity of organization to the different discursive formations that cut across its site. Certain propositions and assumptions apply in various discourses, echoed and repeated in ways that are sometimes conflicting and, at other times, congruent [...]. The repetition of assumptions gives rise to a certain naturalisation of oppositions; such oppositions are productive of types of authenticity, purity, marking off domains from arenas and other objects by definition impure, inauthentic and outside. (62, BrE)

Her observation ties into what de Valck and Loist identify as the first of the six axes of film festival research: an inquiry into film festivals’ prioritization of certain discourses which, in turn, shape their respective identities, renown and the symbolic capital they bring to their respective roles as symbolic marketplaces, as well as their distinctive brand, according to a commercial logic. De Valck and Loist describe a film festival’s discursive formation as a process involving a “rigid agenda setting” (182).

⁵⁶ Of the Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF).

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

This process is crucially dependent on aspects such as a festival's mission; its programming politics; and the implementation of the festival event.

However, while the authors identify aesthetic discourses as the leading ones, no film festival, not even the prestigious and highly subsidized FIAPF "A-list" festivals such as Cannes or Venice, will prioritize on film art alone. Likewise, they engage with a number of additional parameters such as their individual geopolitical situation and specific stakeholders, which results in their being framed in all sorts of different, if sometimes converging, discourses. Moreover, these discourses may change over time due to a changing environment. For instance, Berlin (since 1954), characterized by a unique geopolitical situation in the divided (yet pre-Wall) city, was created and supported by the U.S. along with the two other Western sector powers. In Cold War Europe, Berlin's image was that of a show window advertising Western democratic values such as freedom of expression and thus taken to serve as a symbolic bulwark against the Communist East, which in turn featured prestigious festivals of its own, such as Moscow (since 1935) and Karlovy Vary (since 1946). Accordingly, not only did Berlin's programming politics favor films from the West; back in the pre-Wall days when locals were still able to move back and forth between all four sectors, organizers also made the strategic decision to schedule the festival in ways that made it compete with East Berlin's popular World Youth Festival (Harbord 61; see also Jacobsen 2000:12). The demise of the Eastern Bloc in the 1990s, in turn, was to provide the festival with a wider territorial and political scope but also forced it to reimagine itself along the lines of a recently united Berlin, Germany, and Europe. This was also mirrored by its move to the redeveloped Potsdamer Platz (for a discussion of the processes involved, see for instance Harbord 2002).⁵⁷

U.S. Latino/a film festivals, in turn, differ from generalist and major business festivals in regard to how, next to artistic-aesthetic considerations, they also privilege discourses revolving around their special interest and activist nature. One dominating discourse is the ongoing underrepresentation of Latino/a subjectivities and cinema in the cultural mainstream, even though each festival may have a different approach to the topic; here, proximity to or distance from Hollywood is one relevant factor (for instance, as in making a case for access to, or inspiring alternatives to Hollywood, as in RRAFF vs. SDLFF). Another important discourse that will be discussed in the course of this study is that of the crossover effect, for instance in conjunction with a film's potential to conquer different audiences, which is of importance for festivals' programming politics but also for filmmakers looking to establish themselves in the industry. Other prevailing discourses may resonate with a number of geopolitical parameters, such as the border, which has been tapped by SDLFF as a strategic resource and inspiration but also serves as a point of departure for its diversity project; or the composition and size of local Latino/a communities (San Antonio, Texas's CineFestival and its Tejano/a sensibility in conjunction with its predominantly Mexican-Chicano/a demographic, as opposed to the San Francisco Latino Film Festival's championing of the immigrant experience as a result of its massive Central

⁵⁷ With regard to Berlin's beginnings in the divided city with the financial help of the U.S., Harbord points out that "[t]he reconstruction of the city, unlike other European sites, involved the task of unifying a city out of divided organic fabric, to make the part a whole. The festival facilitated or brought into being (West) 'Berlin' as a new cultural centre, yet this performative gesture depended on acts of expulsion as much as affirmation" (Harbord 61; BrE). The relocation of 2000, however, involved a re-invention of the festival with "the state [being] eclipsed by corporate bodies" (Harbord 65) as symbolized by "'a new town centre built by Mercedes and Sony'" (festival director Moritz van Hadeln quoted in Jacobsen, 2000: 535; in: Harbord 65; BrE).

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

American-Mexican communities); the nature of their venues, for instance, campus based and hence an emphasis on political and educational films (including documentaries), or in a commercial space, which may favor a focus on entertainment (and feature films). Often concurrent with these discourses are specific tropes demarcating an individual festival's identity or brand, such as the restaurant metaphor used by SDLFF director Ethan van Thillo to underline his festival's non-essentializing take on *latinidad* ("You don't have to be Italian to eat in an Italian restaurant," E. v. Thillo Interview 2009) and likening festival patronage to a wholesome consumption experience; or RRAFF's drawing on the culturally specific Mexican-Chicano/a, working class proto-aesthetic of *lo rasquache*⁵⁸ in order to celebrate the resourcefulness and audacity of its filmmaking constituencies. Finally, there is Latino/a film festivals' varying engagement with New Latin American Cinema (El Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano), a multi-national movement that started in the mid-century, sweeping the continent in the 1960s and 1970s with politically committed and at times militant cinemas. Its con- and divergences with 1970s Latino/a film activism and its continued legacy in festivals as different as Cine Acción and RRAFF will be described in the historical overview, RRAFF and Bay Area chapters.

Moreover, a given film festival's identity is also defined by its programming and awards politics. In film festival history, the rise of the programmer or curator was part of the emancipation process that was started at Cannes in the late 1960s and early 1970s, thus "end[ing] the era when films were submitted by nation states or by film festival organisations" (Quintín 2009:43; BrE). Even though in the case of Latino/a film festivals, matters of curation, too, depend on "programmers and his or her ideas and ideals" (de Valck & Loist 2009: 182), I argue that this freedom is somewhat curtailed by their overarching activist agenda/s as well as by individual festival missions; one example is RRAFF's strategic essentialism, according to which the festival has focused on U.S. Latino/a film and films that focus on the U.S. Latino/a experiences. These observations correspond to those of de Valck & Loist on other special interest festivals; thus, they have noted that regarding to queer film festivals, there is a similar "need for more identity-based criteria such as 'a film made by, for, or about or of interest to the queer community'" (June 2004 no pag., in de Valck & Loist 2009:182). This word, "need," also resonates with the way Latino/a film festivals' politics of representation revolve around the appreciation and validation of marginalized experiences. Not only are such programming politics associated with a transfer of symbolic capital, which in turn is of crucial interest to filmmakers; for segments of the audience/s, too, they may serve to affirm a shared Latino/a culture and recognize collective and / or individual experiences.

Lastly, also in the realm of programming, Marc Peranson's prediction as to the scarcity of retrospectives at audience festivals may be correct considering smaller Latino/a film festivals with tight budgets. Retrospectives may boost a given festival event's prestige and increase media attention; de Valck & Loist have pointed to the ways they may also function as part of a festival's "(economic) exploitation strategies" (de Valck & Loist 2009: 182) such as those involved in the promotion of a DVD re-issue. However, in ways similar to their awards politics, Latino/a film festivals, too, have used tribute films or smaller scale retrospectives in conjunction with their respective individual missions and more generally for purposes of education and the appreciation and validation of Latino/a film art. Particularly

⁵⁸ Latino/a arts scholar Tomas Ybarro-Frausto (1990) has defined *lo rasquache* as "neither an idea nor a style, but more of a pervasive attitude or taste. Very generally, *rasquachismo* is an underdog perspective – a view from *los de abajo*. It is a stance rooted in resourcefulness and adaptability, yet ever mindful of aesthetics" (133).

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

in conjunction with older festivals predating the easier access to foreign, non-mainstream films with the rise of the Digital Age, the purpose of such tributes has also been to make films available to a wider public. Cine Acción's pioneering all-women film festival, "Women in the Americas in Film and Video" (1988), which also featured older work by Sara Gómez (Cuba) or Marta Rodríguez (Colombia) is one such example. Even small, three-day RRAFF has repeatedly shown tribute films or small retrospectives. In this vein, the festival's very first edition (2004) honored Robert M. Young's Camera D'Or-winning immigration drama, *¡Alambrista!* (1977), taking advantage of that year's re-issue of a remastered DVD but also featuring the launch of an accompanying volume of essays on the film and overall immigration topic⁵⁹; not least of all, this tribute also highlighted the festival's non-essentializing programming scope by way of celebrating a benchmark film on the Latino/a experience by a non-Latino director.

Awards politics are also closely related to a festival's identity formation. In my discussion of awards in conjunction with RRAFF, I have divided them into "competitive" and "career" (lifetime achievement) awards. I argue that career awards in particular enhance a given festival's own prestige since they further define its goals and mission; furthermore, and especially at business festivals where prize monies or grants (cf. de Valck & Loist 182ff.) are involved, awards in general are also part of a "branding for marketing purposes" (de Valck 2007: 112). In regard to competitive awards this also means that not only do awards add to a given film's symbolic capital and thus increase its chances in finding distribution; awards also reflect back on the festival as an institution with considerable symbolic capital to be bestowed. And yet, interestingly, some business festivals deliberately refrain from competitive awards. Despite the pressure coming from its filmmaking constituencies, MVFF, which has created an identity for itself as a filmmakers' festival, has abstained from featuring a competitive awards category to this day (Fishkin 2009: no pag.; quoted in Fischer 2013: 73). Instead, MVFF's reputation and brand revolves around its renown both as a market and a showcase for select independent films⁶⁰ and an aim to tap the egalitarian, non-competitive spirit of the Bay's many alternative and cineaste cultures and its vibrant local arts and filmmaking scene. As I will show, many Latino/a film festivals feature awards, despite the additional time and effort this involves. Here, too, awards politics tie into their respective types of activism but also their identity and brand. While MVFF plays down its competitive component, the Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival (LALIFF) has traditionally emphasized it. Here, I argue that this is the result of its agenda to act as a shop window for contemporary U.S. and international Latino/a cinemas which gains a particular relevance owing to the lack of representation of these cinemas, which in turn is further emphasized by its location in the heart of Hollywood. I argue that for Latino/a film festivals in general, the idea of validation and the transfer of symbolic capital associated with awards politics is key. In regard to competitive awards, there is the additional element of nurture that is important particularly in regard to the works

⁵⁹ *Alambrista and the U.S.-Mexican Border: Film, Music and Stories by Undocumented Immigrants*, ed. David Carrasco and Nicholas J. Cull. Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press 2004.

⁶⁰ This impression is further underscored by the words of MVFF's longtime curator, Zoë Elton: "Considering its ambience, its proximity to L.A., its reputation as a premier non-competitive festival for distribution-seeking filmmakers, and its elation with U.S. distributors, MVFF is a natural for acquisitions directors, who scan the festival for possible titles [...]. And the distributors, sales agents an filmmakers who regularly work with non-competitive festivals like MVFF and Telluride understand – and factor into their marketing plans – the value of aligning themselves with the prestige and the visibility of those brands as they launch into the U.S. market. It's a stamp of approval worth more than a 'Winner, Yet Another Film Festival' moniker" (Ruoff 2012: 129ff.).

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

by beginning filmmakers, which takes on an added urgency given their underrepresented status; in regard to “career awards” it is the symbolic capital bestowed by awardees onto the festival, which in turn fashions their role model status. For example, LALIFF named its career award, the Gabi, after Gabriel Figueroa Mateos (1907-97), cinematographer and “Mexico’s fourth muralist” (latinofilm.org) and someone who had worked with world renowned directors both in Mexico and the U.S.; its Gabi thus further underlines LALIFF’s own goals of bridge building between U.S. and international *latinidad* and its claims to a – in fact, a long-standing – Latino/a presence in the world of Hollywood filmmaking.

2.2 Economic dimension (axis two)

2.2.1 Festivals as arenas for film markets vs. trading centers for symbolic and economic capital

De Valck & Loist’s second axis of film festival research “focus[es] on film as a product and on the way festivals facilitate the ‘business’ of cinema.” (De Valck & Loist 183) Here, and similar to other special interest festivals, Latino/a film festivals may depart from bigger, “business” festivals and their usual role as “platforms for and of the industry” (de Valck & Loist 183). In fact, it is their very goals – education, cultural affirmation of *latinidad* while recognizing internal diversity and intersectionality, community building, and professional enhancement – that make them attractive to sponsors. One such traditional partnership has been with educational, sometimes co-founding institutions such as universities (such as CineFestival, CLFF, SDLFF, and RRAFF) – institutions which in turn utilized them as outreach tools to attract Latino/a constituencies. However, the traditionally limited state support for U.S. filmmakers and their arenas of exhibition has meant that securing other kinds of sponsorship (foundations, private patronage) has always been particularly important for U.S. film festivals. The 1990s and after saw a withdrawal of the state from cultural and academic spending which contributed to a general paradigm shift towards a “new academic and cultural narrative” requiring universities and cultural producers fashioning themselves according to a “new legitimation discourse” (Miller & Yúdice 2002: 63). As Miller and Yúdice argue,

[...] universities and arts organizations have increasingly resorted to a pragmatic defense of the humanities and culture. They characterize the arts as tools that enhance employability, acting as junior behaviour-modifying partners to the science faculties, which produce profitable intellectual property. In the cultural sector, the arts become part of social service rationales or economic development plans for communities | thus justifying subvention by corporations and foundations. The new legitimation discourse encourages partnerships between government, business and the third or non-profit sector. (63)

For film festivals, this meant that this vacancy was often filled by corporate and other sponsors. The latter, in turn, were also in need for validation in their self-fashioning as corporate citizens. Key to these support relationships has been the transfer of symbolic capital associated with education, philanthropy, multiculturalism or diversity. This means that their goals and rapport with local Latino/a communities have turned Latino/a film festivals into marketplaces for symbolic capital involving a

number of supporters in search of this kind of validation, among them corporate, media, or academic-educational sponsors.

2.2.2 Difference classic and alternative distribution

My overview of Latino/a film festivals' economic dimension benefits from a brief look back at the traditional role of film festivals as film markets. De Valck & Loist have pointed out the role of major film festivals as an “[e]conomic [c]ontinuum [...] from [p]roduction to [d]istribution” (183). In other words, major business festivals may provide support (nurture) to their filmmakers in terms of workshops and productions funds; promote the film and showcase it, and act as arenas for film sales (classic distribution). It is this kind of distribution, film sales, which is viewed by the economic logic of classic FIAPF A-list and other business film festivals as one major, and – considering the globalization of previously national film industries – perhaps even the foremost reason for their existence in today's times (see de Valck & Loist 183), even though it is the predominantly bigger, international film festivals, such as Cannes, Venice, Berlin, Sundance or TIFF, which are “markets where sales agents sell films” (183). Despite the fact that film sale negotiations are usually discreet affairs, their outcome is often publicized and thus becomes part of a given festival's “attention economy” (183), a term used here to describe the media's involvement in generating publicity and prestige for a given film, celebrity, or award, reflecting back on the festival as “buzz.” All these factors, visibility and symbolic capital, may translate into bankable qualities in conjunction with film sales and an individual film's subsequent journey through the film festival circuit as well as its theatrical distribution. (For smaller festivals wishing to show one such highly acclaimed film this may also result in steeper screening fees, a point I will return to in my discussion of SDLFF.)

However, there is also what de Valck & Loist have called the “alternative distribution circuit,” a dominant feature of medium range and smaller festivals such as the Latino/a film festivals discussed in my study. Here, “distribution” indicates the circulation of films from one festival to the other; festivals are “essentially exhibitors” (de Valck & Loist 183). As discussed above, Latino/a film festivals function as symbolic marketplaces; they attract sponsors with a keen eye on reaping symbolic capital. Another such factor is the visibility achieved through star power, even though the relevance of the former varies from festival to festival, as will be discussed in the next section. In their overview, de Valck and Loist have described the film festival circuit as something which may be traveled by a successful film but one that is basically “closed”; it is only those films that are able to capitalize on their success in the festival circuit which are able to “crossover” to cinematic exhibition (184). For the filmmakers involved, this means that Latino/a film festivals in the U.S. have a particularly important role as platforms that may enhance a given film's symbolic capital and possibilities in terms of turning an economic profit. As I will discuss throughout my study, the search for “crossover” qualities and a “Latino/a formula” (a term used by filmmaker Patrick Perez in our interview from 2012) that combines cultural specificity and a potential to conquer larger audiences is a prominent issue among Latino/a film festivals' filmmaking constituencies, and particularly those working in more cost intensive, long narrative formats. The ongoing challenges faced by many Latino/a made films in regard to garnering classic distribution or exhibition in the theatrical circuit has remained one of the most pressing issues in for Latino/a filmmakers today. Alternative distribution may be achieved through Latino/a or minority defined channels, the most important of which being via the public media con-

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

sortium, Latino Public Broadcasting (since 1998)⁶¹ which may provide for a LPB funded production to be screened by PBS. Major festivals such as Sundance have introduced streaming platforms for their filmmaking alumni, a point that will be discussed in conjunction with my subchapter on Latinos/as at Sundance in the historical overview chapter. Such video on demand / streaming options are examples for how the Digital Turn has contributed to a widening of the spectrum for film distribution. Digital platforms are also of significance for beginning filmmakers; the most hands-on alternatives involve self-distribution online, or “straight to DVD” deals, which entail selling the finished product to a retailer (embraced by RRAFF awardee Ken Castillo); in addition, web-based formats offer no revenue but exposure.⁶²

Finally, these observations also resonate with Peranson’s predictions as to the limited studio involvement (2009: 27) happening at audience festivals. This is also suggested by Dina Iordanova’s assessment of the activist festival, even though we need to keep in mind the somewhat uneasy relationship between Latino/a film festivals and the advocacy festivals (often of a more general “human rights” kind) that provide the primary model for her research. Iordanova argues that

[u]nlike other film festivals, where regional / local authorities or film industry interests have immediate concerns, activist film festivals do not usually see much direct interference from the government or the film industry; equally, they cannot expect much support from them. (13)

That U.S. Latino/a film festivals in general do *not* serve as main venues of facilitating classic distribution is a point that has been made by many experts, for instance by the then executive director of NA-LIP (National Association of Latino Independent Producers), Kathryn F. Galán (K.F. Galán Interview 2010). In regard to the California-based festivals analyzed in this study, industry commitment mostly concerns sponsoring matters on the so-called minority ticket. As will be discussed at more length in the respective chapters, Disney, for instance, has been a long-standing sponsor both of LALIFF and RRAFF in conjunction with its multicultural program; LALIFF was also hosted on studio property during its first instantiations as a festival. However, there is a world of difference between the market-driven business festivals envisioned in Peranson’s taxonomy and the kind of support given to these special interest festivals.

2.2.3 Nurture

Nurture has become a traditional feature embraced by festivals big and small, from Berlin’s Berlinale Talent Campus offering training opportunities, to San Francisco’s veteran LGBT festival, Frameline, which offers production funds (cf. de Valck & Loist 2009: 184). De Valck and Loist have argued that nurture provides a means enabling festivals to “expan[d] their operations constantly from exhibition

⁶¹ This is reflected in the organization’s mission statement, according to which “LPB’s mission is to support the development, production, post-production, acquisition and distribution of non-commercial educational and cultural television that is representative of Latino people, or addresses issues of particular interest to Latino Americans” (“Background”; lppb.org/background). LPB will be further discussed in the historical overview chapter.

⁶² The importance of web-based formats, in turn, has long been recognized by festivals such as SDLFF and RRAFF in their programming politics. RRAFF’s particular emphasis on nurturing beginning filmmakers has resulted in creating a workshop-like atmosphere and a festival programming category for web-based formats.

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

to distribution, facilitating sales and networking.” This is how “festivals stop being mere exhibitors of current productions and instead become active players in the film industry” (184). In fact, many bigger festivals also tend to support film projects from so-called World Cinema contexts, thus underlining their dedication to solidarity and the promotion of diverse film cultures; however, such initiatives have also been criticized for their neo-colonializing tendencies (see Peranson 2009; and de Valck 2007).⁶³

Since the very underrepresentation of Latino/a experiences and filmmaking is one of the key issues for the majority of Latino/a film festivals, many of them have provided a range of professional enhancement formats and themes, from pitching workshops to formats on financing projects to directors’ roundtables – despite leaner festival budgets and much more modest resources. Such special programs not only empower their filmmakers and audiences but also raise the festivals’ own symbolic capital – also, as I will show in the analysis section, vis-à-vis educationally minded sponsors. All the while, the extent of nurture provided by each festival also depends on its overall mission (for instance, its relationship with Hollywood and interest in entertainment formats). Another point is the way the needs of film professionals have changed over time. As I will show in my historical overview chapter, the very first Latino/a film festival, CineFestival San Antonio, was instrumental to the support of the first generation of film professionals, owing also to its close ties to Los Angeles based film activists of the Chicano Cinema Coalition (CCC). In various parts of my study (the historical overview and in the analysis chapters) I will show how the situation of a younger generation of film professionals has changed in the 1990s and after: The Digital Age and the promise of levelling the playing field for film production; the increase of Latino/a film school alumni and a diversification of affiliations, ideologies, and loyalties. Many desire to receive support by Sundance, which has provided an important platform for (albeit, select) members of younger generations of Latino/a filmmakers such as Miguel Arteta and Patricia Cardoso; Natalia Almada, Cruz Angeles, Yolanda Cruz and Alex Rivera. While one could argue that the Utah based institute and festival’s attractiveness draws attention to the asymmetric power relations within the festival galaxy, some Latino/a film festivals have also established strategic ties to Sundance in order to enhance their own nurture possibilities: Ever since 2013, CineFestival has partnered up with Sundance for the annual, three day Screenwriting Project (latinoscreenwritingproject.com).

2.2.4 Star power and premieres

There is a long tradition of film festivals that involves the presence of celebrity guests. Not only are they audience magnets, stars also bring with them their own prestige (symbolic capital), populari-

⁶³ Obviously, this issue deserves a more in-depth coverage than can be granted here. Peranson wonders about “the sudden interest in colonising the Third World through world cinema funds which, though certainly valuable, often end up influencing the kind of film that is made” (2009:35; BrE). Conversely, U.S. film critic Robert Koehler has cited the positive example of the Rotterdam’s Hubert Bals Fund in conjunction with the support for New Filipino/a Cinema and praised the dedication and risk-taking of festivals such as “Rotterdam, Vienna, BAFICI [Festival de Cine de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, Argentina] and Vancouver.” Koehler calls this “a particular test-case for contemporary cinephilia: finding radical new work that punches holes through the walls of cinema’s supposed peripheral limits, and then taking the brave decision to show it to audiences” (2009:94).

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

ty, and, sometimes, scandals,⁶⁴ all of which may in turn enhance a festival's visibility in the media, contribute to its renown, lore, and notoriety, and thus both shape its identity and brand. Furthermore, celebrities attract sponsors hoping to boost their image. However, some festivals may foster a more critical relationship towards star power, protecting their "serious" brand, and preferring the epithet "guest" over "celebrity." "Guest" invites associations with alternative conceptualizations of prestige revolving less around stardom and commerce than, for instance, the documentary filmmaker's journalistic ethos; the *auteur*⁶⁵'s artistic autonomy; or the fierce energy and the *rasquache* "from scratch" creativity of the urban filmmaker. Telluride's habit of withholding its film agenda (and thus also mention of stars in attendance) is one famous, if extreme, such example.

In general, Latino/a film festivals, too, have built on the celebrity factor and connected this pragmatic move to their goals of community building, education, and the validation of Latino/a experiences and film; at the same time, attitudes towards and usages of star power vary a great deal depending on each event's relationship with its politics of place, identity, and its relationship with the more commercial aspects of stardom. This also means that an invitee's clout may vary considerably from festival to festival. Accordingly, at San Diego's SDLFF, a gala event featuring a Mexican telenovela star may attract a considerable section of San Diego's border audiences, many of whom follow Latin American mass culture religiously, while sponsors operating internationally will want to capitalize on the media attention thus generated. However, the same guest might be frowned upon for its commercial allure by a large section of the politicized and sophisticated audiences that attended the Bay's bygone ¡Cine Latino! or its follow-up festival, SFLFF (L. Ramirez Interview 2009). These audiences would have been more likely to attend a festival event featuring the eminent New Latin American Cinema filmmaker-activist Oscar Getino when he attended Cine Acción's ¡Cine Latino! for an anniversary screening of *La Hora de los Hornos* (Argentina 1968) in 1998. And, also in San Diego, SDLFF's arts sidebar has featured the presence of Chicano cartoonist Lalo Alcaraz, who, even though known throughout the country due to his cartoon *La Cucaracha*, is a special magnet for San Diego Latino/a communities due to his origins in the city.

Historically, in a Latino/a film context, terms like "celebrity" or "star" traditionally resonate with the first blossoming of Latino/a feature film made with studio involvement, leading to the so-called "Hispanic Hollywood Boom" (Scott M. Baugh) in the mid-to late 1980s. Based on a logic that combined entertainment, cultural affirmation, didactic zeal, and mainstream appeal, these films reached out to more encompassing, crossover audiences.⁶⁶ They were associated with stars such as Lupe Ontiveros,

⁶⁴ A more recent such example is that of controversial Danish director Lars van Trier's exclusion from 2011 Cannes, in conjunction with the premiere of his then latest drama, *Melancholia*, after proclaiming himself to be "a Nazi" and sympathies for Hitler (Higgins 2011, no pag.).

⁶⁵ The categories *auteur* and *auteur* cinema stood in opposition to classic, formulaic Hollywood productions; the latter usually eclipsed the individual style of directors and were geared towards mass audiences, using stars and awards as vehicles to attract the media and audiences. As to the origins of *auteur* cinema in conjunction with France's *Cahiers du Cinéma*, see Bordwell & Thompson (1998:38). From a film festival historical perspective, Marijke de Valck (2007) has described how the emancipatory drive inspiring these younger, *auteur*-driven movements, in the climate of political dissent of late 1960s Western Europe, eventually led to a new appreciation of film festivals. This happened when Cannes, Berlin and Venice led the way of festivals' gradually outgrowing their allocated roles as vehicles for national film industries, which also meant an appreciation of film as art; an increased potential for agency on behalf of their festival directors; and the rise of the curator (cf. 61 ff.).

⁶⁶ I will look at the phenomenon more critically in the historical overview chapter.

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

Elizabeth Peña, Ruben Blades, Cheech Marin, Paul Rodriguez, A Martinez, Rose Portillo, Tony Plana, Esai Morales, Evangelina Fernández, Lou Diamond Phillips (the latter a Filipino American) and, in the 1990s, also with Andy Garcia, Jimmy Smits, Benjamin Bratt, Enrique Castillo, Jennifer Lopez and many more. No one, however, has embodied the rise of early Latino/a feature film and its blend of culturally affirming and mainstreaming tendencies like Edward James Olmos, whose impact as actor-director, social and film activist and film festival director will be considered in various parts of this study and who is the subject of a specially dedicated subchapter in the historical overview chapter. Olmos also stands for the way role model qualities are often associated with the way these stars broke into the industry – their crossover appeal. Such qualities and achievements also figured prominently in festivals’ career awards politics, such as those of RRAFF, particularly attuned to a politics of place resonating with Latino/a film professionals’ long-standing struggle for access.

Furthermore, the 1990s saw the emergence of celebrities slated as “international” Latinos/as, Salma Hayek (Mexican) and Antonio Banderas (Spanish), anticipating the rise of more recent such international Latino/a stars such as Kate del Castillo and Jaime Camil, who both divide their careers between Mexico and the U.S. Such international stars are of course not a new phenomenon but one dating back to Hollywood’s early days; this, too, has been acknowledged in festivals’ tribute films and awards politics. Their presence at many of today’s Latino/a film festivals – but also that of stars primarily associated with the cinemas of their Latin American, Spanish or Portuguese home countries – points to the globalization of film markets and its impact on audiences’ tastes, as well as immigrants’ easier familiarization with cultural trends in their countries of origin via the World Wide Web (cf. J. Flores 2003: 194). This, again, gives rise to numerous issues surfacing at Latino/a film festivals and further discussed in my study. One is the controversy surrounding Hollywood’s predilection for such international talent at the expense of U.S. Latinos/as, and particularly Chicanos/as.⁶⁷ Another is the way the presence of international stars also satisfy the needs of immigrant audiences yearning for a taste of the “old country.”⁶⁸ These issues, and the way they are debated, are always a reflection of a given festival’s situation in a specific geopolitical place, its ties to local communities, its position towards matters of identity, as well as subject to commercial deliberations.

In fact, celebrities can be seen in terms of commodification, but also in democratizing ways in line with Latino/a film festivals’ activism. As early as in the 1930s, cultural critic and philosopher Walter Benjamin recognized the unique ambivalence but also potentialities of cinema in this “age of mechanical reproduction.”⁶⁹ Robert Stam (2000:65) has pointed out that

[f]or Benjamin, film’s uniqueness derived, paradoxically, from its non-uniqueness, the fact that its productions were multiply available across barriers of time and space, in a situation where easy access made it the most social and collective of the arts.

⁶⁷ Further discussed in my historical overview chapter, particularly with regard to LALIFF; and in the RRAFF analytical chapter.

⁶⁸ Discussed in the SDLFF analytical chapter.

⁶⁹ The reference is to Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” translated by Hannah Arendt (in: *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken 1978).

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

On the one hand, the new era thus required new formulae for the appreciation of film (art)⁷⁰; according to Benjamin's line of reasoning, Hollywood's search for the "aura" associated with a traditional art object and its purported singularity led to a production of celebrities – an act which, however, "[p]reserve[d] not the unique aura of the person but the 'spell of the personality,' the phony spell of a commodity." (1978: 231) At the same time, his recognition that "[a]ny man today can lay claim of being filmed" (231) emphasized cinema's activist potential in a way that not only resonates with Latino/a film festivals' politics of representation, but which moreover interrogates the stability of concepts such as "celebrity" and "fame." In Benjamin's day, cinema featured classically trained thespians alongside actors and actresses with a background in the circus or vaudeville as well as unskilled extras; ever since the 1920s, the documentary genre had been "find[ing] its legs" (Nichols 2001: 88ff.), with Soviet filmmakers Vertov (explicitly mentioned by Benjamin) and Eisenstein having real-life workers stage demonstrations on camera; at its most extreme, as Benjamin observed, "the newsreel offers anyone the opportunity to rise from passer-by to movie extra" (231). The way Latino/a film festivals provided arenas for culturally affirming usages of star power will be discussed throughout this study, drawing on many examples from my fieldwork. One prime example for this is the premiere of *Down for Life* (USA 2009, Alan Jacobs), an urban drama about a teenage Latina's exit of gang life. Alongside established stars, the film featured as its protagonist first-time actress Jessica Romero as well as a number of local youth from South Central Los Angeles, whose peers were present at the showcase and met the rolling credits with enthusiastic cheers. The prestigious venue at Grauman's Chinese Theater, whose art déco décor harked back to Old Hollywood, a locale which since then has graced many a studio premiere, substantially added to empowering atmosphere.

Like celebrities, premieres are marked by an exclusivity factor used by festivals to create special incentives for sponsors, the media, and audiences so inclined. Here, the relative scarcity of premieres predicted by Peranson's taxonomy for audience festivals (2009: 27) requires some modifications in regard to Latino/a festivals. First, some established filmmakers have made a point of premiering their films at a Latino/a film festival, such as veteran filmmaker Jesús S. Treviño, who possesses longstanding ties to San Antonio's CineFestival. (J.S. Treviño Interview 2010). In general, Latino/a film festivals' frequent orientation towards community outreach, education and professional enhancement makes them important premiere platforms for up and coming U.S. Latino/a filmmakers. The history of Latino/a film festivals has seen a number of instances when premieres became milestone events and shaped the identities of individual festivals, such as Paul Leduc's *Frida, Naturaliza Viva* (Mexico 1983) at the Chicago Latino Film Festival (CLFF) in 1985 and, incidentally on the same subject, Julie Taymor's *Frida* (2002), for the International Latino Film Festival-San Francisco (ILFF) in 2006. In the case of CLFF, the film was handed down by the older Chicago International Film Festival; it also underlines Latino/a film festivals' pioneering role regarding the exhibition of otherwise rarely screened films from Latin America. The 2002 case, in turn, when ILFF beat the venerable SFIFF to the game, shows Latino/a film festivals as actors in a more diverse film festival scene that had become

⁷⁰ Strictly speaking, film was considered as art only with such movements as those of the Nouvelle Vague in the 1950s and later; cf. also my footnote on *auteur* cinema (Fn. 65).

increasingly commercial and international.⁷¹ SDLFF, in turn, has hosted Latin American premieres quite frequently, having been able to capitalize on its border location, which makes this it a treasured testing ground for Latin American producers eager to explore the U.S. film market (E. Van Thillo interview 2009).

2.3 Institutionalization (axis three)

2.3.1 Film festivals as “field-configuring events” (Rüling)

De Valck and Loist’s third axis of film festival research deals with festivals as institutions. To look at any given film festival as an institution thus also means looking at how it builds, preserves and adapts its (activist) identity and a concurrent business agenda (cf. de Valck & Loist 184) and thus strongly resonates with axes one and two. Its identity and business agendas may be subject to change since they need to be balanced with the interests of a given festival’s different stakeholders as well as with its own organizational structure (de Valck & Loist 2009:185) such as staff, size, and level of consolidation. Furthermore, a festival’s institutional identity is also defined by its relationship with politics of place (geopolitical situation, localized activism) as well as its position within the festival circuit. The latter two aspects also impact a given festival’s collaborative politics.

In my discussion of Latino/a film festivals’ organizational structure, I first want to draw on organizational theory in order to complement some of the observations already made in conjunction with a festival’s discursive formation. In this regard, my study has benefited from Charles-Clemens Rüling (2009), whose research of the Annecy Film Festival (AIAFF)⁷² serves as a case example for the ways film festivals may function as field-configuring events.⁷³ Even though Rüling’s definition of “field” is that of the organizational field, his description is wide enough to cover the discourses and practices described and shaped by Latino/a film festivals. Rüling argues that major film festivals are events that “consolidate and change” the former “by providing a setting for the emergence, reproduction and challenging of field-level identities, norms and standards.” (50)

While Rüling’s findings are particularly fitting in the context of the more influential, larger business festivals, his observations also provide insights in terms of understanding the institutional logic of smaller, special interest festivals. One important point raised here describes film festivals’ diachronic development and discusses how they, as “field-configuring events [,] play different roles within different phases of field development” (51, emphasis added). One example further discussed in my analysis is how the festivals of pioneering film board Cine Acción offered a platform for a new generation of scholars from various intersecting academic disciplines dedicated to Latino/a film. The

⁷¹ The increased interest in Latin American, particularly Mexican cinema in the late 1990s inspired new platforms such as New York City’s Cinema Tropical, exclusively dedicated to Latin American film; this point would merit a research project of its own but cannot be discussed at length here. Founded in 2001, the festival prides itself for “br[inging] U.S. audiences some of the first screening [sic] of films such as [Alejandro González Iñárritu’s] *Amores Perros* and (Alfonso Cuarón’s) *Y Tu Mamá También*” (“The leading presenters of Latin American cinema in the U.S.”; www.cinematropical.com).

⁷² Festival International du Film d’Animation d’Annecy (AIAFF, since 1960), a renowned animation film festival based in the eponymous town in the French Haute-Savoie region.

⁷³ Although he never as much provides an unambiguous definition of the “field” in question, I take this to be the very animation film market that impacts the institutional logic of AIAFF.

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

organization's important function thus corresponded to field configuring events' propensity, "[d]uring field emergence, [... to] contribute to the creation of a common meaning system by defining standards, practices and vocabularies and by positioning the field in relation to entities outside it." (51; reference to Lampel & Meyer 2005: 1026)

Another key organizational aspect is the "co-evolution" of and "mutual influence" among the festival and its "environment" (60; emphases added). As I will discuss in conjunction with festival organizations such as SDLFF's Media Arts Center San Diego (MACSD), the academic and film artistic articles published in festival catalogs and newsletters declined significantly in the 2000s. On the one hand, this was due to a diminished need for the mutual validation of films and disciplines as both these disciplines and festival organizations had grown. On the other hand, though, this also reflected an increased reliance on corporate sponsorship on part of the festivals and to the need to acknowledge these relationships in their publications. This development corresponds to what Ruling has called a festival's "adaptability in a situation of environmental change" requiring for the festival's "contributions [to...] be in line with the demands of its environment." (60)

A third aspect is closely related to this need for adaptability but one which also focuses on a given festival's identity. Here, there is the need negotiate between "competing logics"; these correspond to Harbord's (2002) aforementioned "naturalisation of [discursive] oppositions" (61; BrE). One such example provided by Ruling is that between "arts versus commerce" (62): In the world of Latino/a film festivals, there was RRAFF's need to appeal, among its filmmaking constituencies, both to its industry and independent constituencies.

2.3.2 Festival identity vs. stakeholder interest/s: Competition vs. cooperation and solidarity

For the festival it is crucial to balance its own needs to grow, consolidate, and to develop an identity – at times in accordance with, at times against the respective demands of its stakeholders.⁷⁴ This power dimension corresponds to Peranson's observation that film festivals may be perceived as "political actors [...] subjected to pressures from interest groups." (2009: 25) With all film festivals, the exact composition of interest groups, their numbers and the question as to which one is prioritized may vary and be dependent on its stage of growth and business agenda. In many parts of my study, I will discuss how Latino/a film festivals' frequent stakeholder relationships with academic institutions shaped their respective histories. On part of the collaborating universities, film festivals were means to recruit students and emphasize the respective institution's multicultural agenda. As to the festivals involved, not only did the campus provide visibility and captive audiences, academic ties also underlined their educational agendas and further attracted educationally minded sponsors keen on enhancing their images according to the aforementioned "new legitimization discourse" (Miller & Yúdice 2002: 63). However, as a result of organizational growth and a diversification of target audiences, many festivals at some point loosened or severed their ties to the university campus because of increasingly incompatible agendas. Intersecting reasons included the increased importance of attracting more diverse audiences (SDLFF); professionalization, as to serve its filmmaking stakeholders (RRAFF; CineFestival); or dissent about perceived interferences in financial matters (SDLFF, RRAFF).

⁷⁴ The terms stakeholder and interest group (representative) are taken to be equivalent.

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

With regard to the composition of stakeholder groups at a given film festivals, de Valck and Loist (2009: 185; BrE) have pointed out that

[t]he variety of organisational structures (volunteer, for-profit and hybrids) and cultural / political contexts also results in different expectations from players in the field (industry, state / city funders, etc.) and a variety of funding strategies in a climate of declining resources (state-funding of the arts or regional economics, private sponsorship, community-funding) [...].

While Latino/a film festivals also feature a relative heterogeneity as to organizational structures, one telling difference already discussed in conjunction with axis two (economic factors) is that they generally lack the substantial film industry and media presence key to business festivals. A breakdown of the most frequent interest groups at Latino/a film festivals includes filmmakers and other film professionals; a range of sponsors, patrons, and collaborating organizations; audiences; the festival organizers themselves.

The sponsor category, for instance, is subject to variation depending on a number of factors such as a festival's particular stage of development. Today's SDLFF (2018) is organized by its own organization, MACSD (since 1999); in addition to films, its eleven day program includes galas and star power, but also professional enhancement programs and an art showcase. Both the festival and its backing organization feature ties to a deliberately wide range of sponsors, patrons and collaborators as to avoid dependencies (E. v. Thillo Interview 2009). RRAFF, in turn, has maintained a focus on U.S. Latino/a filmmakers (and one featured visual artist each year, also U.S. Latino/a). A three day event, and without star driven events save for its awards night, it has required less sponsors.

The history of RRAFF's changing fiscal partnerships is also an example for a related issue, namely, the way festivals rely on strategic alliance building. In this respect, Australian film festival organizer⁷⁵ and scholar, Alex Fischer (2012:43) cites "the building of alliances" as the first and foremost of "strategies to increase festival attractiveness." Fischer defines a "co-operative alliance" as

a partnership formed between a film festival and another organisation based on reciprocal benefits for both organisations, which can include such things as the sharing of resources, joint applications for funding and / or cross-promotional activities through media and contact databases. (43; BrE)

At the same time, festival organizers must try to steer clear of competing with their collaborators.⁷⁶ The different ways as to how Latino/a film festivals have engaged in alliance-building will be discussed both in the festival historical and in the three analysis chapters.

Lastly, a given festival's stakeholder constellations, its relationship with its environment, and the negotiation of its identity all are reflective of the opposition between growth and consolidation and may impact a number of factors including the size and composition of its staff, budget, and duration.

⁷⁵ He is associated with Queensland's Gold Coast Film Festival (GCFF; since 2002; ww.gcfilmfestival.com).

⁷⁶ Providing the conflicting interests between art house cinemas and film festivals as an example, Fischer explains that "[...] each entity must be seen as performing different services that do not encroach upon the availability of resources for the other" (44).

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

At this point, a few examples shall suffice. While Peranson (2009:17) expects audience festivals to be “content to remain the same size,” the reality may vary considerably. Representatives both from SFLFF and RRAFF more or less univocally articulated their desire both to expand festival duration as well as to multiply venues, cooperation partners, and sponsor relationships (for RRAFF: L. Alvarado Interview 2011; for SFLFF: L. Ramirez Interview 2012). As to growth, SDLFF evolved from a *Cine Estudiantil* (students’ cinema) in 1994 to an event showing up to 150-200 films per edition. To put these figures into perspective, SDLFF 2011 saw the highest peak of film numbers (around 200). The Vancouver International Film Festival (since 1982; www.viff.org), co-curated by Peranson, usually presents more films and has a somewhat longer duration than most larger scale Latino/a film festivals such as SDLFF and CLFF; that being said, the length of VIFF 2015 and CLFF 2016 was the same: fifteen days. Here, VIFF showed 370 films from 70 countries, while CLFF showed 116 films from 33 countries (chicagolatinofilmfestival.org); in addition to different budgets available, this is also due to their different programming focus as special interest vs. generalist festivals. Such numbers may also be indicative of individual Latino/a film festivals’ commitment to their respective stakeholders. While SDLFF may have overtaken CLFF in terms of the total number of films shown, it also screens more shorts, owing to MACSD’s involvement as supporter and sometimes co-producer of locally made films in conjunction with its own Teen Producers or the *Frontera* Filmmakers projects (“24th San Diego Latino Film festival 2017”; 2017.sdlatinofilm.com).

As to their financial situation, Latino/a film festivals usually confirm Peranson’s (2009) observation according to which audience film festivals “operat[e] on a low budget.” (27) Here, it is not alone by means of box office revenues that film festivals sustain themselves but also through sponsoring and collaborations as well as the (wo)manpower offered by volunteers.⁷⁷ Particularly in the U.S. context, both limited budgets and “small staff” – correctly predicted by Peranson (27) – have made smaller, specialized festivals more vulnerable. In general, only few festivals feature a paid core staff. The analysis section will discuss how, on the one hand, the key goals such as the development of a consistent festival identity and brand and consolidation may be challenged by the fluctuation of associates; moreover, a small staff and the resulting need to recruit help from the outside may also create increased dependencies on partnering organizations and / or volunteers. On the other hand, a fluctuation of people and ideas may to some extent also be seen in positive ways, such as in terms of a strengthening these partnerships and as a reflection of a spirit of flexibility and open-mindedness. The Bay Area’s SFLFF, run by an all-volunteer staff and out of the home of its chief organizer, Luis (Lucho) Ramirez, has used its many partnerships to better reach out to the region’s highly diverse and economically fragmented communities.

2.4 Reception

“While cinema attendance is often bemoaned as declining, festival attendances across-the-board are reported as going up” (de Valck & Loist 2009: 185). This assessment points to the ongoing relevance of the film festival. Marijke de Valck and Skadi Loist argue that its “specific reception environment [...] is largely defined by [its] event nature” (185). Even while the latter is invoked by the authors

⁷⁷ Film festival scholarship has long recognized that film festivals would not be to sustain themselves exclusively based on their revenues. Fischer (2012) has even suggested that “a film festival is a profit-making venture is fundamentally flawed” (40) even though this perspective may be a little too simplistic since it ignores the role of business (sic) festivals as film markets.

to refer to the the commercial agenda of business festivals, I argue that in the case of Latino/a film festivals, their activist and culturally affirming agenda is also crucially predicated on their format as events.

De Valck and Loist have observed that “[t]he opportunity to see something first, or something that cannot be seen elsewhere, something unexpected – and maybe even the added possibility of seeing a film star – brings people to the festival” (185). These “first-seen” and celebrity aspects once again resonate with business festivals’ exclusivity factor; these aspects generate symbolic capital (prestige) attracting both audiences, sponsors and the media to the festival. But in the world of Latino/a and other activist film festivals, the above pronouncement also ties in with with their activist representational politics, since their specialty focus provides glimpses into stories and experiences usually underrepresented or even largely absent from the silver screen. These filmic texts may thus shatter preconceived notions and cultural stereotypes; on part of cultural insiders, they may affirm or interrogate aspects of a presumably shared Latino/a culture; on part of cultural outsiders, they potentially inspire solidarity – although being inside and outside Latino/a culture is somewhat relative, considering that *latinidad* itself is a strategic, pan-ethnic umbrella term and unites many different cultural, national, geographical and other identities. Celebrities, in turn, also serve the empowering agenda of the Latino/a festival; as I have discussed in conjunction with the festival’s economic dimension in this overview and will discuss in various other sections of my study, they have been used as role models and are of particular importance in conjunction with festivals’ ties to historical Latino/a film activism’s struggle for access to the film and television industries.

2.4.1 “Making time matter” (Harbord): The urgency of the festival event

As I have argued earlier, it is also their special time-space structure which makes festivals such useful vehicles for activism as the former instil in them a continued urgency. In this regard they continue in the tradition of all festive rites which, “everchanging or evolving” (Falassi 1987:7 have continued to inspire the daily existences of their target communities in meaningful ways. One crucial aspect is the way a unique festival atmosphere may enhance such a celebration of community. The festival reflects the individual’s most “significant way to feel in tune with his [or her] world,” also owing to its “special reality” produced by a unique “time out of time” (ibid; my emphasis). British film scholar Janet Harbord (2002:40), too, has referred to the way film festivals attempt to inscribe themselves into the collective consciousness of their “imagined communities” (Anderson 1983)⁷⁸ as their “naturalisation” (British English⁷⁹ in the original) as they are becoming part of their communities’ annual routines.⁸⁰ In

⁷⁸ Even for non-observers, commonly shared calendric time featuring a recurring range of religious and state holidays confers to the latter the authority of convention. The etymological roots of *feriae* also suggest a break of routines produced by the tension between the cyclical calendric structure and the chronological, iterative structure of time reckoning. Regularly recurring festivities thus obtain a dual significance due to their simultaneous interruption and emphasis of the chronological count of time. While this may add special experiential meaning to the festive event at an individual level (perhaps also due to an enhanced awareness of one’s mortality and the preciousness of the moment), we are moreover reminded of Falassi’s (1987:2) argument that for their target communities, such festive rites may safeguard and record “social identity, its historical continuity, and [...] its physical survival.”

⁷⁹ Henceforth abbreviated BrE.

⁸⁰ Harbord points out “[...] that festivals just seem to happen one after the other, like a series of dominoes falling onto each other throughout the year, is testament to the naturalisation of these curiously intense yet hybrid events.” (40, BrE)

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

fact, a film festival's recurrence in and interruption of the flow of its hosting city's calendar of events underscores its meaningful relationship with its specific target communities. One poignant example is the way a number of Latino/a film festivals (among them Cine Acción's ¡Cine Latino! and SFLFF) scheduled their festival events during the four week span between September 15 and October 15, thus building on the momentum revolving around the commemorative, national "Hispanic History Month,"⁸¹ used by state agencies, the media, educational and cultural organizations to sponsor events dedicated to the Latino/a experience.

In conjunction with the film festival's generation of a special time and atmosphere, there is also a parallel to historical carnival and its interim reversal of the worldly order as a site enabling contestation of dominant cultural values. Originating in Europe, the so-called "fifth season" continues to be celebrated in countries all over the world, including parts of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa. As described by Soviet literary scholar Michail M. Bakhtin in his pioneering work on carnival and the grotesque, *Rabelais and His World* (1965, translated 1968), carnival, from medieval times up to the renaissance, used to serve as an important site of contained social protest by providing temporary relief from the oppression of the otherwise all-pervasive power of both church and state.⁸² By temporarily toppling hierarchies, carnival provided a site to celebrate cultural articulations usually obscured, condemned, or relegated to the realm of the vernacular. In contrast the Latino/a film festivals of our day raise awareness of and strive to challenge the order that relegates Latino/a subjectivities and cultural production to the peripheries of the mainstream. While these manifold moves from "margin to center" (bell hooks 1984) provide self-ascribed Latinos/as as cultural insiders with the opportunity to revisit and debate facets of a supposedly shared culture in empowering ways, they enable cultural outsiders to educate themselves about and engage with these articulations in ways that engender understanding and solidarity.

I argue that the film festival furthermore lends itself to activist causes because, as Janet Harbord (2009) has argued, it possesses a special potential "to make time matter, to give urgency to the viewing of film in a historical context in which the release of film is no longer a necessarily compelling event" (44, my emphasis). In this age of digitization and increasingly private, individual film consumption via cable and streaming, it is also in this capacity that the festival event has continued to attract audiences; and it is the more important regarding the activist festival's goals of education and empowerment as well as its marketing potentialities. Harbord's coinage, "festivals-time-event" (2009: 44), calls attention to how "[t]he condensed structure of the festival makes the here and the now of the festival critically important" (44), which she sees fit for today's film consumers, their changing needs and interests and overall attitude towards time. More specifically, she attributes the festival's special appeal to the way it relies on a "mixing of temporalities, the recorded time of the film and the present time of projection" (44). Commitment to festival time thus also promises a kind of freedom that harks back to the early days of cinematic consumption: While one of the chief attractions back then

⁸¹ Hispanic Heritage month has its roots in a one-week celebration in September (first introduced in 1968 under the Johnson administration). In 1989, during the Reagan presidency, it was extended to four weeks between September 15 and October 14. This time span was chosen because it encompasses the national independence anniversaries of seven Latin American nations ("Hispanic Heritage Month"; www.census.gov).

⁸² "As opposed to the official feast, one may say that carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time; the feast of becoming, change, and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalized and completed." (Bakhtin 1968: 10; trans. H. Iswolsky)

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

constituted itself in the way going to the movies “released its audience[s] from the over-determined clock-time of labour” (44; BrE), today’s modes of film consumption relate to “the temporalities of digital technologies and decentralised labour” (44; BrE), therefore granting the professional’s round-the-clock availability. Here, Harbord argues that it is digital technology’s very “deinstitutionalization of film viewing” which has also resulted in how “the running time of a film is less assured as a unit, open to dispersal across differently textured times and places in a renewed definition of modernity’s trope of distraction.” (44) Her comparison acknowledges the shift from early film consumption as communal, mass entertainment opposite today’s individualized and solitary film consumption. She observes that “[a] film festival, on the contrary, gathers together the time of the film and the time of viewing. In so doing, it re-institutionalises the collective attention of film viewing and recentres the time of projection as a live event.” (44; BrE) While the festival’s focus on film exhibition as a live event to some extent reinstates the film’s unique status as a work of art with an aura of its own, in the light of festivals’ role as a marketplace for different kinds of capital, films on show thus also undergo a “value-adding process” (de Valck & Loist 2009: 184). One result is that the film’s narrative authority is amplified, which adds weight to activist festivals’ goals of education and empowerment. Here, I also want to point at how the somewhat paradoxical repercussions of Harbord’s description of the festival’s “manufactured time” (44) as they resonate with today’s anti-consumerist, yet increasingly trendy, “slow” and “do-it-yourself” movements. The festival’s uninterrupted, communal film viewing experience ties in with a search for authenticity, thus making the festival experience a coveted commodity.

The festival event’s shared viewing experience thus may bring together a group of viewers with a mixed set of expectations, enable exchange as well as create cross-audiences. In ways particularly significant for Latino/a film festival’s activist goals, the communal act of film viewing that is constitutive of all film festivals draws attention to the process of community formation itself. Accordingly, Harbord locates what she calls the “alchemy resulting from these different temporalities [as...] the potency of the festival as event. (44, BrE) The term “alchemy” underscores the festival’s potential to generate a specific atmosphere where multiple processes of validation – transfers of economic and symbolic capital – may take place. The *Oxford Dictionary of Living English* associates “alchemy” with “[t]he medieval forerunner of chemistry, concerned with the transmutation of matter, in particular with attempts to convert base metals into gold or find a universal elixir” (“Alchemy”; en.oxforddictionaries.com). In the context of the film festival, the term may stand for the appreciation of culture and of community, and of identities and politics of place; seen in the light of a commercial logic, these validation processes may enhance a festival’s particular brand that distinguishes its place in the cultural marketplace provided by the festival circuit.

2.4.2 Festival atmosphere: Cultural performance and “festival communitas” (Cadaval)

Lastly, and even though it is not mentioned in their treatment of the “reception” axis, festival atmosphere is another noteworthy aspect as it corresponds to Valck & Loist’s term, “reception environment.” In fact, I argue that this aspect deserves special attention in my study since it is a key means for Latino/a film festival events to advance their respective activist agendas. Atmosphere ties in with another key argument advanced by de Valck and Loist in their discussion of the reception axis, na-

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

mely, that it is particularly in regard to specialized film festivals that a specific reception environment may elicit “the general feeling of belonging to a group [...] heightened by identity cues” (186). I want to link their argument to similar observations made by anthropologist Olivia Cadaval (1998) in her study on Washington D.C.’s Latino Festival (a.k.a. Fiesta D.C.), a multi-genre street festival. Despite the greater heterogeneity of genres and social actors present at her object of study,⁸³ Cadaval’s aforementioned concept of cultural performance as “a dynamic area where interrelationships and identities are generated, experienced, communicated, and altered” (10) grants valuable insights into how Latino/a film festivals enable audiences (and in fact, all other actors involved) to take possession of the public space provided by the festival event in order to both gain visibility and, at least at a performative level, agency. This corresponds to how specialized and, as I argue, identity driven festivals in particular (which in turn fits in with de Valck and Loist’s example, the queer festival) offer a space for “critical, communal counter-readings of films” (2009: 186; reference to Searle 1996: 47-59). Accordingly, audiences are given the opportunity to interact not only with the films shown and with one another but also, to some degree, with the filmmakers and other celebrity guests present; and, as I have also argued above, in the same empowering sense according to which these stars do not only serve as commercial vehicles and generators of media buzz but also as role models. Cultural performance thus acts like “a multifaceted camera lens that selects, magnifies, and frames” aspects of importance to festival communities (Cadaval 1998: 10).

Furthermore, Cadaval draws on anthropologist Victor Turner’s studies on ritual and liminality as they have shaped her notion of festival *communitas*.⁸⁴ She argues that festivals enable exchange and social change in “an existential moment of what in Third World terminology is called solidarity, in festival terminology, *communitas*” (38). Importantly, such community building is possible despite the different experiences and identities participants bring to the festival event: “*Communitas and solidarity ideally allow for unity in diversity, not homogeneity. Communitas is a utopic moment*” (Cadaval 1998: 38; my italics).

For the festivals discussed in my study, such an ephemeral instantiation of festival *communitas* as “unity in diversity” serves both as a utopian promise as they tie into their social justice and culturally affirming agendas. That the communal experience of film consumption may hold in stall such potentialities was already recognized in the early days of cinema. In this context, U.S. film scholar Robert Stam (2000: 66) points to the writings of Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), German philosopher, cultural critic, and witness to the first flowering of European cinema, who regarded the experience of film consumption as “necessarily gregarious and potentially interactive and critical” and acknowledged cinema’s capabilities to “transform and energize” viewers, even though contemporary festivalgoers are likely to be far removed from the working masses of Benjamin’s day who could be inspired in terms of “revolutionary change” (66). Today’s film festivals have used these potentialities to inspire celebratory and critical assessments of culture as well as exchange.

⁸³ In her study, Cadaval focuses on the time when the festival was an all-outdoor festival in the 1970s and ’80s.

⁸⁴ “For Turner, *communitas* is the antithesis of structure. While structure holds people apart and defines their differences, ‘the bonds of *communitas* are anti-structural in that they are undifferentiated, egalitarian, direct, nonrational [...]’ *Communitas* has three modalities – an existential, spontaneous recognition of a generic bond; a normative organization towards goals and structure; and an ideological recognition of a utopian model of society” (Cadaval 1998: 50; the quoted reference is to Turner 1964: 47).

2.5 Politics of place (axis five)

De Valck & Loist (2009) acknowledge the all-pervasiveness of questions revolving around a politics of space in festival scholarship (186) and point at how politics of place resonate with different areas of current academic scholarship, such as “social geography and [...] the ‘spatial turn’ in the humanities” ever since the 1980s (186). They argue that film festivals

[are] made up of complex dynamics of local and global forces, always defined by the physical place in which the festival is organised but at the same time embedded in an international circuit. Building on insights from globalisation theory, this interplay is understood as a public arena in which uneven power relations are acted out. (187; BrE)

As the earlier example of the complex, mutually dependent relations between Cannes and other European film festivals and Hollywood has shown, film festivals in general have to negotiate their individual relationship with the world locally but also nationally and increasingly transnationally and globally. As smaller, specialized events, the rank of Latino/a film festivals in the film festival circuit may be stratified by factors such as size, budget or mission. That being said, their activism nevertheless resonates with the manifold way globalization and related issues such as labor migration all have impacted the lives of their stakeholders -- and some more profoundly by these same “uneven power relations,” such as poor immigrants and / or those displaced by the reinvention of urban space.

In fact, Latino/a film festivals’ engagement with their politics of place frequently takes into account how local communities have changed in ways Juan Flores (2003) has called the “‘globalizing’ of the Latino presence” (194) of the late 1970s and after:

In addition to the largest groups, Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans, there are now sizeable immigrant communities in the United States from most Latin American countries. As many of these diasporas, notably the Mexican and Puerto Rican, have fanned out across the country, the demographic landscape, as well as the political and cultural setting, has been further altered for U.S. Latinos. (194)

For Latino/a film festivals, the necessity to take into account a more culturally-nationally heterogeneous local audience for which to provide a physical and symbolic space corresponds to the idea of “cultural citizenship.” As William V. Flores (2003) explains,

The concept of “cultural citizenship” has been developed to refer to the various processes by which groups define themselves, form a community, and claim space and social rights (Rosaldo, 1987; Rosaldo and Flores, 1993; Flores and Benmayor, 1997). [...] A key aspect of the concept is the struggle for a distinct social space in which members of the marginalized group are free to express themselves and feel at home. It is in such a space that groups can ‘imagine’ themselves and develop independent social and political organizations (Anderson, 1983). Obtaining space, keeping it, and being free to use it as they see fit often require these groups to organize themselves and make demands on society. (89)

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

Latino/a film festivals' very commitment to providing an arena (*a place*) for such and other underrepresented voices and experiences as well as cultural productions makes their individual projects of community building, of cultural affirmation and their social justice agendas so particularly urgent.

Accordingly, it is also against the background of these "complex dynamics of global and local forces" (de Valck & Loist 2009: 187) that Latino/a film festivals, on the one hand, have engaged in an intense relationship with their local venue/s and communities and that their activism is also marked by transnational repercussions. All the while, such festival communities were never just Latino/a identified. This becomes apparent even with regard to early Chicano/a film festivals; here, Chon A. Noriega (2001) has argued that "they also signalled the need for a pan-ethnic, if not hemispheric, framework for public exhibition in order to reach non-Chicano audiences as well to imbue the public consumption of ethnicity with national and international resonances" (147).

This recognition of Latino/a film festivals' activist and commercial repercussions also informs my study which will show how, on the one hand, Latino/a film festivals' respective engagements with their politics of place tap and validate site-specificity (which, as I will show, is frequently associated with their local communities); and how, on the other hand, they also have engaged in a commercial take on politics of place, such as city marketing and urban regeneration.

One example for how a Latino/a film festival's identity is always also locally defined is Los Angeles based RRAFF, which went on from being a students' to filmmakers' and finally, a filmmakers' and arts festival.⁸⁵ It first started out at California State University-Los Angeles (CSULA), home to one of the first Chicano Studies programs in the country; subsequently moved on to a repertoire cinema, film's "natural" habitat, underscoring RRAFF's roots in Los Angeles long-standing Chicano/a-Latino/a film activism and its fight for access to the geographically close, thus both local and global – Hollywood industries; and lastly, to CASA 0101, a cultural organization in the rapidly transforming Boyle Heights neighborhood; here, the festival resonated with the borough's past as entryway for immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe, Mexico and Japan in the early twentieth century and with today's status as home to generations of Latino/a residents and recently dedicated arts district. RRAFF's development in part reflects, in part contrasts with Janet Harbord's (2009) observation according to which "[f]ilm festivals both utilise and re-inflect the meaning of a particular site in an endless feedback loop to the extent that the topography of a place is changed to suit the needs of a festival [...]" (40, BrE). The factor of reciprocal influence (or re-inflection) is extremely limited in the case of small, special interest RRAFF and its successive locations (it may vary to some extent in regard to bigger events)⁸⁶; this tendency, too, mirrors the "uneven power relations" (de Valck & Loist 2009:187) informing the international film circuit where Latino/a film festivals' foremost role as marketplaces for symbolic capital contrasts with business film festivals' key function in the international cinematic market. Thus, there is a telling difference to major business festivals such as Cannes, the sea resort on the French Riviera; Sundance's Park City, Utah, a skiing resort, or even Telluride, founded in a former mining town in southwestern Colorado and back then a place peopled by "disaffected

⁸⁵ RRAFF had always had an arts component but the last location, CASA 0101, also features an exhibition space.

⁸⁶ As SDLFF founder Ethan van Thillo told me in an interview, audiences' identification with the long-time location at a multiplex in Mission Valley was so strong that whenever there was a festival venue in a different place, he would receive incredulous calls. (E.v. Thillo Interview 2009)

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

hippies, alternative types, people who had moved from the city to eke out their lives in a hardscrabble community” (festival co-founder Stella Pence in Ruoff 2012: 148). Just like a more recent Telluride, which morphed into “a boomtown of condos, million dollar houses and billion dollar ski resorts” (unnamed source quoted in Turan 2002: 149), the other two cities, too, were forever transformed by the festivals they hosted, having implemented a logic of tourism and an infrastructure ready to accommodate the annual influx of industry representatives, film tourists, and film professionals.⁸⁷

All the while, as I will show, Latino/a film festivals have in fact utilized their situation in a particular place as symbolic and / or strategic resources. Accordingly, RRAFF’s situation in proximity to Hollywood makes its projects of education and nurturing filmmakers highly topical, and it is for this reason that it was sought out by Disney, its industry sponsor. SDLFF, in turn, has tapped its geopolitical situation in the San Diego-Tijuana borderlands in ways that continue the long-standing tradition of artistic exchange and cross-fertilization; moreover, the festival blends the commerce of its star-studded galas in San Diego’s redeveloped Gaslight District and the on-screen cultural celebration and empowerment in order to tap its quite diverse and “underserved” (MACSD mission statement) border audiences. In this respect, the festival has remained ever mindful of supporting its poorer constituencies such as in terms of programming choices and by regularly featuring special rate or free programs for families and high school students.

As both these examples show, “place” is also a metonymy for local communities. In ways that correspond to William V. Flores’ above pronouncements on the concept of cultural citizenship and social space, my study will show how Latino/a film festivals, by committing themselves to their politics of place, also work against what Spanish sociologist Manuel Castells (1999) has called, as I have previously mentioned in my introduction, a “loss of community” due to “individualization and [the] atomization of place-based relationships.” (365) Place is defined by Castells as “a locale whose form, function and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of territorial contiguity.” This reference to places is a basic human need; Castells points out that “[p]eople tend to construct their life in reference to places, such as their home, neighborhood, city, region, or country.” (365) Throughout my study, I will show how film festivals may serve to reconstitute meaning and value to locality in ways that inspire community building at a local level inviting reflection, dialog and solidarity – crossing the lines among Latinos/as and non-Latinos/as, citizens and immigrants, and, ideally, resonating with Olivia Cadaval’s (1998) previously discussed adaptation of a “festival *communitas*.”

All the while, Latino/a film festivals’ dedication to local communities may be challenged by their dual need and goal to attract diverse, more encompassing audiences and to create venues that have a crossover appeal. One example is SFLFF, set in the Bay Area, an area deeply divided by class-income, education, and ethnicity-race. This divide, which also runs through the region’s Latino/a communities, has been widened by factors such as the gentrification of low-income, non-white, and immigrant areas such as San Francisco’s traditionally Central American and Chicano/a Mission District. In the spirit of the region’s multifaceted social and arts activism, and spurred by an aim to encourage locals to participate politically and “put down roots” (SFLFF chief organizer Lucho Ramirez; L. Ramirez & D. Díaz Interview 2009), SFLFF’s backing organization, film club Cine + Mas, has hosted festi-

⁸⁷ Back in 2002, Kenneth Turan observed that Cannes’ population at the time, 70,000, “s[aw] a population increase by 50 % during the twelve days it functions as the stand-alone epicenter of the international film world.” (13)

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

val venues all around the Bay in alliance with a wide range state and independent arts, media and educational organizations. Accordingly, its program of films and parties reaches out to the Bay's cinephile, artistic, academic, cultural tourist and the more recent information technology ("tech") constituencies. In this context, de Valck & Loist (2009), too, have drawn attention to an underlying dilemma – namely,

whether it is possible to strengthen community development and cultural tourism simultaneously [...]. At the large film festivals in particular, programmes tend to have a strong international character and therefore attract cosmopolitan visitors who want to celebrate world / art cinema rather than screen programmes that express regional distinctiveness and cater to the local population. (187; BrE)

With regard to the latter, the example of SFLFF is a reflection of the dilemma regarding many Latino/a film festivals' reliance on a logic of city marketing connected to urban renewal and gentrification and likely to be at the expense of lower income, local communities. Here, its multi-locality may be an empowering strategy to honor the Bay's different Latino/a communities on their own terms while serving as one example as to the different "way[s] how space is used at the lowest level of festival organisation" (de Valck & Loist 2009: 187). This may be a way to "add value to film and filmmakers" (187, BrE). However, at the same time, this dispersal of events is also problematic as it may reinforce existing divisions and because it potentially complicates the idea of a unified festival space as a prerequisite for the enabling of festival *communitas*" may happen at the expense of the very community building project envisioned in a unified festival space.

2.6 Festival circuits and history (axis six)

2.6.1 Festivals: "Networks for solidarity" (Torchin)

The final point discussed by de Valck and Loist (2009) centers on the festival circuit as a "cultural network / system" (187, my emphasis) as it impacts and regulates the different relations between festivals among each other, "includ[ing] the existence of a festival calendar, the flows of capital and culture through the circuit, the task division between different (types of) festivals, mutual relations of competition and emulations as well as rankings of prestige and influence" (187).

Even though there is no overarching umbrella organization⁸⁸ for the U.S. Latino/a film festival circuit, U.S. Latino/a film festivals, too, are connected through an informal yet vital network at the local and trans-local levels. In general, Latino/a film festivals are distinct from business film festivals and their more frequent competitive edge – manifest for instance in their goal of exclusivity (premieres; celebrities; specific locations). Compared to the former, the relations among Latino/a film festivals are based on a greater degree of cooperation and solidarity. To give an example, such solidarity plays

⁸⁸ However, a number of Latino/a media advocacy organizations (have) played a crucial networking role: The National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP, since 1999), with its annual conference bringing film professionals, industry, festival associates and Latino/a media representatives together; Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB, since 1998), the national public television consortium supporting Latino/a film-making projects; National Council de la Raza (NCLR; today: UNIDOS-US) for its annual American Latino Media Awards (ALMA; 1995-2014; announced to return 2018 (Pedersen 2018, no pag.) but seemingly discontinued.

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

an eminent role regarding film acquisition: Smaller festivals send scouts to bigger ones, such as in the case of RRAFF and SFLFF, both of whose associates went to CLFF or SDLFF, and with bigger festivals, such as CLFF, occasionally intervening on behalf of smaller festivals in their negotiations with distributors (J. Vargas Interview 2010). The aforementioned Figueroa retrospective, too, while curated by Sergio de la Mora for Cine Acción's ¡Cine Latino!, was also shown in part in 1997 and 1998 by a number of other Latino/a film festivals. Another example concerns collaborations, particularly with internationally renowned festivals, which enhance the prestige of U.S. Latino/a festivals – such as CineFestival's relations with the Festival of New Latin American Cinema in Havana, Cuba; or the programming of sidebars for international festivals, as is the case both with ILFF's Sylvia Perel and LALIFF's Marlene Dermer, who both have served in this function at Mexico's Guadalajara International Film Festival (FICG).

In fact, my usage of network regards this term not so much in terms of one coherent theory than a set of strategic alliances among festivals. It thus corresponds to the multiple relations between one festival and its non-festival stakeholders, tying into the previously discussed axes considering festivals in terms of “institution[s]” and their “politics of place.” As the above example as to film acquisition illustrates, at a pragmatic level, alliances between festivals were formed to share resources and obtain symbolic and / or cultural capital. Moreover, on a more idealistic (or ideological) level, as activist festivals with a set of shared goals, Latino/a film festivals also correspond to Leshu Torchin's (2012:1) observation according to which the former have in common the way they are “[n]etworked for advocacy.” In this context, Torchin has argued in favor of “network” rather than the usage of “festival circuit,” also due to the former term's etymological association with “networking,” which better reflects the multiple engagements – and, one is to infer, the *engagé* nature – of these events (2012:10). Torchin argues that

[t]he value of networking that takes place at, and behind the scenes of, film festivals cannot be underestimated. It appears in varying forms: The casual alliances built among audience members according to the shared taste and interests, the card swapping of professionals in the lobby, the pick-me up of communing with the similarly socially engaged. There are more formal organizations of the One World Network and the Human Rights Network, which pool information resources to explore how best to promote human rights values through film culture. And there are informal arrangements arising from collegial relationships. (2012: 9; BrE)

Torchin's more tentative conceptualization of an activist festival network not only underlines some of the major differences between more established, business film festivals and the special interest, and, if to different degrees, more marginalized such events my study is engaging with, it also points to the limitations of other kinds of network theory for the purposes of my study. This becomes clear considering Marijke de Valck's usage of Bruno Latour's Actor Network Theory (ANT) in her pioneering *Film Festivals: From European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia* (2007), a study investigating the international film festival circuit focusing on Berlin, Cannes, Venice, and Rotterdam. While ANT makes it possible to delineate what de Valck calls the “task division between the major and the smaller

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

festivals” (214),⁸⁹ it falls short of being able to distinguish the network’s micro- and macrostructures and their attending hegemonic nature. In fact, de Valck herself has criticized Latour for his fascination with networks as “parliament[s] of things” (40) and as “delicate set[s] of fragile mediations” (40⁹⁰); she has also pointed to the way ANT has “overlooked [...] neo-colonial tendencies” informing the above task divisions (214).⁹¹ Throughout this study, my discussions of many such alliances and mediations reveal Latino/a film festivals to be quite “fragile,” even precarious. I therefore agree with de Valck, who points to the limitations of network theory as it “remains fixated on the complexity of the network” (2007: 40) – a complexity, however, it is unable to address in regard to “a critical consideration of power relations” (40) informing these mediations.

Moreover, a related point is how for Latino/a film festivals, the individual alliances to other Latino/a and non-Latino/a film festivals also depend on their ties to their respective politics of place. A relatively recent festival, SFLFF was able to capitalize on its role as would-be successor to the renowned festivals of Cine Acción and to ILFF as well as on building partnerships with the Bay’s traditional wealth of film festivals. In general, Latino/a film festivals’ cooperations with other festivals add nuance to their activist agendas, particularly in terms of enhancing diversity and / or renown by partnering up with a particularly old and prestigious festival. In addition, such cooperations help to build cross-audiences. Accordingly, while SFLFF has partnered up with venerable SFIFF, it has also often worked with other festivals which share a special interest focus, such as LGBT themed Frameline and the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival (SFJFF). In addition, SFLFF’s own Cine+Mas has supported the University of San Francisco’s Human Rights Film Festival as well as small neighborhood festivals such as San Francisco’s Bernal Heights Festival. San Diego’s much bigger SDLFF, in turn, has featured collaborations with festivals focused on Asian, Italian, Jewish cinemas as well as children’s film (SDLFF 2011 Catalog 7), created its own satellite Jewish Latino themed festival (2010- 2012) and, across the border, worked with Tijuana’s (since terminated) documentary film festival, BorDocs.

Finally, Latino/a film festivals’ relative lack of competition is sometimes also the result of the scarcity of Latino/a film festivals in a given area; historically, the conditions of co-existence among Latino/a film festivals changed somewhat with their increase, and the rise of more commercial and star-driven arenas for Hispanic-Latino/a Hollywood and international Latino/a film in the 1990s and 2000s. In fact, as my historical and analysis chapters will show, like other festivals worldwide, Latino/a film festivals have had to balance their need for organizational self-preservation, including their own, dis-

⁸⁹ In this context, de Valck explains that “[t]he major media events, the ones that attract the most media representatives and industry professionals, are the central nodes in the festival network, while the smaller festivals perform specific functions, for instance, by supporting new talented directors, paying attention to specific genres or serving as a cultural-political platform for (ethnic) minority groups. Together, the festivals offer a heterogeneous, spatially-dispersed system in which every film can find an event somewhere that suits its interests best and filmmakers, in addition, can grow within the system to different levels of establishment.” (214)

⁹⁰ The passage quoted is taken from an interview given by Latour featured at “Making Things Public,” at ZKM / Center for Culture and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany, 2005 (“Bruno Latour,” zkm.de).

⁹¹ Here, de Valck refers to the way postcolonial theories may provide insights into “the current forms of domination that characterize the transnational dynamics of the festival network: Western festivals continue to be the most important gateways for the cultural legitimization of world cinema; Western funding has a disproportionate influence on international co-productions, and the primacy of Western taste results in the ‘ghettoization’ of cinemas from developing countries in less prestigious program sections of the various festivals” (214).

tinctive identity and brand as one of the primary sources of their symbolic capital⁹² and their solidarity, which is also a reflection of their shared mission of promoting Latino/a film and supporting the film festival network as well as other Latino/a organizations.

2.6.2 U.S. Latino/a film festivals: Overview

All the pioneering Latino/a film festivals of the 1970s and '80s, if in line each with their individual activist missions, primarily sought establish an interest in U.S. Latino/a and Latin American film that would celebrate Latino/a culture/s, build bridges between communities at local, national, and transnational levels, and advance opportunities for Latino/a cinemas. Thus, even though the nation's oldest continuing festival, **CineFestival** in San Antonio, Texas (since 1976; www.guadalupeculturalarts.org/cinefestival) had originally been started as a Chicano/a film festival in accordance with its predominantly Mexican descended local Latino/a communities, it soon widened its scope to include national and international Latino/a vistas and film production. In addition to being an audience festival, it was also a filmmakers' festival with close ties to local and Los Angeles based activists. In contrast, the nation's other long-standing, continuing **Chicago Latino Film Festival** (CLFF; since 1984; chicagolatinofilmfestival.org), one of the biggest such events today, features a more encompassing Latin American and U.S. Latino/a programming scope also owing both to the city's large immigrant communities and its director's own immigrant background. This is an audience centered festival with ties to city marketing. Northern California's Bay Area, in turn, saw the foundation of **Cine Acción** (1980-2008). A film board with a focus on U.S. Latino/a and Latin American film, it had been inspired both by New Latin American Cinema⁹³ (hence its name) and San Francisco's political and independent film scene. Steeped in the region's vibrant and diverse activist environment, Cine Acción organized a festival dedicated exclusively to Latina filmmaking, "Women of the Americas in Film and Video" (1988). Meanwhile, on the East Coast, New York City's El Museo del Barrio (El Museo), an institution founded by Puerto Rican educators and arts activist in the 1960s, was involved in the organization of a number of Latino/a- and Latin American themed film festivals (1984; 1988; 1991).⁹⁴ Also in New York City, Joseph "Joe" Papp's Public Theater featured as a Latino/a film festival as sidebar to its theater fest⁹⁵, a showcase of predominantly Latin American and some Latino/a film.

In the 1980s, the Latino/a filmmaking community's trend towards professionalization was also reflected in the way some festivals turned into platforms for cross-validation via new fields of scholarship involving Latino/a film, such as by means of contributions to festival catalogs and other publications.

⁹² A telling exception concerns the screening of the dramatic feature *Filly Brown* (USA 2012, Youssef Delara and Michael D. Olmos) at SFLFF 2012. The visit of the film's leading actress, Gina Rodriguez, was halted due to exclusivity issues and the film's official premiere in Los Angeles the following spring, hosted by the Latino International Film Institute (LIFI) and incidentally associated with the co-director's father, Edward James Olmos.

⁹³ Its repercussions will be further discussed in the respective chapter on Bay Area festivals.

⁹⁴ 1984's National Latino Film and Video Festival and Latin American Showcase, coordinated by Jaime Barrios and Diego Echeverría, was co-presented by, and held at, the Public Theater ("El Museo del Barrio: Timeline" 18). In 1988, El Museo hosted The National Latino Film and Video Festival, organized by Lillian Jiménez, at Columbia Cinema (22) In 1991, the third edition was dedicated to Cine de Mestizaje: The National Latino Film and Video Festival. Curators were Chon Noriega and Marlina González-Tamrong. It was held at The Anthology of Film Archives, New York (24). El Museo afterwards reshifted its programming focus.

⁹⁵ Also mentioned by Noriega 2000:147 as National Latino Film Festival, the New York Latino Festival appears to have been discontinued after Papp's death in 1991; it bore no personal affiliation to the subsequent New York International Film Festival (NYIFF).

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

In the same decade, there was also the much more momentous emergence of the mainstream-targeting narrative formats associated with so-called “Hispanic Hollywood,” and Latino/a film festivals’ need to adapt in terms of providing suitable platforms, often in conjunction with star power. Here, different festivals drew on buzz and glamor differently depending on their individual activism. Thus, while Cine Acción’s next festival project, the annual **¡Cine Latino!** (1993-2004), made a more tentative use of star power and continued in the tradition of its founding organization’s intersectional activism, the San Diego Latino Film Festival (since 1994) emerged from a campus festival to an event which employed its geographical border location, celebrities and education as a formula intended to attract sponsors as well as very diverse audiences, eventually making SDLFF one of today’s (2018) longest enduring and biggest such events as it even predates the **Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival**. LALIFF (1997-2013; 2018), in turn, was first hosted in 1997 and co-founded by popular and hugely influential Chicano actor, producer and film activist Edward James Olmos. LALIFF obtained a unique position due to its highly symbolical location in Hollywood, adding distinction to its self-positioning as showcase of, and bridging effort between, U.S. and international Latino/a cinemas. But LALIFF has also served as a foil to other, smaller Los Angeles based Latino/a film festivals founded in the 1990s and 2000s, like the **Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival** (RRAFF, 2004-2014), which is the subject of another analysis chapter, and other, smaller, more infrequently hosted festivals such as **Annual East LA Chicana/o Film Festival-Cine Sin Fin** (founded 1995; “Cine Sin Fin,” latinola.com). Inspired by the city’s arts and social activism and by the increasing numbers of local Latino/a film professionals, these festivals have frequently chosen to focus on U.S. Latino/a film productions, for the most part renounced star power and targeted local audiences. First held in the same year as LALIFF, 1997, the **International Latino Film Festival San Francisco (ILFF, until 2008)**, was another Bay Area based festival and resembled LALIFF in regard to its ties to Latino/a Hollywood and a focus on celebrities and entertainment; this festival is also part of the Bay Area Chapter in the analysis part of my study. The late 1990s and early 2000s saw the emergence of another number of festivals, including the **Cine Las Americas International Film Festival** (CLAIFF, Austin, Texas, since 1998), the **New York International Latino Film Festival** (NYILFF, 2000-2013; 2018, and at the time, a competitor to CLFF in size), and the **Boston Latino Film Festival** (BLFF, since 2002). On the one hand, one is to infer, this was the result of a wider appreciation of the appeal and the marketability of Latino/a film. On the other hand, it was also indicative of the aforementioned “globaliz[ation]’ of the Latino presence” (J. Flores 2003: 194). The worldwide economic crisis of 2008, however, impacted many festivals, particularly those more cost-intensive formats dependent both on a high degree of corporate sponsorship and star power. This led to down-sizing and brand-altering measures (such as in the case of formerly multi-locational ILFF in 2010-11)⁹⁶ and temporary cancellations (LALIFF, in 2012 and between 2014 and 2017; NYILFF, between 2013 and 2016).

The following table provides a (by no means exhaustive) overview of the festivals previously mentioned. The festivals analyzed at more length in the second part of my study are highlighted.

⁹⁶ To be discussed in the Bay Area chapter.

II. Contextualizing Latino/a film festivals within current film festival research

Table: Overview: U.S. Latino/a film festivals

FESTIVAL⁹⁷	PRODUCING ORGANIZATION (ORGANIZATIONS FOUNDED BY FESTIVAL OR GENERATING THE FESTIVAL)	CITY / REGION	YEAR OF INITIATION (AND TERMINATION, IF APPLICABLE)
CineFestival	Oblate College Southwest; Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center	San Antonio, Texas	1976-
Chicago Latino Film Festival (CLFF)	Various universities; International Latino Cultural Center (since 1987)	Chicago, Illinois	1985-
“Women of the Americas Film Festival”	Cine Acción (since 1980)	San Francisco / Bay Area, California	1988
¡Cine Latino! (CL)	Cine Acción	San Francisco / Bay Area, California	1991-2004
San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF)	Various San Diego based universities; Centro Cultural de la Raza; Media Arts Center San Diego (s. 1999)	San Diego, California (and at times, various locations in Baja California, Mexico)	1994-
Los Angeles Latino Film Festival (LALIFF)	Latino International Film Institute (s. 2005)	Los Angeles, California	1997-2011; 2013; 2018-
International Latino Film Festival San Francisco (ILFF)	International Latino Film Society (s. 2005/06)	San Rafael, California; later, Bay Area	1994-2008
Cine Las Americas International Film Festival (CLAIFF)	Cine Las Americas Media Arts Center (s. 2001)	Austin, Texas	1998-
New York International Latino Film Festival (NY-ILFF)	No single producing organization but reliant on various sponsors, including HBO	New York City	1999-2012; 2017-
Boston Latino International Film Festival (BLIFF)	Northeastern University	Boston, Massachusetts	2002-
Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)	California State University Los Angeles; CASA 0101	Los Angeles	2004-
San Francisco International Latino Film Festival (SFILFF)	Cine+Mas San Francisco	San Francisco / Bay Area, California	2009-

⁹⁷ Many of the festivals were renamed in the course of their existence; names given here correspond to the most recent designations.

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

This chapter provides a selective historical overview which identifies and discusses some key developments, works and protagonists of emerging Latino/a film and film activism from the late 1960s to the first decade of the 2000s. In order to be able to better assess the flow of ideas and impact of single actors that helped shape the emerging Latino/a film festival network, I have chosen to discuss three key Latino/a film festivals, San Antonio's CineFestival, the Chicago Latino Film Festival (CLFF), and the Los Angeles Latino Film Festival (LALIFF) within this overview (rather than separately) – and emphatically not in their entirety but selecting characteristic episodes and milestones.

The decision for writing this chapter and selection of issues has been motivated by a couple of insights. One is my observation that while all of the California based festivals discussed in the analytical part of my study are rooted in their respective unique geo-political setting each and have positioned themselves vis-à-vis local activism(s), all have also engaged with (or sometimes positioned themselves against) both historical and contemporary trends in Latino/a film, film activism, and of course the other festivals in the U.S. Latino/a film network. The situation of the five festivals considered in my analysis, based in three distinctive Californian metropolitan areas all marked by a historical presence of Mexican American communities, also means that this overview must prioritize on the development of Chicano/a film and film activism when dealing with the stages preceding the emergence of Latino/a feature film. Another is quite equally straightforward: On a national level, too, Mexican Americans make up the largest group within the Latino/a population and the group that Another is their situation in California, in relative proximity to the Hollywood film and television industries, which has made it necessary – given also this study's particular interest in commodification and identity logics – to consider phenomena such as the emergence of so-called "Hispanic Hollywood" and the need for creating crossover "content" in line with Hollywood's entertainment logic, a discourse that has also inspired both the festivals and their filmmaking constituencies considered in my analysis. And furthermore, given the proximity to Hollywood and the enduring underrepresentation of U.S. Latinos/as in the industry (and owing to the fact that with the exception of CLFF, many U.S. Latino/a film festivals have started out as platforms primarily dedicated to U.S. Latino/a film), there is also an emphasis on U.S. Latino/a productions and filmmakers even though most of today's U.S. Latino/a film festivals function as arenas for both Latin American and other international Latino/a film.

Thus, in my overview, I start by looking at how in the late 1960s to late 1970s television and here, public affairs shows served as the first platforms for Latino/a film – almost exclusively documentary formats – and at a first guard of film activists – in a time which, as Chon A. Noriega (2000) has put it, a "discourse on violence" (25) dominated Chicano/a-Raza and Puerto Rican film producers' relationship with the state. I will then show how during the second half of the 1970s, with the first film school alumni continuing to enter the workforce, a "discourse of professionalism" (Noriega 2000:25) emerged; as advocacy groups protested the mis- and underrepresentation of Latinos/as in Hollywood, there was an increased need for alternative arenas for the exhibition of Latino/a film and the nurture of filmmakers, coinciding with the creation of CineFestival in 1976. In the 1970s, U.S. Latino/a filmmakers were beginning to look southward to the politically committed cinemas that had emerged

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

ever since the 1950s, the so-called New Latin American Cinema; some, like the Los Angeles based Chicano Cinema Coalition (CCC), also established transnational ties to representatives and institutions of New Latin American Cinema. The latter provided a repository of language for U.S. filmmakers and activists and made it possible to put pressure on the state and the film and television industries.⁹⁸ Havana, created in 1979 and soon to emerge as the foremost arena for New Latin American Cinema, became an important platform for the validation of Chicano/a-Latino/a film as well as a model for U.S. based Latino/a film festivals in regard to networking and professional enhancement. However, the altogether diverging development of New Latin American Cinema in the 1970s and '80s; the different production conditions in regard to state support; and the different conceptualizations of national identity (put simply: mainstream-minority in the U.S.; *mestizaje* in Latin America) also curtailed similarities. It is also because these differences between Latin American and U.S. Latino/a cinemas have continued to influence programming politics at today's U.S. Latino/a film festivals that I have discussed New American Cinema's particular role in the late 1970s and 1980s more exhaustively. An awareness of these differences and a growing acknowledgement as to Chicano/a-Latino/a communities' diversification back home in the U.S. regarding socio-economic and educational factors informs a key document of the time, "Notes on Chicano Cinema" (first published 1979) by CCC's Jason Johansen, who uses these aspects as a point of departure to argue in favor of a cautious and critical approximation to Hollywood and an embrace of the narrative feature film.

I will then look at the early stages (late 1970s into early 1980s) of the nation's oldest Latino/a film festival, CineFestival San Antonio, and the way it reflected concurrent developments: Broadening its identity from a Chicano/a to Latino/a film festival with transnational repercussions; providing an arena both for audiences (in terms of education and a celebration of culture) and for filmmakers, acknowledging professionalization trends and the need to provide an appropriate, more commercially viable platform for Latino/a feature film. After this, I will turn to CLFF, a festival celebrating national and international *latinidad* and one whose identity is based on the immigrant's perspective and the idea of a participatory, "new citizen[ship]" (William V. Flores 2003), while also drawing on the (city) marketing and consumer citizenship logic in line with its foundational "Decade of the Hispanic," and a need to appeal wider and heterogenous audiences. Here, I will focus on the festival's early stages (second half of the 1980s to the 1990 festival edition).

Subsequently, I will examine the rise of the Latino/a feature film in the early 1980s, so-called "Hispanic Hollywood," enabled by factors such as the industry's growing interest in multi-cultural content; the semi-hype of the "Decade of the Hispanic"; and a changing film and media landscape leading to the exploration of ancillary markets for so-called independent, and specialty film. In conjunction with this, I will also discuss the "crossover" discourse that has gained currency in Latino/a cinema ever since the decade's rise of more cost-intensive and mainstream-oriented, narrative formats, including the handful of films seeing considerable commercial success which was later touted as "Hispanic Hollywood Boom" (mid-to late 1980s). I will then move on to the so-called "Boom"'s more critical repercussions, such as frequent rendering of Latinos/as in a meritocratic light (cf. also Newman 2001:68 ff.); and because for all its media presence at the time, the boom did not suffice to persuade

⁹⁸ Cine Acción, the audio-visual media activist group and first U.S. Latino/a film board will also mentioned in this section but considered more exhaustively in its respective subchapter in the Bay Area analysis chapter.

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

the industry to create an enduring “habitat” (producer-director Moctesuma Esparza quoted in Davila 2010, no pag.) for Latino/a film— again, reflecting a prevailing trend in today’s U.S. Latino/a cinema.

I will then discuss an exemplary pre-“Boom” film that anticipated some of these tendencies, Luis Valdez’s *Zoot Suit* (1981), the first Latino/a narrative feature made within the studio system. Edward James Olmos, whose career took off then, epitomizes the rise of more mainstream compatible narrative formats. Olmos, too, will be considered in this overview owing to his rise as “Face of the Decade” and heavy promotion as “exemplary citizen” and “savior” (Newman 2001; Beltrán 2009) and later, the *pater familias* of Latino/a Hollywood; roles which, I argue, also further advanced his key functions in Latino/a media activism with LALIFF and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting’s ethnic consortium for Latino/a audio-visual media, Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB). Subsequently, I will look at LALIFF, the festival co-founded by Olmos in 1997, and its self-fashioning as a Hollywood based bridge between “international” Latino/a cinemas and U.S. Latino/a cinema, which also means accommodating the needs of its international and national filmmaking constituencies, from exhibition to nurture, despite the many aforementioned differences.

Finally, this overview also looks at Latino/a media activism from a very different vantage point as it explores their opportunities past and present at mighty Sundance in conjunction with the festival’s long tradition of nurture of minority filmmaking. It is also in the latter respect that Sundance serves as a foil to Latino/a film festivals, which in turn rely on smaller budgets and less media attention and feature an at best very limited industry presence. A glance at a selected number of filmmakers in regard to their establishment of a relationship with Sundance, including Lourdes Portillo, Robert Rodriguez, Miguel Arteta, Patricia Cardoso, Yolanda Cruz and Alex Rivera provides insights into the possibilities and ongoing challenges for Latinos/as to navigate the field of film production. It will reveal that while Sundance has been a milestone in each of these filmmakers’ careers, their ability to build on the exposure and nurture provided has frequently been a matter of a compatibility with Sundance’s own development from a festival for low budget and predominantly off-Hollywood productions to one of the chief marketplaces for specialty national and international film.

1. First film activist generation: Los Angeles area and beyond

The common denominator for self-identified Latino/a⁹⁹ filmmakers, Chicanos/as, Puerto Ricans¹⁰⁰, and others, was their struggle to respond to the specific socio-political climate of their day and to affirm their culture within U.S. society, and alongside with it, their demand for equal opportunities. By way of example, there is media scholar Lillian Jiménez’ (1996) description of Puerto Rican cinema, having

emerge[d] during the tumultous era of the documentary form, characterized by a sense of urgency and expediency of the moment. The social and political revolution many clamored for demanded

⁹⁹ Throughout this study, I will use “Latino/a” (instead of Hispanic) as a collective term to describe members of U.S. based groups with Latin American roots, despite my awareness that the term only gained wider currency by the end of the late 1980s. I will distinguish U.S. and “international” Latinos/as wherever necessary.

¹⁰⁰ Puerto Rican here denotes the film production in conjunction with U.S. based ethnic and social movements. The film industry on the island is far more long-standing, starting out with the founding of La Sociedad Industrial Cine Puerto Rico in 1916 (Keller 1994: 211).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

that films reflect the ‘truth’ and that they be finished by any means necessary. (35)

This predilection for documentary forms for educational, consciousness-raising (also in counter-distinction to Hollywood) and mobilization purposes also invites parallels to early militant New Latin American Cinema’s championing of the genre as a means for “document[ing], bear[ing] witness to, refut[ing] or deepen[ing] the truth of a situation” (Getino & Solanas 1969: 124); in both cases, however, this preference was also borne out of necessity.

While Latino/a social advocacy groups were claiming rights as “new citizens” (W. Flores), also in emulation of the ground-breaking achievements of African American civil rights groups,¹⁰¹ Latino/a media activists from the very beginning had exposed the gross underrepresentation of Latinos/as in the media (Keller 1994:193). The 1969 U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission reported only three per cent of “Spanish surnamed” working in the film industries, and a similar or worse situation in the fields of commercial television and public broadcasting, with the latter featuring less than “one percent of Mexican or Chicano employees” (ibid.). As Keller (1994) and Noriega (2000) have shown, media activism particularly thrived in the Los Angeles area. One reason was the proximity to the Hollywood industries. Some early stage advocacy groups, even though not long-lived due to a lack of institutional association, due to their “more confrontational approach played a significant role in the increased access to the mass media in the early 1970s” (Noriega 2000:17)¹⁰²; another enduringly influential advocacy group with roots in this early struggle is NOSOTROS (Spanish for “us”), co-founded in 1970 by renowned Chicano actor Ricardo Montalbán (Keller 1994: 193; Noriega 2000: 66).

The second reason for Los Angeles’ emergence as a hub for Latino/a audio-visual media production and activism was its role as an entryway into film schools for ethnic minorities as part of a greater trend, namely, the implementation of affirmative action programs in the 1960s and early 1970s. In Los Angeles, the University of California (UCLA) and the University of Southern California (USC) became key to the formation of a new generation of filmmakers of color. UCLA’s School of Film and Television alone produced a considerable number of film and television professionals; among them Moctesuma Esparza, Sylvia Morales, Gregory Nava, José Luis Ruiz, and Susan Racho (cf. Noriega 2000: 114). Esparza had distinguished himself not only as a participant in the March 1968 East Los Angeles high school walkouts for which he had been indicted on conspiracy charges, he was also a co-organizer of UCLA’s multi-ethnic Media Urban Crisis Coalition program (Keller 1994: 192; see also Noriega 1992:42). Also in Los Angeles, Jesús Salvador Treviño graduated from Occidental College.

In addition, outside Los Angeles if California based were two more founding figures of Chicano/a cinema, who started their careers at the very beginning and the end of this first phase, namely, Luis Valdez and Lourdes Portillo. Valdez, who had attended Northern California’s San José State Univer-

¹⁰¹ Among them were more long-standing groups such as the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC, since 1929) as well as more recently founded groups such as the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), ASPIRA of America, and the National Council of La Raza (Keller 1994: 192; Noriega 2000:16). Other such older pre-civil rights groups were the American G.I. Forum and the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA) (Noriega 2000: 16).

¹⁰² Examples are the Council to Advance and Restore the Image of the Spanish-Speaking and Mexican Americans (CARISSIMA) and Justice for Chicanos in the Motion Picture and Television Industry (JUSTICIA) (Noriega 2000:17).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

sity (Baugh 2012:277) and founded the unique theatrical institution known to the world as El Teatro Campesino (ETC) in San Juan Bautista in 1965, had come from agit prop theater with close ties to UFW (United Farmworkers of America) in an “early, natural, militant activist transition to film” (Keller 1994: 192), or rather created a vibrant and successful parallel career there. His adaptation of militant Chicano Movement activist Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales’s epic poem, *I am Joaquín* (1969; officially produced by ETC) is listed in Noriega’s *Shot in America* (2000) as the oldest documentary produced by a Chicano/a (251). *Joaquín* is an independent production and thus differs from the majority of early Chicano/a-Latino/a cinema created and shown in conjunction with public television’s public affairs shows (Keller 1994: 196).¹⁰³ In 1981, Valdez also made the first Latino/a film with Hollywood involvement, *Zoot Suit*, which will be the subject of a discussion of its own.

Lourdes Portillo, who had also grown up in Los Angeles, moved to the Bay Area in the early 1970s, attended the San Francisco Art Institute (MfA) and became the co-founder of Cine Acción in 1980. Her début, *Después del Terremoto / After the Earthquake* (with Colombian-American filmmaker Nina Serrano, 1979) departed from the mostly documentary works of her Los Angeles colleagues, being an experimental narrative short, and together with Sylvia Morales’ *Chicana*, it was the first of a number of films on a female subject, signalling a more feminist conceptualization of *Latinidad*. As a filmmaker, she worked outside of Hollywood and tended to rely on a mix of public grants (such as from the American Film Institute or the Corporation of Public Broadcasting) and grants from arts foundations but also, through a frequent collaborator¹⁰⁴, sometimes on the support of Lucasfilm, the production firm of director George Lucas (lourdesportillo.com; Fregoso 2001: 36).

1.1 Public affairs shows (1968-77)

Public affairs shows provided the first arenas for early Latino/a film – documentaries “reflect[ing] the aesthetic priorities of the Chicano movement, the stylistic influence of the network documentary of the early 1960s, and a willingness to experiment that came, by and large, from ignorance of television conventions” (Noriega 2000: 115).¹⁰⁵ Paradigmatic of the programming range was *Reflecciones* (Los Angeles’ KABC-TV; 1972-1973; Luis Garza, Susan Racho, and David García), a “political documentary series, which protested the Vietnam War, advocated the farmworkers’ union, and exposed the criminal legal system” (Keller 1994: 193). Important works included *Requiem-29: Racism and Police Repression against Chicanos* (1971, directed by David García and produced by Moctesuma Esparza), on the death of journalist Rubén Salazar in the wake of 1970’s Los Angeles based Chicano Moratorium against The Vietnam War; *América Tropical* (1971, Jesús S. Treviño), which captured the history of the whitewashing of a controversially themed mural by Mexican muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros commissioned by the City of Los Angeles, and, also by Treviño, *Yo Soy Chicano* (1972), “the first Chicano film to be nationally televised and to deal with the Chicano movement from its roots in pre-Columbian history to the activism of the Chicano present” (Keller 1994: 195). These early public affairs shows also served as springboards for the careers of other filmmakers, among them José Luis Ruiz (later to be associated with media arts organization and LPB forerunner, National

¹⁰³ Valdez’s *El Corrido* (formerly *La Gran Carpa de los Rasquachis*) (1976), was to be produced for public television (KCET-Los Angeles), meriting “critical success” (Keller 196).

¹⁰⁴ The collaborator is Vivien Hillgrove (Fregoso 2001: 36).

¹⁰⁵ Apart from these documentary dominated formats and actually more attuned to entertainment heavy Los Angeles, there was also *Canción de la Raza* (KCET-TV, 1968-70), a dramatic series set in East Los Angeles.

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

Latino Communications Center / NLCC); Severo Pérez¹⁰⁶; and, both from the Bay, filmmaker-artist Francisco X. Camplis, co-founder of San Francisco's seminal cultural arts organization Galería de la Raza (s. 1970), and documentary filmmaker Rick Tejada-Flores¹⁰⁷, later associated with Cine Acción. Another significant such public affairs show was New York City's *Realidades* (1972-77; ¹⁰⁸ (WNET/ Channel 13). The first pan-Latino/a such platform after its relaunch in 1974, it featured Puerto Rican, Chicano/a, and Central American producers, thus opening up new avenues to cooperation and "instrumental" to paving the way for "the formation of the National Latino Media Coalition, which legally challenged the broadcast industry nationally" (Jiménez 1996:26).¹⁰⁹ Like its West Coast counterparts, *Realidades* had been created in response to social protest but, as Noriega (2000: 151) tells, through "more confrontational" forms, namely, by means of the occupation of broadcasting outlet WNET through members both of the Puerto Rican Education and Action Media Council.

1.2 Rocky road towards professionalism (1974-84)

While it is well beyond the scope of this study to follow all the many shifts and turns of 1970s and '80s Latino/a media activism, which were also responses to changes in an increasingly deregulated public broadcasting landscape – in effect pointing to the necessity for other arenas for Latino/a film and video, such as festivals – there were some notable trends and tendencies. One straightforward result attesting to a drive both for professionalism and independence was the creation of Latino/a production companies in the 1970s and early 1980s in "response to the limited opportunities within television stations and [as] an attempt to acquire greater control over the development, production, and distribution of Chicano/a-themed films" (Noriega 2000: 147).¹¹⁰ Another was to continue building community with like-minded media workers, such as by way of advocacy groups which lobbied for opportunities and against Hollywood's representational politics. And there was the increasing tendency to seek for alliances and inspiration transnationally. Here, New Latin American Cinema played a significant role.

¹⁰⁶ Director of the early experimental film, *Mozo* (1968), Pérez was to direct ...*And the Earth Did Not Swallow Him* (1994, with Paul Espinosa), an adaptation of the pioneering Chicano novel by Tomás Rivera (Noriega 2000: 253 ff.).

¹⁰⁷ Co-director of *The Fight in the Fields* (1996), on the life and work of labor organizer César Chavez. Co-director Ray Telles was also involved in founding Cine Acción.

¹⁰⁸ There are conflictive statements as to when *Realidades* was discontinued. Lillian Jiménez (1996:26) states that "a precarious funding base, uneven programming schedule, and internal problems caused *Realidades* to end in 1975." Chon A. Noriega (2000:151), in turn, points to 1977 as its last running year and cites a number of films broadcast through the show – films actually made between 1975 and 1977.

¹⁰⁹ National Latino Media Coalition (NLMC, early 1970s until 1980, cf. Noriega 155-58). Noriega argues that of all of the 1970s media advocacy organizations, it was "[t]he only effective media organization." However, in ways that point at the increasingly pragmatic stance embraced by many Latino/a film activists, the NLMC was "was not involved in media reform per se, but rather consisted of television producers lobbying within the industry and among government and nonprofit sources." (88)

¹¹⁰ They included Esparza / Katz Productions (Moctesuma Esparza, since 1974); Ruiz Productions, later InterAmerican Pictures (José Luis Ruiz, 1975-80); Learning Garden Productions (Severo Pérez, 1976-82); Sylvan Productions (Sylvia Morales, no dates given), and Xochitl Films (Lourdes Portillo) (Noriega 2000: 148 ff.). Noriega has pointed to how they, too, sometimes had benefited from the struggle of advocacy groups by way of "various settlement agreements and bilingual education funding sources" (148). Esparza / Katz. For instance, had been established with the help of the "La Raza Series" initiated by renowned publisher and financial / media services, McGraw-Hill (148).

1.3 Professionalism at the crossroads: The Chicano Cinema Coalition (CCC, 1978-80)

The CCC was a Los Angeles based media advocacy group consisting of some forty film professionals, including filmmakers Sylvia Morales, Susan Racho, José Luis Ruíz and Jesús S. Treviño, and film scholars such as Jason Johansen (Noriega 2000: 158). Despite the CCC's short existence, it had considerable impact on San Antonio's CineFestival, particularly as to the festival's special regard for its filmmaking constituencies in terms of providing exhibition and nurture, rather than exclusively focusing on its audiences; and in regard to the festival's increasingly pan-Latino/a and transnational perspective.

The CCC's proximity to Hollywood and to an unfolding community of like-minded Latino/a film professionals led to its emphasis on a logic of access, on promoting Latino/a-Chicano/a productions and identities and attending lobbying and protest practices.¹¹¹ Its negotiations between reform and radicalism – including its ties to New Latin American Cinema – shine a light on Chicano/a-Latino/a film at a crossroads in a time that saw an increased privatization of the old broadcasting platforms, the need for filmmakers and other media workers to professionalize, and their soon-to-come embrace of formats such as the feature film. Its more confrontational engagement with Hollywood set the CCC apart from other groups such as the later formed, Bay Area based film board Cine Acción (1980-2008), a more loosely knit group also concerned with promoting up and coming Latino/a filmmakers by film and video archives, a newsletter, and later with itinerant screenings and film festivals. Contrary to the CCC's focus on Los Angeles' more substantial Chicano/a film and media community; on the other hand, also due to a lack of a comparable such community in the Bay, Cine Acción frequently aligned itself with local independent arts and filmmaking scenes and was not exclusively Chicano/a identified.

Chon A. Noriega has described the CCC's situation at a crossroads between reform and radicalism:

Rejection of the 'liberal' filmmakers who sought change or reform from within the established modes of production and distribution existed simultaneously with the call for a 'radical' practice that sought revolution based upon an assumption of Hollywood-type distribution. This contradiction also manifested itself in the practical efforts of the Chicano Cinema Coalition to seek access to the U.S. film and television industry while developing relations within Latin America on the basis of an antithetical position toward Hollywood. (160)

While I agree with Noriega's observations, I have come to a somewhat different conclusion which nevertheless resonates with some of his findings. I do not see the CCC's situation so much as a contradiction but one characterized by a rapidly transforming professional environment. The group's activism resonated with the changed working conditions for Latino/a producers, including the deregulation of the broadcasting industries; a need and drive to professionalize and thus, following the logic of entertainment-dominated Hollywood, to move to the next level of more commercial formats such as narrative feature film (such as Treviño's soon to be made PBS American Playhouse production, 1982's *Seguín*) and, later, episodic television (as was the case with Treviño and Sylvia Morales). This strategy also met their needs to further disseminate their visions; yet, to appeal to a

¹¹¹ For instance in conjunction with their protest against the industry's proliferation of gang genre films, to be discussed later in this section.

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

broader public also required a more solid financial basis. At the same time, I argue that the dialog with New Latin American Cinema provided with them with a repository of language fit for their fight to infuse Hollywood with their own visions – a repository which, as I will show, has been tapped not only by the CCC but also by other groups such as Cine Acción, and one which to some extent (namely, selectively) has continued to inspire U.S. Latino/a film activists to this day. The CCC's presence and validation at platforms such as Havana enabled them to enhance their symbolic capital vis-à-vis Hollywood and internationally. For this reason, I will continue by way of a detour into the New Latin American Cinema; its early goals and platforms; and then look at some points of convergence and at differences, also with the CCC's "Notes on Chicano Cinema."

1.4 Impact of New Latin American Cinema: Repository of language, empowering alliances

New Latin American Cinema is a collective term for the vibrant and often oppositional political cinemas that surfaced in early 1950s' Latin America in "respon[se] to the climates and political crises that prevailed across the continent" (Pick 1994:1), seeing their first peak in the late 1960s. Encompassing as different formations as "the filmmakers of the Documentary School of Santa Fé (Argentina), the Ukamau Group (Bolivia), the *cinema novo* (Brazil), as well as those of revolutionary Cuba and others in Colombia, Chile and Uruguay and Venezuela (1)," New Latin American Cinema "sought committed ways to use film as an instrument of social awareness" (1).

Of particular significance to my study is that in New Latin American Cinema, film festivals played a central role as they enabled networking, community-building, the exchange of ideas and definition of common agendas. Moreover, film festivals frequently provided a safe meeting ground for participants from politically shaken up countries. Not only were the U.S. Latino/a filmmakers later to be involved in Havana able to benefit from these aspects; the communal spirit also had a model character for U.S. Latino/a film festivals, such as those of CineFestival and Cine Acción's "Women of the Americas" festival and its subsequent ¡Cine Latino! festivals. The festivals in question were based in Europe¹¹² and later also in the Americas, such as Chile's Festival Internacional de Cine de Viña del Mar (FICViña) in 1967 and 1969 and Mérida, Venezuela's First Encounter of Documentary Film (1968) (cf. Pick 21; 23) and Havana (since 1979). In fact, with regard to the late 1950s and early 1960s, Zuzana Pick has argued that the early New Latin American Cinema's validation¹¹³ by way of its success in the international festival circuit and with international film criticism was essential both to filmmakers' political and artistic self-positioning and to the "founding of a new Latin American film canon" (17).

Moreover, one key aim of New Latin American Cinema was the "establish[ment of] a distinctive vocabulary (22)" such as by means of a number of seminal manifestos. Zuzana Pick points out that

filmmakers viewed cinema as an ideological agent and rejected standard assumptions about film-

¹¹² One example is the International Festival of New Cinema in Pesaro, Italy, where Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas's *The Hour of the Furnaces* (1968) caused an uproar at its premiere (Pick 1994 21 ff.).

¹¹³ That said, key protagonists of the movement such as Cuba's Julio García Espinosa soon became critical of established film criticism and its putative imperialist repercussions. In his manifesto, *For an Imperfect Cinema* (1969), he asks: "Why should we worry about their accolades? Isn't the goal of public recognition a part of the rules of the artistic game? When it comes to artistic culture, isn't European recognition equivalent to worldwide recognition?" (García Espinosa 2005 (1979); no pag.).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

making as nonpartisan activity, as entertainment. At the same time, filmmakers adopted terms such as “third cinema,” “imperfect cinema,” and “aesthetics of hunger,” taken from manifestos written by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, Julio García Espinosa, and Glauber Rocha respectively. Although these terms originated within specific contexts and nationalist options, they were used as all-encompassing categories, capable of accounting for the ideological and aesthetic characteristics of the movement. (22)

Here, for U.S. Latino/a film activists in search of a language of their own, New Latin American Cinema’s early, radical, “polemi[c]” writings, typically revolving around “terms such as *imperialism* and *decolonization*” (22, the author’s italics) were particularly inspirational; in fact, Cine Acción took its very name from one such manifesto.¹¹⁴ At the same time, such appropriations were by necessity eclectic, matching their own respective political ends and socio-political situation in the U.S., which, after all, varied greatly from that of their Latin American counterparts – such as the militant activists of Argentina’s Third Cinema, who had produced some of their early films in the political underground, or the film workers of Fidel Castro’s Cuba, having established its own Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematográficos (ICAIC; Cuban Film Institute) with the onset of the revolution. Nevertheless, U.S. Latino/a film activists from the 1970s – and, as I will show in my analysis, in the decades to follow – time and again have been attracted by the educational fervor of these early manifestos and their drive “to develop the taste of the masses” (García Espinosa 2005, no pag.); New Latin American Cinema’s advocacy of alternative ways for exhibition and distribution would particularly resonate with Cine Acción in regard to its establishment of a media archive and early 1990s itinerant Cineteca screenings. Furthermore, U.S. Latino/a activists tapped New Latin American Cinema’s iconoclast demands for a new, “imperfect” cinematic language to critically review their position vis-à-vis the industry. With regard to the Los Angeles based activists of the CCC, Chon A. Noriega has shown that this point took on a special urgency since “[...] Hollywood constituted the U.S. film and television industry, one from which they remained excluded, except as stereotypes.” (Noriega 2000: 161) U.S. Latino/a media activists thus readily embraced New Latin American Cinema’s scathing critique of bourgeois and Hollywood cinema, if sometimes strategically, namely, in order to advance their own demands for access. Thus, the CCC organized several protests against Hollywood made gang films and television productions, including Michael Pressman’s *Boulevard Nights* (1979) and lobbied for the inclusion of Latinos/as-Chicanos/as into the (state funded) programs of the American Film Institute (AFI) (Noriega 2000: 158ff.).

In general, many different Latino/a groups throughout the country tapped New Latin American Cinema’s language of militancy in their retaliation against Hollywood’s biased portrayal of minorities. Lillian Jiménez (1996) has likened 1970s’ Puerto Rican cinema’s struggle against stereotypes to a “war” where “*images* were a potent and vital weapon” (22; italics in the original); this is an almost a word by word quotation of Getino & Solanas’ famous simile (1969), according to which “[t]he camera is the **inexhaustible expropriator of image-weapons**; the projector, **a gun that can shoot 24 frames per second**” (127, emphasis in the original).

¹¹⁴ Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas’s *Towards a Third Cinema* (1969) in ways to be discussed in a later section.

1.4.1 Convergences, diverging paths

All the while, U.S. Latino/a filmmakers' affinity for New Latin American Cinema's early militant and revolutionary language was also based on the fact that New Latin American cinema in the 1970s and '80s saw massive consolidation trends, which made it more difficult for U.S. Latinos/as to draw parallels to their own situation. These trends were the result of developments including the gradual strengthening of national film industries, despite numerous setbacks due to political inconsistencies, totalitarianism, and economic crises; activists' creation of alternative channels of distribution and other professional associations,¹¹⁵ among them the Foundation of New Latin American Cinema (Havana, 1985), which in turn established the Film and Television School of the Three Worlds at San Antonio de los Baños in 1968 (Pick 1993: 32); exchange and the negotiation of shared goals at arenas such as international film festivals; and not least of all, the rise and recognition of diasporic cinemas,¹¹⁶ which also strengthened the presence of political Latin American cinema internationally.

Among these developments, with regard to the situation of Latinos/as and their marginalized role in U.S. film production, the increased establishment and protection of Latin America's national film industries was one particularly important point. While in the 1950s, it had often been difficult for Latin American filmmakers to find distribution back home despite success in the international festival circuit,¹¹⁷ in the early 1960s "[n]ational governments began responding to the lobbying of producers, distributors, and exhibitors, and protective legislation was instituted to revitalize fledgling industries of Argentina (1962), Brazil (1961), and Mexico (1960)" (Pick 1994: 18). Of course, these protective measures were to no small degree directed against Hollywood. Even though individual national histories unfolded differently, most of Latin America followed suit in creating similar supportive structures. There was also the unique case of Cuba, whose "Cuban Film Institute [ICAIC, since 1959] provided a relatively stable environment for the creative development of the movement's only socialist cinema, to which the years after 1969 brought a relative thematic and stylistic diversification" (Pick 1994: 28). And Mexico, another particularly relevant reference point for U.S. Latino/a filmmakers, saw a "nationalization of the film industry (under the aegis of the National Bank of Cinematography)" (28) – even though state support tended to be somewhat volatile since it was subjected to current government policy; the two year delay in distribution of Jesús S. Treviño's pioneering narrative feature, *Raíces de Sangre* (1978), financially supported by the Mexican government, was one example for how cultural policies issued under the presidency of Luis Echeverría Álvarez (1970-76) inspired an "author-oriented production [...] until succeeding policies devastated the gains made between 1971 and 1976" (29).¹¹⁸ That said, Zuzana Pick has pointed out the overall "important strategical effects"

¹¹⁵ Other examples include FEDALC – Federación de Distribuidoras Alternativas de América Latina y el Caribe, created in Havana in 1985 and ACLA – Asociación Cinematográfica Latinoamericana, created in Cartagena, Colombia in 1984 (Pick 1993: 32).

¹¹⁶ Needless to say that these cinemas owed their existence to the tragic political upheavals of their day. Pick has emphasized the particular significance of Chilean diasporic cinema (28).

¹¹⁷ One example is Argentina. Pick writes that "[f]ilmmakers from the Argentine *nueva ola* [new wave ...] were forced to recognize that European and North American critical approval after the release of their first features did not automatically guarantee either widespread critical acceptance or financial success at home. Although production was backed by protective legislation by the Fondizi regime, this movement faced a variety of problems. *Los inundados* (Fernando Birri, Argentina, 1962), for instance, received an award in Venice, but its distribution was limited by a system unfavorable to nationally produced films" (17).

¹¹⁸ The film will be discussed at more length in conjunction with RRAFF's awards politics in the respective chapter.

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

(29) of government involvement in New Latin American Cinema of the 1970s and later, effects of which are still felt today, despite the ups and downs faced by individual national film economies:

To the extent that film legislation was established, the lobbying efforts of filmmakers – motivated by political rather than financial considerations – were finally paying off. Monetary incentives and funds reallocated by taxation of box-office revenue benefited national producers. Resources for film production (including publicity), made available through private investors, streamlined the financial base of cinema and contributed to increase production. Although screens were still occupied by foreign films, national films gained audience exposure through exhibition quotas. Independent filmmakers worked within a more or less solid production and distribution infrastructure. (29)

Another important development was the way Havana had emerged as a pre-eminent site of what in festival terminology has been called “rigid agenda-setting processes” (de Valck & Loist 2009: 182), having taken over from older Latin American film festivals such as FICViña (on a lengthy hold due to the military dictatorship). Havana became a cornerstone in the consolidation of New Latin American Cinema, in the course of which filmmakers attempted to “strengthen existing pan-continental organizations (and to establish new ones)” (Pick 1994: 31) – and this also included ties to Chicano/a-Latino/a film activism. Here, Havana was to assume an important function as role model for U.S. Latino/a film festivals and partner particularly to CineFestival and the festivals of Cine Acción in the 1980s. In fact, as early as in the 1960s and 1970s, enduring relations had been established between Chicano/a and Latin American film activists.¹¹⁹ In 1978, the Latin American Filmmakers Committee (C-CAL) issued a statement declaring both its solidarity with the struggle of Chicano Cinema and their shared Latin American roots as well as its determination to help with the “dissemination of their films, their experiences, and their struggles” (162), which then became a reality at Havana.

For Chicano/a-Latino/a filmmakers, the relationship with Havana signaled their navigation of an increasingly international sphere,¹²⁰ particularly in the Spanish speaking world, and here, their “increased awareness of and attention to the international film market and festival circuit” (162). Noriega has shown that early Havana served an “important symbolic role in doubling the ‘location’ of Chicano cinema, making it into a movement that was at once reformist and revolutionary” (164): While the relationship to communist Cuba served as an alignment to radical cinema, it also provided additional leverage to Chicano/a activists’ demands for visibility and access and their ambitions to change the system from within. (That said, Havana’s support of Chicano/a cinema obviously also served its own anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist agenda.) Chicano/a film earned considerable recognition at the festival, including awards for Treviño’s *Raíces de Sangre* (winner of best feature script) and a specially curated Chicano/a film showcase (Noriega 2000: 162). Noriega has also observed that Chicano/a cinema¹²¹ was promoted to a national category during Havana’s early stages as it more or less solely

¹¹⁹ From the 1970s on, Jesús S. Treviño had been involved in the Comité de Cineastas de América Latina (Latin American Filmmakers Committee or C-CAL for short; Noriega 2000:161) instrumental to the creation of Havana. Moreover, he was also appointed its U.S. representative by the board of the Cuban-based Fundación del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano (Foundation of New Latin American Cinema, since 1985), a position that he has held ever since.

¹²⁰ Already in 1979, right after Havana’s inauguration, Johansen had noted Chicano/a cinema’s increased presence in the national and international film festival circuit – mentioned were CineFestival; Mexico City, and Havana (Johansen 2001: 303).

¹²¹ That said, other Latino/a filmmakers were also present, notably Puerto Rican documentary filmmaker Raquel Ortíz.

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

represented U.S. film production. However, I argue that Chicano/a-Latino/a cinema's triumphs in the international film festival circuit obviously could not make up for its underrepresentation back home. This is one central point that has taken on a continued urgency in regard to U.S. Latino/a film festivals' programming politics, particularly in regard to Hollywood based LALIFF, where the asymmetry between nationally subsidized cinema from Latin America and often more humble productions from the U.S. is most blatant.

Moreover, with New Latin American Cinema's own roots in the class struggle, there were important differences, too, in regard to U.S. Latinos/as' identity politics and its conceptualization of ethnicity as a critical category; and much more so with regard to the intersectional activism of Cine Acción, as I will discuss in conjunction both with its all-women festival and an all-women conference hosted at the Colegio de Estudios de la Frontera Norte (COLEF) in Tijuana, Mexico, featuring filmmakers and film scholars from Mexico and the U.S.¹²² To be sure, these differences had been anticipated by leading thinkers of New Latin American Cinema, who attempted "to regulate the movement's diversity through support of new agendas and negotiation of complex infrastructural ambiguities" (31). To this end, the term *mestizaje* had been employed by the movement as a community building tool and "powerful symbol of solidarity" (31). Zuzana Pick cites ICAIC founding director Alfredo Guevara, who, on the occasion of Havana's first edition, claimed that "[i]t is in that creole culture, born of the '*mestizaje*' of ancient civilizations that converged precisely at the moment of their utmost splendor, that the New American Cinema grounds its roots" (Guevara 1980: 9; quoted in Pick 1993:31; my italics). Guevara's usage of *mestizaje* (also corresponding to its Portuguese equivalent, *mestizagem*) continued in the vein of long-standing traditions when the term had been strategically reinvented as a means for celebration in conjunction with various Latin American nation building projects (for instance, those of Brazil and Mexico) thus shedding older, pejorative, early colonialist connotations, when – as Rowe and Schelling (1991) remind us – it stood for "the miscegenation of Spanish and Indians [sic]" (18, quoted in Pick 1993: 127). However, *mestizaje*'s affirmative yet somewhat uncritical usage was not unproblematic; Pick has argued that "without an analysis of power structures, [*mestizaje*] becomes an ideology of racial harmony which obscures the actual holding of power by a particular group" (Rowe & Schelling 1991: 18, quoted in Pick 1993: 127) and in fact has shown that this blind spot had been retained in much of New Latin American Cinema up until the publication of her own study (1993) even though some filmmakers, notably, Cubans and Brazilians,¹²³ had indeed addressed "cultural difference" (Pick 1993:126).

In sum, particularly in the 1970s and '80s, New Latin American Cinema has been an empowering ideological resource for U.S. Latino/a film activism. All the while, there are important differences in regard to the development of Latin America's national film industries, their definition of film as patrimony and the subsequent, if sometimes volatile, support of national filmmakers on the one hand and

¹²² Festival: "Women of the Americas in Film and Video," various locations, San Francisco-Berkeley 1988; Conference: "Cruzando Fronteras: Encuentro de Mujeres Cineastas y Videoastas Latinas: México-Estado Unidos," at the Colegio de la Frontera Norte (COLEF), Tijuana, Baja California, in 1990. To be discussed in the Bay Area analysis chapter.

¹²³ "By the late 1970s and into the 1980s Brazilian and Cuban filmmakers, in particular, had begun to advocate a need to review historical and cultural elements belonging to racially distinct groups that have contributed to the shaping of collective identities." (Pick 1993:126). This group also includes Jorge Sanjinés (Bolivia) and Marta Rodríguez (Colombia). I will return to some examples in my discussion of Cine Acción's "Women of the Americas in Film and Video" film festival (1988) in the Bay Area analysis chapter.

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

Latin American cinema's recognition in international arenas on the one hand, which also breached new forms of solidarity and support. While New Latin American Cinema's celebration of *mestizaje* for the most part did not interrogate the traditional ways "the ideology of *mestizaje* / *mesticagem* democracy has been one in which the structure of racial chauvinism has been 'inscribed but indiscernible; embedded but intangible; urgent but untouchable (Goldberg 2009: 237, quoted in Kirschner 2012: 32), U.S. Latinos/as have based their demands for participation in the film industries on their underrepresentation as an ethnic minority. As Jesús S. Treviño put it in our interview from 2010, "if you live in Mexico, your patrimony is the Mexican film industry. Here, you would think, our patrimony is the U.S. film industry; but the fact is we have been excluded for so long."

1.5 The location of Chicano Cinema, or: "Notes on Chicano Cinema" (Johansen 1979)

I want to end my observations on CCC and its relationship with New Latin American Cinema by way of a brief discussion of "Notes on Chicano Cinema" (1979, reprinted 1992), a key text highlighting Chicano/a cinema's situation at a crossroads facing a rapidly changing media landscape impacting professional opportunities and funding structures; socio-economically diversifying audiences; and a professionalizing enclave of Latino/a-Chicano/a media workers. Johansen's suggestion Chicano/a cinema turn to narrative formats and (albeit cautiously) to the industry anticipates 1980s "Hispanic Hollywood" and acknowledges the fact that New Latin American Cinema, too, had outgrown its more radical roots. At the same time, the text's cautioning against Hollywood's entertainment ideology resonates with New Latin American Cinema's similar such warnings against a "cinema of mystification or anti-historicism" and "surplus value cinema" (Getino & Solanas 1969:108).

Thus, in his search for "the function" (303) of Chicano/a Cinema, Johansen cites Treviño's assessment of Chicano/a cinema as a "response" (303) to stereotypical politics of representation, which resonates with the group's focus on media advocacy. However, while acknowledging early Chicano/a cinema's important educational function for the late 1960s/early 1970s *movimiento* and as trajectory both of "nationalism and the fomenting of ethnic pride" (304), Johansen also points out that the community has diversified in terms of class/income/education and that Chicano/a film's imagined community, which is also a project of solidarity, transcends boundaries of citizenship. On the one hand, he notes the emergence of a liberal middle class, one of "Chicano politicians, businessmen, and professionals [...] indicative of the success of the movement" (304); on the other hand, cultural producers, "Chicanos [...] increasingly looking at the exploited working class (witness the undocumented workers) as a symptom of larger problems: socioeconomic relations between the U.S. and Mexico and even between the U.S. and Latin America" (304).

Johansen takes these observations as a point of departure in order to argue in favor of long narrative formats as suitable vehicles for an "alternative cinema." All the while, in their emphasis both on film's educational possibilities and community involvement, and their anti-Hollywood, anti-consumerist attitude, the manifest's proposed criteria bears parallels to the legacy of early stage, more militant forms of New Latin American Cinema:

Bringing the filmmaking process to the community and soliciting its involvement places in its

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

hands a powerful communicative tool, a tool which allows the expression of a people's perspective, concerns, and reality. Chicanos need not be awed by a medium which has traditionally been kept out of their hands but of whose products they remain consumers. (305)

There are some resemblances to key texts like "Towards a Third Cinema" (1968) and the way it "[sought] its own liberation in the subordination and insertion in the others, the principal protagonists of life" (130, emphasis in the original). These points correspond to Johansen's advocacy of a "decolonization of minds (305)." Here, the issue for Chicano/a cinema is "not only [to] reaffirm its respective culture but identify the false values and ideology delivered through the media" (305ff.); Johansen calls for films that are "[r]eflective and open-ended" as opposed to the happy endings of Hollywood's entertainment logic, films which instead contribute to an "altering of consciousness" and the "effect[ing] of social change" (306).

Also considering Chicano/a film producers' ongoing "limited access to the means of productions, particularly capital (304), the text culminates in making the case for a new chapter in Chicano/a cinema. In a manner underscoring CCC's at once pragmatic and radical stance, Johansen argues that it will be necessary for Chicanos/as to "look (as they have been)¹²⁴ more to the established industries of Hollywood, Mexico, and, possibly, Cuba" in order to be able to create longer narrative formats and thus reach more encompassing audiences (304). (In this context, Johansen also notes the demise of the construct of the "independent" filmmaker.)

"Notes on Chicano Cinema" was written just one year after the theatrical release of Jesús S. Treviño's Mexican-made narrative feature, *Raíces de Sangre*, and with the production of the first ever Latino/a film made in Hollywood, Luis Valdez's *Zoot Suit*, only two years ahead, which then took the negotiations between cultural specificity and the ambition to conquer more encompassing audiences – the creation of crossover potential – to new levels. Not least of all, "Notes on Chicano Cinema" also points to the vital role of festivals both in support of their filmmaking constituencies in regard to professional enhancement, for education and exchange, and for the celebration of *latinidad*.

1.6 CineFestival (since 1976). Challenges of professionalization

1.6.1 Profile: Beginnings and politics of place

San Antonio, Texas's CineFestival is the oldest Latino/a film festival in the U.S. The festival was founded by Adán Medrano, a filmmaker and former seminarian. Through Medrano, the festival possessed institutional ties to Oblate Southwest College, a Roman Catholic university, where he then served in the capacity of associate director to its fund-raising and development office (Adán Medrano Personal Blog). Eventually, in 1984, CineFestival became part of San Antonio's Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center (GCAC), a Latino/a identified cultural arts organization founded three years earlier.¹²⁵

Due to its geographic situation in the U.S. Southwest, there are demographic and historical similarities between CineFestival's local Latino/a communities and those in California. First, the collective

¹²⁴ An allusion to Treviño's *Raíces de Sangre* (Mexico 1978).

¹²⁵ GCAC is one of the earliest Latino/a arts organizations in the U.S. It was founded by a multi-disciplinary cultural activist group, Performance Artists' Nucleus (PAN), in 1980 (guadalupeculturalarts.org).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

memory both of double colonization and the not-too-far removed history of a *de facto* segregation experienced by its Chicano/a constituencies.¹²⁶ Second, there is the city's relative proximity to the U.S.-Mexican border, particularly by Texan "bigger 'n' better" standards.¹²⁷ Third, there is a pervasive cultural and demographic Chicano/a / Tejano/a presence. In fact, the latter contributed to a specific political climate which had already made it a stronghold of the La Raza Unida Party (LRUP) shortly before CineFestival's creation. LRUP had operated in several Southwestern states but with particular success in Texas from the early to the mid-seventies,¹²⁸ characterized by a stance at once pragmatic, radical, and ethno-nationalist, "combin[ing] civil rights organizing techniques and Alinsky¹²⁹ methods with a heavy component of ethnic regional pride, which passed off as 'nationalism'" (Gómez-Quiñones 1990: 130). Its extensive voter base spanned "the lower middle class, and students" as well as "some workers and older citizens" (Gómez-Quiñones 1990: 130). An important mouthpiece of the Chicano Movement, LRUP had also been portrayed by CineFestival long-time supporter Jesús S. Trevino in *La Raza Unida* (Video, PBS 1972). The party's success and its ethno-nationalist and potentially transnational agenda had not gone unnoticed on the other side of the border, where it aroused the interest of Mexican president Echeverría Alvarez (J. S. Treviño Interview 2011; see also Gómez-Quiñones 1990: 182ff.). As we remember, he also sponsored Treviño's first feature, *Raíces de Sangre*, which pursues a similar focus on trans-border solidarity among factory workers, based on common ethnic "roots" and a shared experience of exploitation.

1.6.2 Organizational development

From an organizational perspective, the move to GCAC in 1984 was felicitous in many respects because of the sharing of resources, including the visibility of year-round events and the publication of CineFestival's festival agenda in GCAC's own newsletter, *Tonantzín* (until 2000). In 1983, the partnership with GCAC also included a shift in leadership, with Eduardo Díaz being the next in a steady succession of festival directors. Considering CineFestival's longevity and its prestige in the U.S. Latino/a festival network, its flow of festival associates¹³⁰ (potentially inspirational yet a considerable challenge to organizational stability and festival identity) was balanced by its institutional ties to GCAC and put it at an advantage when compared to other organizations, such as the Bay's Cine Acción. Meanwhile, GCAC further qualified the festival's rootedness in a particular politics of place. GCAC's rank "among the nation's first Chicano organizations to collaborate with Mexican artists and cultural institutions" (guadalupeculturalarts.org) underscores an emphasis not only on celebrating Mexican American communities but also on branding GCAC's *Tejano/a-Mexicanidad*. This latter strategy also resonated with San Antonio's upwardly mobile, middle class constituencies proudly

¹²⁶ Even though the Mexican origin population is the largest non-white constituency in Texas, similar experiences were shared by its Native American, African American and Asian American inhabitants.

¹²⁷ The closest border town, Laredo, is only about 160 miles away – only some twenty miles more than the distance between Los Angeles and San Ysidro, California.

¹²⁸ LRUP had a special relationship with the Lone Star State, where its beginnings can be traced back to *El Plan de la Raza Unida* (1967), drafted in El Paso (cf. Gómez-Quiñones 1990: 131) LRUP was particularly successful in the 1972 the state elections when it "dr[ew] nearly 215,000 votes (6.5 percent of the total vote) for the governorship and seventeen elected positions; then decline set in and dissent developed" (135), leading to LRUP's gradual fading into insignificance after the mid-1970s.

¹²⁹ Community organizer Saul Alinsky, whose manifesto *Rules for Radicals* (1971) called for the "pragmatic radical."

¹³⁰ Among later directors/co-directors are filmmakers-arts administrators Jim Mendiola and Ray Santisteban, whose ties to Cine Acción will be discussed in the analysis chapter dedicated to Bay Area Latino/a film festivals.

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

embracing their Tejano/a heritage; a leading figure of the time, Henry Cisneros, a Democrat and San Antonio's mayor between 1981 and 1989 perhaps best expressed the city's spirit of cultural revival and the crossover potential, as it were, of Mexican culture in this minority majority city that would increasingly endear the festival also to non-Latino/a constituencies.¹³¹ In his time as mayor, Cisneros would repeatedly endorse CineFestival, such as in the 1981 edition (Cisneros 1981 Catalog [7]).

CineFestival has remained one of the most important Latino/a film festivals in the U.S. despite the rise of eventually bigger festivals in the 1990s. This was also due to the fact that along with Cine Acción's festivals, through its catalog contributions and conferences, CineFestival was one of the most important such events for emerging Chicano/a-Latino/a identified film scholarship.¹³² Its duration has become relatively stable, five days in the 1990s (such as in 1997 or 1998) to four in the 2010s, such as in the its 2018 edition (cf. CineFestival 1997, 1998, for 2018, guadalupeculturalarts/cinefestival.org). The association with GCAC has possibly also curtailed its growth into a bigger, more star-driven event both in greater need of corporate sponsorship and more vulnerable to economic upheaval such as the 2008 crash. Instead, CineFestival has been consistent as to its focus both on the city's large Latino/a communities as well as on nurturing filmmakers, including its partnership with Sundance Institute for its Latino Screenwriting Project (latinoscreenwritingproject.com).

¹³¹ Juan Gómez-Quiñones (1990), who calls Cisneros' mayorship a "[m]ajor achievement" for a politics advancing the interests of Chicano/a communities, has described Cisneros' career in the 1970s and '80s in ways I see as paradigmatic of the rise Chicano/a-Latino/a middle class (or rising self-confidence, considering the city's long-standing Mexican American middle class). His observations invite – cautious – comparisons to GCAC's and CineFestival's establishment to a broader, more heterogeneous audience base: Initially "benefit[ing] from the repeated efforts at mobilization [...] in San Antonio, [...] he succeeded in forming coalitions that joined [his] ethnic base with progrowth business interests and middle class white liberals." (171) Characteristically, Cisneros is also described as "well-educated, articulate, and attractive politician who [is] also more conservative than liberal" (171). Cisneros later was to become Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (1993-97) in the Clinton administration.

¹³² For instance, CineFestival 1993 saw the participation of Chicano/a film scholars Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Chon A. Noriega, of Cuban American anthropologist José Piedra, media activist José Luis Ruiz (filmmaker and long-time National Latino Communications Center director) and of Cine Acción board members and future festival organizers Jennifer Maytorena Taylor and Gina Hernández ("CineFestival 1993 Flyer"). Without being able to discuss these contributions in detail – which call for a study in their own right – an overview provides insights into the festival's pioneering force and broad range of issues covered by its outlets, characteristic also of the festivals of Cine Acción and also to be emulated by early, 1990s SDLFF. Thus, the 1993 festival – which should also be noted for its tributes not only to Anthony Quinn but also Lupe Ontiveros, at a time when the achievements of Chicana-Latina actresses were often eclipsed by "Hispanic Hollywood"'s centering on male subjectivities and stardom, in its catalog featured a number of essays by the new generation of Latino/a media scholars and artists: Rosa Linda Fregoso's excerpt from her ground-breaking study on Chicano/a cinema (the second monography after Keller 1992), *The Bronze Screen*, which saw its release that same year (Fregoso 1993: 32-33); Chon A. Noriega, on Latin media and citizenship in the 1990s (Noriega 1993:34-35); and a contribution by Latina media artist Sandra Sarmiento Peña, a self-ascribed *pocha* (a performative embrace of the traditionally negative epithet *pocha/a*, used by Mexicans for culturally "watered down" Mexican Americans), sounding a "[r]ally call for *pocha* filmmakers" and calling for Latina cultural activists' need for a "re-deconstruction". She claims that "[w]e cannot turn away from our community – nor can we embrace it. We must carve our own non-space or not; taking with us our more useful cultural remnants and moving on to create new ones. We must wipe words like 'sacred' and 'martyr' from our minds, building as we tear down – recreating, reclaiming, renouncing the past, present and future" (Peña Sarmiento 1993: 36-37).

1.6.3 Negotiation of festival identity: Ethnic, pan-ethnic, and transnational repercussions

CineFestival's roots both in Chicano/a film activism and in a distinctive Tejano/a politics of place have been the point of departure for a self-definition which over the years has become increasingly non-essentializing with strong transnational repercussions. Here, CineFestival's changing designations indicate a development from a Chicano/a perspective to a more encompassing, pan-ethnic imagined community: In addition to "CineFestival," it was initially known as San Antonio: Annual Chicano Film Festival (1970s); then as International Hispanic Film Festival (early 1980s). Since 1982, it has been known simply as CineFestival (Noriega 2000: 146; J. S. Treviño Interview 2010).

One of the most long-standing supporters is filmmaker and activist Jesús S. Treviño, actually an El Paso native. According to Treviño, in the late 1970s, festival director Medrano could be persuaded towards envisioning a more encompassing festival identity (cf. also Noriega 1992; J.S. Treviño Interview 2010). It was also through Treviño's involvement with Havana¹³³ that CineFestival developed ties to the world renowned film festival – despite occasional resistance of the city's more conservative politicians.¹³⁴ CineFestival thus increased its focus both on national and transnational Latino/a film, such as in 1984, when the four day-festival featured Mexican independent film; U.S. Latino/a film; and film from Brazil, Cuba, Nicaragua, Spain, El Salvador, and Puerto Rico and Guatemala (CineFestival 1984, no pag.), or in 1986, when a nine-day festival edition was dedicated to New Latin American Cinema, featuring films from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, and Puerto Rico (as reported in the special festival issue by GCAC's own *Tonantzín* 4(1), November 1986). The fruitful exchange between CineFestival and Havana also helped promoting the career of Graciela I. Sánchez, a San Antonio based filmmaker and LGBT activist, who, as participant in Havana's filmmaking program, made the documentary short *No Porque lo Diga Fidel Castro* (1988), a pioneering film on the taboo surrounding homosexuality in Latino/a / Latin American culture.¹³⁵

As I have stated earlier, for the purposes of this overview, I have had to limit my account of the festivals discussed in this chapter to some poignant examples from their much longer and complex histories, each of which is worthy of a more exhaustive study in its own right. With regard to CineFestival, I will focus on its early days in the late 1970s look at the evolvment into a filmmaker's festival envisioning a more encompassing Latino/a identity. I will then look at its short phase of re-orientation in the early 1980s, namely, a two-year period in a more commercial environment (1981-82), happening when the advent of the more commercial Latino/a feature film (Hispanic Hollywood) demanded more professional outlets.

¹³³ Treviño had been involved in the creation of the festival and represented the U.S. as part of the honorary board of the transnational non profit association of New Latin American Cinema, the Fundación del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano.

¹³⁴ As Treviño said, in the early 1980s, later CineFestival director, Eduardo Díaz, had invited some Cuban film makers which led one of the city councilmen to demand a defunding of the festival. This was when other U.S. filmmakers came to the support of the festival, demanding San Antonio be "bigger than this," that freedom of speech was vital and that they needed to hear all sides. Subsequently, the threat was averted, while the aforementioned councilman was later indicted for embezzlement (J.S. Treviño Interview 2010).

¹³⁵ In an interview with Loretta Ross, Sánchez credited an associate from GCAC with telling her about the opportunity provided by Havana's soon to be founded Escuela Internacional del Cine y Television (Ross 2005: 38).

1.6.4 Early CineFestival: Arena for filmmakers

In the 1970s and into the early 1980s, Cine Festival transitioned from an agenda closely focused on the Chicano/a experience to a more inclusive imagined Latino/a community with transnational repercussions. As festival director Adán Medrano wrote in his welcome editorial to the second festival in 1977:

The festival is dedicated to those filmmakers and video artists who have given powerful yet sensitive

expression to the Chicano and Chicana experience. Hombres y mujeres de nuestra comunidad han logrado desarrollar un arte nuevo [men and women of our community have been able to develop a new art, A.R.]: Chicano film and video. This new type of film projects an image of an energetic people on the move towards the horizons of the twentieth century. A new century marked by the creative contribution of Chicano culture which ennobles the principles of humane justice and love. (Medrano 1977: [7])

Thus, the festival was not only intended for a local Chicano/a community but explicitly aimed to provide a forum for both local and national Chicano filmmakers in a combined effort to disseminate new images and “celebrat[e] [...] Chicano life as expressed in film” and present “an opportunity for critically analyzing the ‘state of the art’ of Chicano film making” (“Film Festival and Story,” CineFestival 1977 Catalog [3]). The relative diversity of Chicano/a film production in terms both of genres and production – and with it, the multifacetedness of the Chicano/a-Latino/a experience – was acknowledged by the festival from its early stages onwards. Accordingly, film and video submissions – the catalog mentions “[o]ver fifty” – had come “from TV stations, Universities [sic], film production companies and independent filmmakers” (ibid.). In fact, the second edition consisted of altogether twelve showcases; among them a number of films considered classics of Chicano/a made and themed film today, such as Severo Pérez’s *Cristal* and *Guadalupe*, José Luis Ruiz’s adaptation of El Teatro de la Esperanza’s play. The inclusion of film made by non-Chicanos/as speaks to the way “Chicano/a” even then was considered a relatively open and non-essentializing category that also considered the inclusion of respectful and quality contributions by non-Chicanos/as, as the inclusion of Les Blank’s *Chulas Fronteras* implies. In a move that further underscored its educational agenda, the program also acknowledged contributions to children’s programs by programming of an episode from PBS’s *Infinity Factory*, described as “a new mathematical series targeted to Black and Latino children” (CineFestival 1977: [15]). CineFestival even featured a what is considered a mainstay at most festivals today, namely, a youth component consisting of outtakes from videos produced by local high school students.

CineFestival’s commitment to film activism and nurture inspired recurring educational and professional enhancement programs for its filmmaking constituencies; initially, by way of symposia among experts, later, featuring participation oriented workshops.¹³⁶ Furthermore – and thus promoting a programming politics ahead of its time in its acknowledgement of the growing presence of Lati-

¹³⁶ Sometimes these events were joined by eminent figure from other fields of cultural production, serving as role models. In 1977 CineFestival invited pioneering Texan born writer and scholar Tomás Rivera, author of *...Y No Se Lo Tragó La Tierra* (1971).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

nas in film production and their many contributions to the more encompassing field of audio-visual media – CineFestival 1979 dedicated one of its two symposia to Latinas in film and media. Here, it featured panelists Margarita Galbán (stage actress and director; and Spanish language advisor at *Villa Alegre*, a bilingual PBS children’s program), Carmen Tafolla (locally based writer/poet, scholar, and head writer for bilingual PBS children’s program, *Sonrisas*), Leticia Ponce (editor and host for Los Angeles based public television station, KNBC), Grace Castro Nagata (scriptwriter, producer, and media activist; co-founder of the Latino Media Resource Center, Inc., Los Angeles), Marcela Fernández Violante (filmmaker and film scholar, Mexico City), and CCC’s Sylvia Morales (filmmaker and producer, Los Angeles and director of the first-ever documentary on La Chicana, 1979’s eponymous *Chicana*) (CineFestival 1979 Catalog [9-10]). The involvement of professionals working in public media was particularly important too since they provided the prime platform for early Latino/a made film. The festival also screened Lourdes Portillo’s milestone yet, at the time, somewhat controversial experimental narrative short, her début *Después del Terremoto / After the Earthquake* (1979) (CineFestival 1979 Catalog [11]). Here, the festival’s enablement of encounter and understanding among different, competing voices in a rapidly diversifying Latino/a-Chicano/a film community becomes apparent: Portillo was to contrast the the negative reactions by her Angeleno/a colleagues to the film¹³⁷ and emphasized the contrasting positive, “wonderful” review written by CCC’s Jason Johansen after its screening at CineFestival: “[...] it was very encouraging that somebody saw it with fresh eyes, without all the preconceived notions of what I should be doing” (Rich & Newman 2001:58).

1.6.5 Turning point cultural affirmation / commerce: Going “Hispanic International” (1980-82)

Initially, CineFestival had been balancing the aims of serving its local and filmmaking constituencies by creating a reception environment that enabled the affirmation and contestation of Latino/a culture; at the same time, it was promoting the exhibition of Latino/a-Chicano/a made and themed film as well as its filmmaking stakeholders. The early 1980s, however, signalled a turning point for CineFestival as it needed to adapt to a changing environment (Rüling 2009) both as to the overall commercialization of Latino/a film and its arenas and the related the professionalization trend among Latino/a filmmakers. As I will discuss later, the early 1980s promised new opportunities as a result of profound changes in the power structures of the studio system, allowing for the blooming of the independent and minority made productions. This trend coincided with the dawning era of so-called “Hispanic Hollywood” with its more expensive, long narrative formats, the involvement of studios, and the mainstreaming tendencies and detection of the Latino/a consumer.

In the following section I will discuss this turning point drawing on what incidentally may be one of the earliest examples of scholarship on the U.S. Latino/a film festival. In an article dating back to 1983, Chicano/a studies scholar Yolanda Broyles describes how CineFestival’s 1981 and 1982 editions sought to transform the festival’s identity by accommodating current professionalization, diversification and commercialization trends, thus redefining itself according to an arguably more

¹³⁷ With its departure from the documentary form and a perceived lack of interest in partisan politics Portillo’s film, a narrative short on a Nicaraguan immigrant, ran counter to her colleagues’ expectations (cf. Rich & Newman 2001: 58). The film focuses on a young woman living in San Francisco’s Mission District. Having gained a certain amount of financial independence, she is torn between the traditional female role envisioned by her relatives and newly arrived fiancé, Julio, and her striving for self-determination. .

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

streamlined, market compatible “Hispanic” profile tailored to corporate sponsors and a broader public. Both as a witness to its beginnings and as a Chicana scholar-activist, the author was partial to CineFestival’s impact on the city’s Mexican American audiences and to its educational and culturally affirming features. In this vein, she emphasizes the “considerable” success of earlier festival editions as to drawing in “the heart of the Chicano community,” noting how “the rare opportunity of experiencing cultural reinforcement through film [had been] readily seized” (Broyles 1993: 116). She also praises the “enthusiastic atmosphere” of the screenings, in particular regarding the opportunities for audiences to connect with Chicano/a films and filmmakers – an “achievement carr[ying] special significance in the city of San Antonio, a major center of Chicano population and culture” (117).

However, Broyles’ assessment of the festival’s continuation in the early 1980s is less favorable. By that time, CineFestival had relocated, re-shifted its priorities towards a more market-oriented image, and expanded the scope of films on show to allow for more diversity. One point of Broyles’ criticism addresses the festival’s more ambitious, businesslike orientation, which, she feels, had not always been accompanied by the necessary professionalism and organizational skills. With regard to the festival’s second such year (1981), she points to the way the premiere of Jesus S. Treviño’s historical drama, *Seguín* (officially released 1982) was marred since hosts seemingly paid more attention to the attending celebrity-driven reception than to technical details, such as an undersized projection screen. Likewise, as to CineFestival’s previous, 1980 edition, when the festival had offered professional workshops dealing with topics such as “distribution (mainstream), funding, financing, and buying,” she argues that these events “exhaust[ed] themselves in the description of hard-sell marketing techniques and financing strategies.” As a particularly low point she quotes one instructor’s words, according to which Chicanos/as “need[ed] to learn to sell Coca-Cola to our people through [their] own advertising” (Broyles 1993: 117). In regard to what she sees as CineFestival’s lack of connection to its politics of place, Broyles criticizes the change of location “out of barrio proximity and into the new and towering Marriott Hotel” (117), whose receptionists were unable to give directions and where doormen became likely “deterrent[s].” To Broyles, this is a sign of CineFestival’s being no longer attuned to the needs of local and blue-collar Chicano/a communities. Emphasizing San Antonio’s abundance of “historical buildings and in meeting space tailored to human needs,” she finds the festival’s relocation “to the alien atmosphere of the Marriott [...] indeed startling” (117). Along the same lines, Broyles also notes a more general lack of focus and festival identity. She sees CineFestival’s move from an ethnically specific and nationally bounded group term, Chicano, to the new adopted pan-ethnic, transnational “Annual International Hispanic Film Festival.” As indicative of a “vagueness [which] appears to be self-defeating” (118). Broyles distances herself from essentializing tendencies but criticizes “the concept of a Chicano film festival turned open house,” (117) also resulting in a curatorial relativism featuring

topics as unrelated as African woodwinds, Cuban salsa singers, the Indios of Ecuador, Black musicians such as Eliot Jordan and Papa John Creach, *los gamines* (street children) of Bogotá, sun-dried fruits, or films on ‘the habits, history and mores of Uruguay’ or ‘two detectives describing the different safety precautions that can be taken to prevent homes from being burglarized.’ (Broyles 1993:117)

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

I regard CineFestival's situation in the early 1980s as one of an intensified negotiation between competing logics of maintaining a distinct festival identity as a popular community event and the need to allow change in order to meet the demands of its environment. Broyles' account alerts us to some of the possible pitfalls of CineFestival's attempt to forge an identity as a festival and to reconcile the needs of its different stakeholders. In ways that contradict Broyles' position – who sees local communities as CineFestival's primary stakeholders¹³⁸ and who, as an academic and activist, is a festival stakeholder herself, involved as she is in making claims as to the festival's identity – I have shown that it has maintained a consistent focus on the needs of its filmmaking constituencies, perhaps even to the point of prioritizing on the latter. Films that were harbingers of the “Hispanic Hollywood Boom” (Baugh 2012) paradigm change, works like *Zoot Suit*, *Seguín*, as well as *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez* (1982, Robert M. Young) and *El Norte* (1983, Gregory Nava) with their commercial and crossover aspirations as well as their celebrity lure, required media buzz and showcases beyond the university and outdoor family screenings. CineFestival's multifaceted program – criticized by Broyles for an eclecticism resembling a “smorgasboard of filmic material” (Broyles 1992:118) – in fact reflected a diversification of audio-visual formats and content that corresponded to a multiplication of professional and personal identities.¹³⁹ Not least of all, this diversification was also signaled by the very change of designation from Chicano/a to Hispanic and a professionalization of film and video producers. Lastly, from today's perspective, it is impossible to completely and fairly judge the curatorial logic or films featured. It is important to keep in mind, however, CineFestival's singular role as a showcase for Latino/a film at a time when there were fewer films made by and on Latinos/as.

1.6.6 Lessons from CineFestival (1981-82): Festival identity and the stakeholder perspective

Yolanda Broyles' account is also meaningful because it provides us with insights as to how Latino/a film festivals, too, have always been arenas for different stakeholders who frequently compete over the meaning and purpose of the event. Broyles has rightfully underlined the vital importance of film festivals in the 1980s, a “decade of cultural and political retrenchment” (119); she has also stressed

¹³⁸ Her description of the commercial sphere's “deterrents” also comes across as somewhat patronizing as she does not acknowledge the heterogeneity of the filmmaking community or their capacity to travel these “alien” worlds.

¹³⁹ While I could not access a copy of the 1980 festival catalog, the 1981 catalog attests to an in fact impressive multifacetedness of programming. One example is CineFestival 1981's three-hour workshop with El Paso based experimental filmmaker Willie Varela (“Super 8 mm: Personal Filmmaking”). Varela's workshop statement makes an impassioned argument for his use of the 8 mm medium which I read as a refutation of the increasing professionalism of his day and Chicano/a-Latino/a filmmakers' aspirations towards social realist, narrative formats; as a programming choice, I regard Varela's participation in terms of CineFestival's function as a forum for the diverging interests of many of its filmmaking constituencies – from educational-entertainment articulations such as *Seguín* to the experimental forms. Referencing U.S. video artist Ingrid Wiegand (1976), Varela states that ““To many people video (or super 8) is flawed (16 mm), flawed primarily because of the low resolution of its resolution. Our entire culture emphasizes a high degree of definition – intellectually, aurally, and visually. This relates to the fundamental materialistic concept that the more precisely something is consciously understood, heard or seen, the more completely it is grasped. We view perception as a selective process of information-gathering. In effect, information is equated with knowledge. By contrast, experience is total, instantaneous and unselective. What is present at a given moment is taken in toto, in a way that is simultaneously mental and physical, involving the whole person.” Nowadays, many independent filmmakers are more concerned with producing 16 mm (even 32 mm) ‘epics,’ ‘major works,’ ‘ontological investigations,’ and all these other self-important descriptions which have come to characterize the new wave of independent filmmaker, then [sic] they have been with simply making films that are personal, intimate, private, and open in every way” (Wiegand 1976, no page provided; quoted in Varela 1981: [7]).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

their need for institutional support (119). In ways mirroring her own prioritization of a Chicano/a identity politics, education and the empowerment of local Chicano/a communities, in her article, Broyles held up as a model another festival event, the Chicano Film Festival sponsored by the Eastern Michigan University and located at three different venues in Detroit, Michigan (April 5-9, 1982). The festival had been created by scholar and publisher Gary D. Keller, who broke new ground in the emerging field of Chicano/a film studies in the 1980s; the festival was also co-sponsored by Keller's own *Bilingual Review / Press*, a pioneering Chicano/a centered journal and publishing house.¹⁴⁰ In its aim to redirect attention to Chicano/a film activism's purported roots – issues like representation, recognition, education and community building, the festival was dedicated to three communities: academia, educators and local Latino/a communities. Accordingly, it was hosted in three different places, while keeping to a programming strategy of providing an overview of both landmark and recent Chicano/a film from all across the country. Broyles emphasizes the festival's huge rapport with audiences; she argues that “[i]f future festivals continue to cultivate an awareness of Chicano film history and development, the event may *in time* serve to stimulate Chicano film production, generating new visions and new directions Chicano films can take.” (119; italics added) However, as her wording (“in time”) subtly reveals, the Michigan event prioritized on education and outreach, while filmmakers came second. Broyles' critique thus provides us with insights into how the increasing diversification of the Latino/a experience, including factors such as social and geographical mobility, necessitated a response on part of all cultural arenas that were Latino/a identified. In their need to build an identity of their own, Latino/a film festivals have always had to acknowledge these developments and reconcile them with the specificity of a given politics of place by grounding programming and alliance building in locally based activism while striving to meet the needs and demands of all of their stakeholders.

In a way that expands on Chon A. Noriega's claim as to Latino/a film and media producers' increased recourse to a citizenship discourse in the late 1970s and after, I have shown early CineFestival to provide an example for a festival whose identity is deeply rooted in its hosting city's Mexican-American history. I have argued that CineFestival's particular identity has served as the point of departure for the establishment of transnational networks of solidarity, as for example to Mexico or the Havana Film Festival; after all, San Antonio's Chicano/a communities possessed first-hand experience of the very arbitrariness of creating national boundaries and the potential instability and fluidity of citizenship and its associated rights and privileges – as expressed in the popular Mexican American epithet, “We did not cross the border, the border crossed us.” This observation attests to the way Chicano/a communities have collectively been marked by “a mixture between colonizing conquest in the nineteenth century and diasporic migration – both to and within the United States – in the twentieth” (Berg 2002: 201). In fact, historically, many generations of *de facto* Jim Crow discrimination had long conferred to them a status of second rate citizenship despite their U.S. nationality. Concepts of citizenship as intrinsic or stable were further interrogated by immigrants coming from the south of the border; and in fact, today's San Antonio Latino/a community, despite its prevailing Mexican majority, also boasts a substantial Central American populace.¹⁴¹ For these communities, CineFestival has continued to serve as a place where to interrogate and celebrate *latinidad* and validate their presence in

¹⁴⁰ Since 1986, *Bilingual Press* has been associated with Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona.

¹⁴¹ As the Pew Research Center has revealed, in the San Antonio-New Braunfels metropolitan area, Latinos/as easily outnumbered all other ethnic-racialized groups by making up 1,259,000 or 55.7 % of the total population, with Mexicans leading in higher numbers (89.6 %, followed by Salvadorans: 9.8 %, and Guatemalans: 4.3 %). (“Hispanic Population and Origin in Select U.S. Metropolitan Areas, 2014; www.pewhispanic.org)

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

and contributions to San Antonio and their self-confidence as “new citizens” (W. Flores 2003). At the same time, as I have shown, CineFestival has continued to accommodate the needs of its diversifying, film professional constituencies for nurture and for more commercial platforms.

If I continue by way of CLFF, the U.S. Latino/a film festival network’s other seminal veteran, it is also because this festival, founded ten years after CineFestival, in many ways serves as an important foil to the former. CLFF’s take on cultural citizenship has championed the immigrant experience and thus departs from the way CineFestival has taken the long-standing presence and political activism of its Mexican origin constituencies as its template for its emerging vision of *latinidad*. Despite Chicago’s substantial Mexican origin communities and the city’s history of Chicano/a and Puerto Rican political activism, CLFF’s director Pepe Vargas has decided to provide an arena for Latin American, U.S. Latino/a and other cinemas that corresponds to a transnational, non-essentializing and fluid definition of *latinidad*. While demographics published by the Pew Research Center (2014)¹⁴² attest to a predominance of Mexican people in the Greater Chicago Metropolitan Area but one which has registered a considerable amount of foreign born / immigrant Latinos/as (36.1 %), which even beats numbers of Southern California’s San Diego-Carlsbad border region (33. 6%), this alone would not be enough to understand his choice (“Hispanic Population and Origin in Select U.S. Metropolitan Areas, 2014”). Neither would it be plausible to attribute this orientation only to the director’s own background as a Latin American immigrant, even though this undoubtedly has played a role. Rather, CLFF negotiates its identity as an audience centered festival that seeks to position itself both in terms of inviting celebration and contestation of *latinidad* which may act as a safe space and a place where understanding and solidarity may be engendered but one which also frames CLFF, hosted in one of the nation’s biggest cities and one with considerable competition among cultural events, in a consumer citizenship logic which also resonates with its creation in the “Decade of the Hispanic.” As such, CLFF is an important precursor to its Californian based sister festivals, SDLFF and SFLFF. However, despite its valuable function for its many participating filmmakers, CLFF is a festival that has not grown out of an inspiration to nurture U.S. Latino/a (or other) filmmakers and thus does not prioritize on Latino/a film activism. It is thus also an important precursor to other, more commercial festivals which primarily relied on exhibition and star power, such as NYILFF, even though its own usage of celebrities has remained more restrained.

1.7 The Chicago Latino Film Festival (since 1985)

1.7.1 Profile

From its inception in 1985, the Chicago Latino Film Festival (CLFF) has emerged as today’s largest continuing showcase of U.S. and international Latino/a film in the U.S., and it has continued to play a prominent role in the U.S. Latino/a film festival network. Various film festival organizers have looked to CLFF for inspiration: In San Diego, Ethan van Thillo has called CLFF a model for his own SDLFF (since 2004) and CLFF’s Pepe Vargas a “mentor” (E. van Thillo Interview 2009); and to Lucho Ra-

¹⁴² Again, this is backed up by the following figures from the Pew Research Center: Here, the Chicago-Naperville-Elgin metropolitan area (coming in sixth nationwide as to the size of its Latino/a population, the only Latino/a enclave of such considerable proportions in the Midwest) counted about 2,070,000 Latinos/as (21.8 % of the total population). Mexicans were leading by 79.8 %, followed by Puerto Ricans (9.9 %) and Guatemalans (2.0 %). (“Hispanic Population and Origin in Select U.S. Metropolitan Areas, 2014”; www.pew-hispanic.org)

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

mirez, in turn, co-founder of the more recent SFLFF (since 2009) and a native Chicagoan himself, CLFF was the festival that initiated him to the world of Latino/a film festivals (L. Ramirez & D. Díaz Interview 2010). Both festivals share CFLFF's emphasis on the transnational, immigrant experience.

What makes CLFF such an interesting case example is its unique mixture of consumer and cultural citizenship aspects; its status as an audience festival; the long-standing presence of its director, and its unique relationship with its politics of place: Neither having established ties to West Coast (Chicano/a) style film activism, nor to localized Chicano/a or other Latino/a cultural activism, CLFF has instead targeted metropolitan Chicago's encompassing Latino/a communities as well as general audiences with an interest in Latino/a film – for reasons that resonated with the festival director's own experience as a member of Chicago's Latin American diasporic community as well as with the evolving public interest in Latino/a culture in the "Hispanic Decade." In fact, festival director José (Pepe) Vargas has no reservations against situating CLFF in a city tourism logic.¹⁴³ Accordingly, CLFF is based on a dual logic that is at once a celebration and affirmation of Latin American and Latino/a culture/s, but which has also played to these new tastes by promoting the festival, in the fashion of city marketing.

Like CineFestival, CFLFF was founded at a university; tellingly, its creation happened as part of Augustine College's two-year campaign attempting to target prospective Latino/a students (Keller 2005, no pag.). Starting out as a "humble" event hosted as a university gym (Sharp 2004, no pag.), the festival was substantially shaped by Vargas, who had served as film consultant for the inaugural edition and subsequently became CLFF's director, a position in which he has remained to this day. Vargas brought the festival to his own alma mater, Columbus College (Bowser 2012, no pag.), expanded the number of films on show, and created significant alliances with sponsors, such as to the city of Chicago. He also founded CLFF's backing organization, Chicago Latino Cinema, in 1987; the latter was rebranded as International Latino Cultural Center of Chicago (ILCC) in 1999, a designation more attuned to its by then multi-disciplinary scope.

A cosmopolitan at heart, with a law degree and experience as a paralegal, Vargas had lived in three Latin American countries – his native Colombia, Argentina, and Mexico – and witnessed their socio-political transformations. His experience of once more starting over in the U.S., working menial jobs while pursuing a degree in broadcast journalism and television/film production,¹⁴⁴ had profoundly shaped his perception that immigrants needed a cultural arena validating their experiences (Bowser 2012, no pag.). When, in our telephone interview (2010), I asked him about CLFF's mission, Pepe Vargas stated that CLFF was based on solidarity networks among Latin American immigrants and U.S. Latinos/as. It was imperative to foster a mutual appreciation among immigrants as to their respective cultures, while also presenting to the cultural mainstream the variety of cultures contained by the label Latino/a (J. Vargas Interview 2010). Here, I argue that CLFF's dedication to the immigrant experience has been balanced with the need to engender a crossover appeal. The latter also means

¹⁴³ In an interview from 2004, Vargas outlined the organization's respective agenda as follows: "Ultimately, we'd like to build a facility in the city of Chicago that is open and in contact with the universe that will allow the city to really grow beyond being a really provincial city. It really goes in line with the mayor's vision to grow this city into a sort of cosmopolitan destination for tourists and business, education, culture and the arts" (Sharp 2004; no pag.).

¹⁴⁴ Vargas graduated in 1985 (Bowser 2012, no pag.). Both for the college, with its focus on film production, and the festival this sponsorship association was bound to be mutually rewarding.

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

marketing the festival to a large proportion of people who do not define themselves along the lines of “Latino/a” and or “immigrant.” This is substantiated by the figures provided in a portrait of the festival and its hosting organization, ILCC, from 2012, according to which non-Latinos/as make up 40 percent of the entirety of event attendees (Bowser 2012, no pag.). Accordingly, despite Chicago’s aforementioned substantial Mexican-Chicano/a and Puerto Rican populaces, CLFF eschewed embracing these groups’ historical activisms for the sake of a promoting a “Pan-Latino”¹⁴⁵ identity for the festival (“ILCC: Who We Are. Our History”; latinoculturalcenter.org/). In other words, CLFF is more of an audience event and less of a “filmmakers’ festival” with close ties to a U.S. Latino/a film activist and scholarly community. In this respect (and in ways later to be emulated by San Diego’s SDLFF), CLFF has capitalized on its monopolist position as the sole Latino/a themed such event in Chicago, the U.S. Midwest’s undisputed Latino/a hub, and it is in this regard that despite its focus on audiences rather than filmmakers and nurture, it is an impactful platform for international and U.S. Latino/a filmmakers, particularly with respect to audience rapport and validation of their films.

In fact, from the very beginning, it was above all CLFF’s strong audience rapport which has continued to form its main symbolic capital, owing to a wide and ever-increasing range of films unlikely to return to the U.S. festival or theatrical circuit. This exclusivity factor also played a key role when, back in the 1980s, the Chicago International Film Festival (CIFF) rejected two films that subsequently became milestones for CLFF (J. Vargas Interview 2010). One was Paul Leduc’s Nuevo Cine Mexicano work, *Frida – Naturaleza Viva* (1983), screened at CLFF 1987¹⁴⁶, another one *La Gran Fiesta* (1986, Marcos Zurinaga), a Puerto Rican film screened at CLFF in 1988 (Keller 2005, no pag.) Both films drew considerable crowds and contributed to building CLFF’s visibility and reputation in its early days. In an interview with *Time Out Chicago*’s Chris Keller, Vargas expressed his satisfaction as to venerable CIFF’s short-lived attempt to start its own Latin American-Latino/a sidebar “in the late ‘70s and early ‘80s.” Vargas’s insistence on Latino/a agency, which mirrors what SFLFF’s Lucho Ramirez has called the immigrant’s duty to “tak[e] ownership” (L. Ramirez & Damián Díaz 2010), is mirrored in Vargas’ emphasis that “we must be doing what is ours. We can’t entrust it to anyone else.” (Keller 2005 no pag.) All the while, his uncompromising attitude may also be read in commercial terms, namely, as an attempt to preserve CLFF’s exclusivity as a branding tool and to use the festival’s own Latino/a focus as symbolic resource in the city’s highly competitive cinematic-cultural marketplace. This stance poses a contrast to the solidarity paradigm that characterizes smaller community festivals and underlines CLFF’s self-perception as self-confident agent in what we could call “the field of film festivals.”

However, despite CLFF’s aspiration to appeal to a wider range of target audiences, the films curated were far from being of the apolitical, for-entertainment variety, as the following line-up from 1988 and my later discussion of CLFF’s 1990 edition show. CLFF 1987 screened two Chicano/a classics,

¹⁴⁵ This is subtly underlined in the mission statement issued by the CLFF’s mother organization, the International Latino Cultural Center (ILCC), according which the organization “differs from other Latino cultural organizations in the city in that others are located within neighborhoods and primarily focus on the contributions of one country’s culture or use a single cultural expression. While these organizations prove beneficial to the constituencies they serve, their programming does not encompass the multi-nationality of all the Latino cultures.” (“ILCC: Who We Are. Our History”; latinoculturalcenter.org/)

¹⁴⁶ To underline the dimension of the film’s success, at the 1987 festival’s three screenings, *Frida – Naturaleza Viva* was attended by “nearly 1,500 people” and when scheduled for a re-run later that year, originally only for one show, he “promptly sold out two shows” (Bowser 2005, no pag.).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

Luis Valdez's *Zoot Suit* (1981) and *Seguín* along with Latin American films such as *El coraje del pueblo* (*Courage of the People*, Bolivia/Italy 1971) by Jorge Sanjinés, on the deplorable working and living conditions of as well as the massacre against Bolivian miners. Other topics included documentary-reportage and fictional films on subjects such as Uruguayan prisons, U.S. troops stationed in Puerto Rico, the aftermath of the Chilean military dictatorship, Japanese immigration to Brazil, Central American immigrants in the U.S., and the enduring historical and socio-economic impact of the Panama Canal on its people.¹⁴⁷ I argue that a number of decisive factors – early institutional autonomy; the successful establishment of an extensive supportive network of patrons, sponsors, and other supporters; a solid audience rapport; and the monopolist position all contributed to its growth, longevity, and renown. Back in 2005, Vargas had already estimated that the festival up until then had screened “about 1,000 films viewed by more than 250,000 people” (Keller 2005); in a 2012 profile, yearly attendees of ILCC's programs were estimated to be around 35,000 (Bowser 2012). All the while, at CLFF, star power had always been viewed with a degree of caution. In 2005, Pepe Vargas provided the number of USD 1.6 million as ILCC's annual operating budget, with the lion's share reserved for films (Keller 2005). As he stressed, “the multicultural agenda trumps glamor” since the festival “need[s] the films to shine,” a point of view he also emphasized in our interview, then citing budgetary reasons (Keller 2005, no pag.; J. Vargas Interview 2010) One is to infer that this is also one of the reasons why CLFF introduced its own Gloria Awards as late as by the end of the more glamor-conscious 1990s, in 1999.¹⁴⁸

1.7.2 CLFF 1990: Solidarity and crossover challenge

I want to close my discussion of CLFF by providing an example from an early (1990) festival edition. As I have argued before, among its varied Latino/a audiences, CLFF's mission has been to inspire pride in a shared “Pan-Latino/a” and immigrant experience, while fostering a better understanding of both among its more encompassing non-Latino/a audiences. Yet certain challenges arise from addressing such heterogeneous constituencies, most of all in promoting films in a way that would garner interest without resorting to oversimplification or exoticism, the “spectacle of the Other” (Hall 2001), and doing justice to the complexity of the on-screen vistas and experiences.

In this vein, festival director Vargas's 1990 welcome address praised the “richness and diversity of Latino cinematic expressions” (Vargas 1990: [3]), while at turns appealing explicitly to local Latino/a communities, at turns to an unspecified general audience. The latter was the case when Vargas invited

¹⁴⁷ *The Eyes of the Birds* (France 1981, Gabriel Auer); *The Battle of Vieques* (Puerto Rico 1986, Zydna Nazario); *Chile, ¿Hasta Cuándo? / Chile, When Will It End?* (USA 1986, David Bradbury); *Gaijin: A Brazilian Odyssey* (*Gaijin: Os Caminhos da Liberdade*, Brazil 1979, Tizuka Yamasaki); *On the Border* (*På gränsen*, Sweden 1985, Peter Torbjörnsson); *Panama: The Fifth Frontier* (*La Quinta Frontera*, Cuba 1974, Pastor Vega) (“Latino Film Festival,” *Chicago-Sun-Times* June 19, 1987, 27).

¹⁴⁸ CLFF's first “Gloria” lifetime achievement awardees were Cuban American singer-entertainer Celia Cruz and Mexican actor Ignacio Tarso (“Gloria Award,” chicagolatinofilmfestival.org). The relative late introduction of this lifetime achievement award, its lack of a competitive award, and instead, its emphasis on its Audience Award are all indicative of CLFF's different discursive construction as an audience festival removed from a Hollywood logic of “access.” In contrast, Los Angeles based festivals, in ways that I attribute to their proximity to the industry, are more committed to awards politics. Celebrity driven and “bridging” national and international *latinidad*, Hollywood based LALIFF introduced its Gabriel Figueroa Award (“Gabi”) in conjunction with its inaugural, 1997 edition. Likewise, Eastside based RRAFF, in its first year (2004), has introduced its career awards category in its very first year, 2004, which is used to recognize exemplary U.S. Latino/a film professionals for their achievements in the Hollywood industries. Both have also featured competitive awards.

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

visitors to embrace the singular opportunity for exchange between artists and audiences provided by CLFF. Drawing on a vocabulary of foreign relations, he emphasized the idea of culture (here, film) as a “tool” to engender such understanding, and the role of the filmmakers in attendance as “diplomats of the arts.” (“They bring news from their countries and fresh ideas, and many have stories to tell about the unusual circumstances in which they made their films.”) His urbane wording resonates with CLFF’s unique brand of activism, and with its negotiation between different target groups and interests; cultural insiders and outsiders; urgent political issues and pleasurable entertainment. Vargas stressed CLFF’s goal to inspire mutual exchange between filmmakers and audiences as he pointed to the filmmakers’ desire to get to know Chicago’s local communities (tellingly, without ethnic specification), asking the latter to “please be there to tell them,” characteristic of CLFF’s goals to instigate participation in the sense of claiming one’s rights as (cultural) citizen, mediate between different communities and enhance its crossover appeal. All the while, Vargas also used his platform to alert audiences to CLFF 1990’s exhaustive sidebar of U.S. short films on AIDS, pointing to the alarming way the former was “taking its toll among Latino communities across the nation (Vargas 1990: [3]).” By drawing attention to the way the immune deficiency crossed all social and sexual boundaries, CLFF countered prejudices according to which it “only” affected homosexuals and drug addicts. Not least of all through programs such as this one CLFF engendered understanding and solidarity among its many different constituencies. The festival featured a twice-screened, free of charge program; it encompassed five U.S. Latino/a productions, including works by renowned filmmakers / scholars such as Frances Negrón, Lourdes Portillo, and Severo Pérez, each focusing on a different city and on widely different groups: Urban Latinos/as in Chicago¹⁴⁹ and in San Francisco¹⁵⁰, respectively; the impact of the epidemic on Puerto Rican drug addicts in Philadelphia¹⁵¹; Chicano/a high school students in El Paso¹⁵²; and a young Latina in New York (“Free AIDS Series / Serie gratuita sobre el SIDA”; *CLFF 1990* 62-63).¹⁵³

One last example from the catalog, however, illustrates the difficult negotiations involved in CLFF’s promotion of latinidad using homogenizing and sometimes commodified images in order to attract a wide range of audiences. In the case of Lourdes Portillo’s *La Ofrenda: Days of the Dead* (1989) there was no mention of the fact that a substantial part of the film is set in the U.S.¹⁵⁴ This also means that the entire synopsis ignored one of the film’s most original and important aspects, namely, its celebration the way immigrant Mexican-Chicano/a communities have been reinventing syncretistic Mesoamerican Indigenous and Euro-Catholic religious and cultural practices – the *Días de los Muertos* celebrated on All Saints and All Souls, November 1 and 2. Despite possible pragmatic reasons – such as lack of space in its bilingual calendar of events or the fear of alienating potential viewers, this remains highly problematic because it fails to prepare audiences for one key insight provided by the film: the way transnational, immigrant communities adapt and reconfigure rituals and customs from their countries of origin to meet their changing needs and as a way to honor and celebrate their

¹⁴⁹ *AIDS: Questions and Answers / SIDA: Preguntas y Respuestas* (USA 1987, Community Televisión Network).

¹⁵⁰ *Between Friends / Entre Amigos* (USA 1989, Severo Pérez).

¹⁵¹ *AIDS in the Barrio: It Can’t Happen to Me / SIDA en el Barrio: Eso no me pasa a mi* (USA 1989; Peter Biella and Frances Negrón).

¹⁵² *At Risk / En el peligro* (USA 1989, Warren Asa Maxey).

¹⁵³ *Life / Vida* (USA 1989, Lourdes Portillo).

¹⁵⁴ This is even more peculiar because CLFF’s aforementioned AIDS sidebar featured the narrative short *Vida / Life*, another work by Portillo, listed as a U.S. production.

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

culture/s. This lack of acknowledgement is particularly regrettable considering CLFF's own championing of the immigrant experience and the missed opportunity to counter some of the early criticisms coming from Latin American audiences and critics as to *La Ofrenda*'s purported loss of cultural authenticity, calling the film out for its translation of cultural practices felt to be "false" and "contrived" (Newman & Rich 2001:72).¹⁵⁵ What is more, *La Ofrenda* also reveals the cultural practices connected to these Days of the Dead to be in ongoing transformation already among their original practitioners back in Mexico as it depicts cross-dressers challenging traditional gender boundaries in a carnevalesque manner¹⁵⁶; the film's San Francisco based communities take this even a step further by lovingly celebrating gay icons and dedicating altars to AIDS victims.

All the while, by focusing on the film's "explor[ations of] the Indian [sic] roots of Days of the Dead" ("La Ofrenda"; *CLFF 1990* [57]), the catalog embraced a reductive, merely folkloristic perspective: "During the first days of November, Mexicans confront mortality with good humor and honor their dead in cemeteries and at homes. Dancing skeletons and skull candies are some of the offerings" (ibid.). This emphasis on an uncomplicated and somewhat touristy vision of *latinidad*, free from any transcultural "contamination," steers clear of the film's highly topical and potentially liberating cultural and sexual politics – particularly regrettable, for instance, in the light of its AIDS showcase. This was an instance when, by way of an artificial separation of "palatable" and "political" films, the otherwise committed and multi-faceted festival lost an opportunity to engage cross-audiences and to celebrate *La Ofrenda*'s empowering potential.

2. Eyes on the prize: Marketing *latinidad* and the formation of Latino/a Hollywood

While my discussion of CLFF meant a fast-forward move to the second half of the 1980s, I now want to return to the early 1980s and take a glance at a number of interrelated professionalization and commercialization trends impacting both filmmakers and arenas of film exhibition in the decades to come. One point was that the 1980s were marked by a more encompassing, changed attitude regarding Latinos/as, namely, in regard to their image as consumer citizens. While there was an increased interest on part of the industry to conquer Latino/a markets in this "Decade of the Hispanic," Latino/a cultural producers, too "profit[ed] from difference" (Dávila 2001:9). This resulted in favorable conditions for

¹⁵⁵ Portillo herself had noted that "there [was] no value to the Latin Americans of the continuation of culture," which she saw as a "specific immigrant kind of concern" (Newman & Rich 2001: 72ff).

¹⁵⁶ Barbara McBane (2001), for instance, has pointed to *La Ofrenda*'s liberating potentialities when she contrasts the possibilities for cultural and sexual self-expression within the film's two different communities and countries. In Mexico, she argues, the celebrations are "mapped out as a heterotopic space where rigidities of sex and gender [were] momentarily suspended" since "[i]n traditional Mexican society, formed [...] from an overlay of European-Spanish Catholicism onto ancient indigenous practices and beliefs, the enactment of gender fluidity [is] reserved for the heterotopic, carnivalesque space of these Day of the Dead activities." In contrast, regarding the film's San Francisco, Mission District communities, "[t]he film depicts a social environment [...] with a relative tolerance of everyday sex and gender mobility that is absent in Old Mexico" (174)." While the film thus celebrates the liberating power of these traditions in *both* countries, it highlights their particularly empowering impact regarding transnational communities. In the age of AIDS and the crucibles against LGBT communities, these reinventions reinstate the dignity of those marginalized, and of the afflicted and dead, therefore making it possible "to pay them respect" (174).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

the emergence of entertainment driven, narrative feature film by Latinos/as¹⁵⁷; formats with more or less direct studio involvement yet films which clearly departed from earlier, often self-financed projects such as those of pioneering Chicano filmmaker Efraín Gutiérrez. This period was instrumental to the creation of what was retrospectively called the “Hispanic Hollywood Boom” (Baugh 2012), leading to the formation of a canon of films that made Latino/a stories and experiences available both to Chicano/a-Latino/a audiences but also to a more encompassing public due to its crossover potential. I view this period as highly significant because it signaled to Latino/a filmmakers that they, too, could become stakeholders and competitors in an emerging specialty film market; *latinidad* on screen was subject to negotiations involving filmmakers, sponsors, and, to an increasing degree, other film professionals such as actors. Even though themes in today’s film production have further diversified and the production and sponsoring landscape keeps on changing, these are issues that are as valid today as they have been back then; and while they take on a special urgency in conjunction with the nurture agendas of Los Angeles based film festivals, due to their Hollywood proximity, these issues resonate with all festivals discussed in my study.

However, before I continue, a disclaimer. The 1980s saw diversification processes that were more encompassing than the trends to be discussed in this subchapter. As I am focusing on the emergence of Latino/a feature film, I am fully cognizant of the fact that Latino/a producers had also embarked on other avenues of less commercial kinds of film production, such as filmmakers and media artists working in more experimental¹⁵⁸ formats and documentary filmmakers who, as I have argued earlier, were at the forefront of first wave Latino/a-Chicano/a film production. What they share with the protagonists of Latino/a feature film is that they, too required more sophisticated arenas of exhibition, even if art and academic spaces posed viable alternatives for some. For these film artists, Latino/a film festivals have also frequently served as platforms, such as Cine Acción’s experimental showcase as part of its ¡Cine Latino! 1997 festival¹⁵⁹ and RRAFF’s insistence on programming documentary and experimental formats despite the overwhelming majority of narrative formats received by submission.

That being said, numerous filmmakers bridged more artistic, auteur-driven and more commercial formats, such as Jesús S. Treviño or Sylvia Morales, who both worked in public and later commercial / cable television but also made independent documentaries and / or fictional films on the side.

¹⁵⁷ Early transitional dramatic features were *Please, Don’t Bury Me Alive!* (USA 1976) and two more independent productions by San Antonio based Efraín Gutiérrez, *Chicano Love is Forever* (1978) and *Run, Tecato Run* (1979); there was *Only Once in a Lifetime*, by Mexican filmmaker Alejandro Grattán, produced by Moctesuma Esparza (USA / Mexico 1978) and the aforementioned *Raíces de Sangre* (Mexico 1978) by Jesús S Treviño. Robert M. Young’s Camera d’Or winning Latino/a themed *¡Alambrista!* (1977) also ranks among these precursors.

¹⁵⁸ The Latino/a experimental mode, as Chon A. Noriega has argued, goes all the way back to Ernie Palomino’s 1966 experimental film *My Trip in a ’52 Ford*. Its pioneers also include Willie Varela; Harry Gamboa Jr., of the Los Angeles based arts collective ASCO; the Border Arts Workshop / Taller de Arte Fronterizo (BAW/TAF); and Chicana video artists Frances Salomé España, Sandra P. Hahn, Laura Aguilar, Rita González, and Sandra ‘Pocha’ Peña” (Noriega 2001:196).

¹⁵⁹ “Experimental texts: Other Authors, Other Forms.” Sidebar curated by Rita González for ¡Cine Latino 1997!, who also wrote a short companion article for the festival catalog (González 1997: 26-27).

2.1 Towards “Hispanic Hollywood”: Changing media landscape and film markets

The film and television industries’ evolving interest both in *hispanidad* / *latinidad* and the Latino/ media consumer in the 1980s is attributable to a number of reasons, including the decade’s shift to more encompassing, multicultural societal paradigms; Latinos/as’ demographic growth; and the marketers’ promotion of a “Decade of the Hispanic.” This interest moreover resonated with a larger trend on part of U.S. film and television industries, namely, their growing investments in productions made by and / or revolving ethno-racial minorities. At the same time, as David Rosen (1996) has shown, the media, broadcasting and communications landscape saw profound changes which – if temporarily – led to increased possibilities for film productions categorized as “speciality” films. This opportunity was seized by emerging Latino/a feature film, seeing a first, so-called “Hispanic Hollywood” boom in the second half of the 1980s.

Thus, Mary C. Beltrán (2009) has pointed to the fact that in the 1980s, “[...] ethnic-oriented television programming and independent filmmaking began to be viewed as potentially profitable, encouraging the regional and national distribution of Latino/a films” (111). While studios had become more aware of Latinos/as’ rapid demographic growth, possible investors regarded the prospect of tax breaks as an incentive to engage with the independent film sector (cf. 111). This trend was both supported – and in turn further advanced – by Hollywood’s “shift in the racial paradigms that guided casting and promotion” (111), as exemplified by the success of selected African American celebrities such as Whoopi Goldberg and Eddie Murphy, and television formats like the *The Cosby Show* (1984-92) (112).¹⁶⁰ One example when television met film in order to create an important arena for early Latino/a narrative features was PBS’s “American Playhouse” franchise (1980-1994). Its anthology format was driven by an educational mission and canonizing efforts that championed a multicultural and diverse agenda. Its productions often featured studio involvement, and both the consecrating cinematic release and their subsequent television broadcast granted a highly desirable, wider exhibition (see also Collins 1994, no pag.).¹⁶¹ Among the series’ Latino/a productions were *Seguín* (1982, Jesús S. Treviño); *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortéz* (1982, Robert M. Young; starring Edward James Olmos in the lead); Gregory Nava’s gripping immigration tale, *El Norte* (1983); *House of Ramón Iglesia* (1986, Luis Soto; based on an award winning play by Puerto Rican playwright José Rivera); *Break of Dawn* (1988; a border drama by Tijuana based Mexican filmmaker Isaac Arstenstein); *Stand and Deliver* (1988, by Cuban American Ramón Menéndez); and *La Carpa* (1993) by Peruvian American Carlos Ávila (“American Playhouse 1981-94”; imdb.com).

With regard to the temporarily increased opportunities for Latinos/as in the age of an emerging specialty film market, David Rosen has shown that the 1980s also saw massive upheavals of the film, entertainment and communications sector, a trend that led to the proliferation of low budget, inde-

¹⁶⁰ Notable precursors from the 1970s include *Sanford and Son* (NBS, 1972-1977), revolving around an African American owned family business, and *Chico and the Man* (NBC 1974-78, featuring Puerto Rican actor Freddy Prinze).

¹⁶¹ On the production and distribution histories of American Playhouse’s *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*, *El Norte*, and *Stand or Deliver*, see Rosen 1996: 251-59. The combination of theatrical and television exposure was to remain standard practice also with regard to the Corporation of Public Broadcasting (CPB)’s ethnic consortia, such as Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB, since 1998).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

pendent film in this decade.¹⁶² Rosen has pointed to how Hispanic Hollywood's blossoming coincided with a unique constellation of factors causing a boom in overall feature film production (243).¹⁶³ Of particular interest for the development of Latino/a feature film was the resulting increased amount of entertainment outlets in the shape of "'ancillary markets': broadcast and cable television, home video, and foreign sales" (Rosen 1996: 243) – because this trend caused an "enormous expansion of demand for filmed entertainment, especially original works" (243). Rosen has argued that these trends also tied in with what I want to call a shift in taste cultures as the 1980s saw the emergence of a sophisticated arthouse clientele rejecting mainstream Hollywood's blockbuster fare tailored to less demanding and teenage audiences. Baby boomers in particular "became a countervailing force in the marketplace demanding films with more 'quality,' with more 'creativity,' with a 'literary' sensibility – or at least pretensions to such standards" (245). Lastly, yet again important in the light of Latinos/as' pursuit of more encompassing audiences, the new specialized film market segment was also targeting what Rosen calls "cross-over audiences."

Cross-over: In the history of Latino/a cinema, this term merits particular attention. Back in the early 1980s, it was associated with an emergence of narrative feature films made by Latino/a film professionals collaborating, if to varying degrees, with the mainstream industry. This move was characterized both by the ambition and necessity to appeal to wider audiences as a step beyond the various monolithic Chicano/a-Raza-Puerto Rican community-building projects of earlier activist phases, and

¹⁶² Rosen points out that "[b]etween 1984 and 1988, total feature film releases increased from 410 to 513; by 1990, output had declined to 417. Not surprisingly, the relative proportion of independent films released rose from 58 percent to 69 percent during the four-year-period, peaking at nearly four-quarters of the total releases in 1987; by 1990, the proportion of independent releases fell back to 60 percent." (243)

¹⁶³ Reasons for this ranged from an "extensive federal deregulation of the communications industry, and especially of the Hollywood studios and cable companies, [which] fueled wide-spread cross-ownership, spin-offs, and acquisitions" (243), to "monetary policy changes le[a]d[ing] to the widescale availability of 'cheap money' at both the investment-capital and disposable-income levels" (243; the latter accounting for Beltrán's previous argument revolving around tax breaks).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

it frequently required recognizable faces. Such Latino/a celebrities¹⁶⁴ would serve as vehicles for its celebration and affirmation of culture and its educational and community building and not least of all, marketing purposes.

In the context of his article, I find Rosen's definition of the cross-over audience¹⁶⁵ as "people who would only occasionally or not normally be drawn to an 'art' film" (246) somewhat reductive since it limits Latinos/as to the group's lesser educated, working class constituencies (even though, it needs to be said, these monolithic definitions have been perpetuated by Chicanos/as themselves at the height of the *movimiento*, a time of close identification with the working class inspired by a staunch solidarity with the frequently most underrepresented and disenfranchised in this group¹⁶⁶). Here, I regard Scott M. Baugh's (2012) definition as more appropriate. In his definition of the 1980s' "Hispanic Hollywood Boom," he describes the latter as "a particular instance of Latino culture's crossing over demographics and audiences" (127), a statement acknowledging Latinos/as' diversity while, contrary to Rosen's assessment, taking their agency in the market as point of departure. Baugh has also pointed to roots of the term "crossover" in Hollywood's early days and to studio tycoon Darryl F. Zanuck's famous declaration according to which "a film, political message or no, is a success only if people

¹⁶⁴ That Latino/a directors, sometimes acting upon the pressure of the studios, sometimes for their own, pragmatic reasons, frequently have chosen to cast non-Latinos/as in key Latino/a roles to increase their cross-over potential is an interesting point I wish I had more room to explore. Two examples shall suffice: One involves Luis Valdez's casting of Lou Diamond Phillips, who is of Filipino, mixed European, and Native American heritage, in the role of Ritchie Valens in *La Bamba*, which was met with some protest coming from Chicanos/as but could not stop the film's triumph among these and far more encompassing audiences (Varela 1992:9). Another was the so-called "Frida Fracaso" (Jesse Varela in *El Boletín de Cine Acción*, 1992:1), the controversy revolving around Luis and Lupe Valdez's early 1990s' script for a biopic dedicated to the Mexican painter (1907-54) – after all, a cultural, feminist and artistic icon among Latinas and well beyond, whose massive crossover potential continues to be proven by a wealth of books and exhibitions as well as countless commodities bearing her distinctive image and / or style. (The latest example as I am writing this is the Victoria & Albert Museum's "Frida Kahlo: Making her Self Up," offering "a fresh perspective on Frida Kahlo's compelling life story through her most intimate personal belongings and clothing," 06/16-11/04, 2018, <https://www.vam.ac.uk>.) In what I regard as a watershed emancipatory moment for a younger generation of Latino/a film professionals (Latinas especially), a crowd of angry protesters, in the summer of 1992 picketed the streets in front of New Line Cinema in Beverly Hills, the studios which had persuaded Valdez to choose Laura San Giacomo for the leading role (a young Italian American actress who had starred in the 1990 Sundance hit, *sex, lies and videotape*). (A detail telling of the particular lack of regard for the sensibilities of *Latina* Hollywood was that the actor envisioned to portray Kahlo's husband, Diego Rivera, was Puerto Rican actor Raúl Juliá.) The protests caused waves within Latino/a Hollywood, each side accusing the other of selling out (Fox 1992); Valdez chastised two actresses associated with the protests, Evelina Fernández and Rose Portillo, both of whom had previously worked with him in theatrical and / or film productions (Newman 104); meanwhile, New Line put the project on hold (Fox 1992). Kathleen Newman has suggested that these female protesters were inspired by the way the "the female figure of Frida Kahlo at the time registered an antiauthoritarian and anti-patriarchal trend in our society, and a level of resistance to extirpation, symbolic or otherwise" (105); yet, in the light of the (still prevailing) scarcity of such roles and opportunities and Kahlo's immense crossover appeal, I want to add that they also responded to their right to participate in the unfolding Latino/a specialty market. -- After Valdez's successive attempts to revive the project, stages of which first involved Mexican actress Ofelia Medina, who had played Kahlo in Paul Leduc's aforementioned *Frida*, *Naturaleza Viva* and later, *Selena* star Jennifer Lopez in a race with Salma Hayek's Kahlo themed project (Munoz 2000), he abandoned his own plans for good. The rest is history.

¹⁶⁵ This becomes evident when Rosen describes how "[s]uch 'crossover' groups are drawn from individual ethnic groups [...] or other demographic groups [...], regional groups [...], or people who share particular social or political convictions [...], among other identifiable characteristics" (246).

¹⁶⁶ For instance, by Tomás Ybarra-Frausto's observations on the Chicano movement's "romantization of the working class" (Ybarra-Frausto & Dear 1999: 33ff.) which led them to ignore its actual heterogeneity, to be discussed at more length in conjunction with the RRAFF analysis chapter.

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

actually watch it” (54). In the same vein, Baugh claims, “the criterion of box office tallies has traditionally merged with its value and even the potential for social activism and cultural expression” (54).

It was thus in the 1980s that crossover became a central discourse for Latino/a filmmaking – with its “Hispanic Hollywood Boom” (Baugh) and films like *La Bamba* (1987), Luis Valdez’s second studio-made feature based on the tragically short life of Chicano Rock ‘n’ Roll musician Ritchie Valens turning the conquering of larger audiences into a reality. For Latino/a filmmakers, crossover appeal has continued to elicit pragmatic repercussions – investor / sponsor satisfaction; climbing the ranks of Hollywood; and, if lamentably often on a more modest scale, revenues. In the world of film festivals, these associations resonate with Marijke de Valck’s (2007) observations as to how a given film’s cross-over appeal and successful journey through the festival circuit may create “cultural value” so as “to emerge as economically interesting to the arthouse circuit,” thereby enhancing its chances for finding distribution (121, BrE). But she also alerts us to its role in the aggressive promotional techniques as exemplified in what she calls the 1990s trend of “Miramaxation,” named after the production company founded by Harvey and Bob Weinstein, namely, “the use of festival exposure, marketing strategies, stars and controversies to promote ‘quality’ films with cross-over appeal to ensure box office success” (123). Marc Peranson (2009), in turn, has criticized “premiere heavy” business festivals’ ambivalent role in regard to arguably nurturing of “a specific kind of festival film, one with potential crossover success” (33). As I will show in my analysis, Latino/a filmmakers and Latino/a film festival programmers have negotiated these different associations, their pragmatic-economic as well as culturally affirming and educational aspects, including the building of community, in their attempts to create cross-over potential, for instance according to a “Latino Formula” (filmmaker Patrick Perez). All the while, de Valck’s reference to the industry’s bold and successful marketing campaigns also points to the lack of similar such resources available to Latino/a productions, a point I will return to later in this section.

2.2 Hispanic Hollywood Boom

The so-called “Hispanic Hollywood Boom” is associated with a short period in the late 1980s when Latino/a feature film production experienced its first more noteworthy “commercial and popular success[es]” (cf. Baugh 127). It was preceded by a number of pioneering films with more modest box office results – *Zoot Suit* (1981); *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez* (1982), *El Norte* (1982), and *Heartbreaker* (1984, Frank Zuniga) (2012:55; see also Noriega 2000: 254). As Scott M. Baugh has argued, Cuban-American director Leon Ichaso’s¹⁶⁷ social drama with the telling name *Crossover Dreams* (1985) to some extent also “prefigures” the Hispanic Hollywood Boom: Starring Panamanian born salsa singer Rubén Blades in his first role, the film is one of the few U.S. Latino/a features distributed by Miramax and “highlights a cultural and marketing shift readying itself in Hollywood and popular American culture” (55). The actual boom itself revolves around what, in retrospect, looks like a small number of films encompassing five works, the successes of which, however, were “treated dramatically in the mainstream press” (Beltrán 2009: 123), namely *La Bamba* (1987), Cheech Marin’s *Born*

¹⁶⁷ In fact, León Ichaso’s *El Súper* (1979), a social drama about Cuban exiles in New York City featuring the young Elizabeth Peña in one of the leading roles, is another feature prefiguring “Hispanic Hollywood.”

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

in *East L.A.* (1987), *The Milagro Beanfield War* (1988, directed by Robert Redford¹⁶⁸ and produced by Moctesuma Esparza), *Stand and Deliver* (1988), and *Break of Dawn* (1988) (Baugh 2012:127).

In general, “Hispanic Hollywood” is a controversial label.¹⁶⁹ Mary C. Beltrán has argued that it “provides insight into the problematic aspects of the media coverage that accompanied and to a large degree constructed Hollywood’s ‘Decade of the Hispanic’” (123). Scott M. Baugh, too, has cautioned to use the term “boom” with caution and argued against the term’s all-too-optimistic associations. Not only would this run the risk of “overshadow[ing] the long-standing traditions of indigenous and Latino cultural expressions on the American continent” (127). Baugh also argues that

the juxtaposition of ‘Hispanic’ and ‘Hollywood’ [...] suggests, for worse, that film and media artists had suddenly ‘made it’ and that previous generations’ problems with mainstream cultural production – stereotyping and typecasting, underrepresentation, uneven power distribution conveyed through Latino-related imagery [...] – were resolved or absolved. Or, for better, that Hispanic-plus-Hollywood combinations resulted in effective correlations among the ideas conceptualized as Hollywood-style mainstream and Hispanic culture and identities. (127)

Kathleen Newman (2001),¹⁷⁰ in turn, has taken issue not so much with the label “Hispanic Hollywood.” Instead, she has pointed to the way how the new wave of Latino/a feature film was celebrated in markedly back-handed ways symptomatic of a more encompassing discursive trend in the news media and in popular film and television. This trend questioned Latinos/as’ civic legitimacy in the face of the actual challenge the latter (as brokers of a multicultural national identity and in terms of their rapidly growing demographic) posed to supposedly stable conceptualizations of a monolingual cultural mainstream. Newman supports her claim by way of the introductory editorial of *Time*’s July 11, 1988 Latino/a themed special issue.¹⁷¹ The article, appropriately titled “‘A Latin Wave Hits the Mainstream’” claims¹⁷²:

Ever ready to borrow from other cultures, America is celebrating the spirited sounds and shapes, the flavors and flirtations of Hispanic style. The new influence is changing the way the country eats, dresses, dances, plays and learns – the way it lives. [...] In theaters and films, Latin playwrights and directors supply a fresh vision and voice. [...] And as they cross over into the American imagination, Hispanics are sending one irresistible message: we come bearing gifts. (“A Latin Wave,” 1988:3; in Newman 2001:68ff.

¹⁶⁸ This production underlines Latino/a filmmakers’ connection to the emerging alternative culture of the Sundance Institute (Esparza was one of the founding members of the institute) – a relationship I will briefly discuss this in a later section.

¹⁶⁹ As Beltrán has pointed out, the attribute “Hispanic” by and in itself is somewhat controversial and has largely fallen out of favor among Latinos/as for its Eurocentric semantics, a trend I have briefly discussed earlier on. In the context of what was hailed as “Hispanic Hollywood,” both the fact that the term “Hispanic” had gained currency with the U.S. Census’ introduction of its eponymous category and its usage in advertising marks it as a label largely imposed from the outside, also underlining its commercial connotations (123).

¹⁷⁰ Newman’s article was first published in 1992, thus in much closer chronological proximity to the “Decade.”

¹⁷¹ The issue’s famous cover, bearing the image of Edward James Olmos, will be considered in the later subchapter.

¹⁷² Excerpted by me for reasons of brevity.

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

Like Newman, I read the text as a document that relegates Latinos/as to the status of foreigners; one which calls their cultural achievements and contributions “new influences” and reduces their impact to matters of “entertainment and aesthetics but not the political-economic structures of the nation” (69). I also agree with her pithy decoding of the text’s superficially upbeat tone with its patronizing undercurrents, along with a reassuring gesture towards its supposedly Anglo-White readers as it reminds them, the “‘imaginary’ homogeneous, monolingual mainstream that it need not fear a multicultural Trojan horse” (69). The *Time* text draws our attention to the precarious cultural climate that provided the background for the first flourishing of Latino/a feature film, at a time when the U.S. were (if not the for the first time, to be sure) confronted with a need to come to terms with its multicultural rather than mainstream-margin dynamic. The heightened attention reserved for Latinos/as in the Decade of the Hispanic provided better opportunities for emerging Latino/a feature film and Latino/a film professionals in terms of conquering specialty and, for lack of a better term, mainstream or mass markets; at the same time, the visibility and (financial) success promised by this new interest in Latino/a themes was frequently predicated on concessions made to similar discourses of meritocracy – of earning, rather than claiming (in the fashion of William V. Flores’ “new citizens”) one’s place in society, and on casting *latinidad* as palatable, non-threatening entertainment.

Nevertheless, the 1980s were a time when Latino/a feature film was able to break new ground in terms of industry alliances, audience rapport and critical reception, and as Baugh has argued, instrumental in “solidify[ing] a Latin feature film canon and market.” (2012:129) Looking back, he argues that

[i]t may be fair to argue that the decade of the 1980s saw a significant decline in typecasting and stereotyping characters for Latino and minorities in American cinema. The numbers remain dismal and unfair, as NALIP [the National Association of Latino Independent Producers, A.R.] claim that Latinos stand as the ‘most underrepresented’ group in Hollywood despite being the ‘largest minority’ in the United States. Still, Latina and Latino artists likely gained greater opportunities and the cinema leveraged richer work and more sophisticated genre films for decades to follow the 1980s Hispanic Hollywood Boom. (129)

2.3 The pioneering force of Luis Valdez’s *Zoot Suit* (1981)

Luis Valdez’s *Zoot Suit* is a work that was not part of the “boom” yet illustrates some of the characteristics of and challenges for emerging “Hispanic Hollywood,” both in its ambition to celebrate Latino/a culture and create cross-audience appeal – and thus not least of all underlines the need for creating new arenas for exhibition. I agree with Rosa Linda Fregoso’s assessment (1994), according to which the film forever “changed the formula” according to which early activist films had been “made by Chicanos, about Chicanos, and fundamentally *for* Chicanos¹⁷³” (1994:129, author’s emphasis). *Zoot Suit* inaugurated a new era in Chicano/a-Latino/a cinema as the first long narrative feature produced with studio involvement (Universal Studios). At the same time, the circumstances both of its production and exhibition also show to what limited extent studios were actually willing to invest in “ethnic” specialty cinema: Even though Valdez was granted full artistic freedom, the film was made with a modest budget of 2.5 million USD and shot in less than two weeks (23). Its modest box office records, too, were in part the result of “lack of corporate investment for advertising and

¹⁷³ Fregoso insists on the male form due to what she sees as the early movement’s male-centredness (1994: 129).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

distributing the film” (24).¹⁷⁴ Rosa Linda Fregoso has pointed to how, on part of Universal, *Zoot Suit* reflected an attempt to conquer intersecting specialty markets; and ironically, as a product, *Zoot Suit* had been intended to be marketed alongside other urban / gang themed targeted by the CCC’s aforementioned protest campaign (23).

Based on Valdez’s own, eponymous stage play,¹⁷⁵ *Zoot Suit* saw a number of changes which, arguably, turned *Zoot Suit* “from semi-documentary dramatic narrative to heavily melodramatic musical [obscuring] the play’s more hard-hitting historical and social dimensions” (Broyles-González 1994 no pag., quoted in Fregoso 25) and therefore attested to the director’s “project of ‘mainstreaming’” (Broyles-González 1994, in Fregoso 1994: 26). Even though *Zoot Suit*’s crossover agenda is undisputable,¹⁷⁶ Yolanda Broyles-González’s verdict is oblivious to the film’s negotiation of a Mexican-American bicultural identity. The engaging musical score of Chicano/a Swing and the dance scenes enrich the viewing experience, but they also situate *Zoot Suit* in a specific culture and time, which, together with its social criticism, work against any sugar-coating tendencies. Fregoso, too, has noted the film’s “deep influence by Hollywood musicals” but maintained that “the film’s representation of dance as pleasurable and meaningful underscores as well *Zoot Suit*’s affinities to a Mexican vernacular tradition” (26).

In addition to being nominated for a Golden Globe and advancing Luis Valdez’s artistic and critical recognition beyond Latino/a circles, *Zoot Suit* is also notable as a milestone in the career of Edward James Olmos, the godfather of Latino/a feature film in the 1980s and 1990s, setting the course both for his special relationship with the media and fanbase. As Mary C. Beltrán (2007) notes, Olmos “skillfully conveyed pride, outrage, and cool in a mesmerizing performance. [...] [He] was to learn later in his career that Mexican Americans who saw the film considered him not just a star but a legend because he played El Pachuco.” (116) At the same time, the failure of El Pachuco to register as a role model with other, non-Chicano/a communities points to related challenges to forge a unified Latino/a audience (cf. Puente 2004: 120-25; 153; in Beltrán 2007: 116).

In her analysis, Rosa Linda Fregoso has described *Zoot Suit*’s indebtedness to a “Mexican performance tradition” and its dialog with “the dominant cinematic codes of enunciation” (27); yet, “in addition to this innovative, intertextual style, [it] is as much about cultural identity as it is about the Sleepy Lagoon case” (27). The film’s revisionist agenda served as a window into a pivotal time in the cultural memory of Mexican American communities in the U.S. Southwest. According to historian George J. Sánchez (1993), this was a time when, both as a result of the “deportation and repatriation campaigns” during the 1930s Great Depression and the experience of violence and marginalization

¹⁷⁴ The film’s limited financial base also resulted in a need for improvisation such as its usage of props (Fregoso 1994: 23). While *Zoot Suit* never disowns but instead emphasizes its roots in the theater (also through the filmic version’s addition of the musical component or El Pachuco’s breaking of the fourth wall to address the audience directly), its “theatricality” may have prompted scholars such as Gary D. Keller (1994) to see the film primarily as a “filmic rendition of the play” (164) than an original work.

¹⁷⁵ Published at *The Bedford Introduction to Drama*, ed. Jacobus A. Lee. *New York: Bedford/St. Martin's* 2009, 1256–1288.

¹⁷⁶ Here, the added romantic subplot involving Anglo-Jewish unionist Alice Bloomfield as a love interest for protagonist Henry “Hank” Reyna may count as a concession to audiences’ romantic tastes; at the same time, by incorporating this character-based on the historical character of Alice Greenfield McGrath, an activist serving as an assistant to the defense in conjunction with the Sleepy Lagoon Murder trial, the film is further anchored in the counter-history of the Mexican American 1940s experience (Hukill 1996, metroactive.com).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

of the 1940s, “a new cultural identity was forged within the context of a hostile, racist environment which sought to deny Mexican Americans a claim to being ‘Americans’” (12). In large part a courtroom drama, the film follows the infamous trial faced by a group of young *pachucos*, accused of their alleged involvement in the historical “Sleepy Lagoon Murder”¹⁷⁷; here, *Zoot Suit* points at the crucial role of the press as instigator both of physical violence and injustice at the hands of the courts against Chicanos/as at a time when Latinos/as were grossly underrepresented in Californian juries.¹⁷⁸ In the context of Mexican Americans’ bi-cultural situation and their frequent rejection by both dominant cultures¹⁷⁹; *Zoot Suit*’s *pachucos* serve as paradigms of this in-between, neither-nor state. All the while, *Zoot Suit* refrained from providing easy role models. El Pachuco is portrayed as an ambivalent figure, both a victim and facilitator of violence. At the film’s extradiegetic level, he serves as a narrator and *magister ludi*; at a diegetic level, as foil and alter ego to Hank Reyna. A morally ambivalent, proto-mythological figure, El Pachuco also reiterates a Valdez’s adaptation of a famous Mayan poem, “In Lak’ Ech” (You Are My Other Me).¹⁸⁰

For all its cultural specificity, however, *Zoot Suit* was definitely geared towards a more general audience, with its engaging narrative, stylish 1940s aesthetic and the sweeping soundtrack by Pachuco/a swing legend Lalo Guerrero and Daniel Valdez (the director’s brother, who also played the film’s other main role, zoot-suiter Henry “Hank” Reyna). Also in the light of El Pachuco’s limited appreciation among non-Chicanos/as, I argue that the film – much in the same way as the play on which it was based – was not, as some argued, properly understood by Latino/a communities with diverging histories; the reservations among East Coast audiences (Latino/a and beyond)¹⁸¹ may be explicable above all by the same cultural specificity which made it so appealing to West Coast, and particularly Chicano/a, audiences. The box office records show that on its opening weekend in October 1981, *Zoot Suit* made modest USD 63,356 (“Zoot Suit,” imdb.com). To compare, on its respective opening weekend in July 1987, *La Bamba*, Valdez’s later box office hit, revolving around the tragically short life of Chicano Rock ‘n’ Roll star Ritchie Valens (Richard Valenzuela), scored USD 5.651.990 (“La Bamba”; imdb.com). No doubt it offered greater crossover potential due to its tribute to “a wider ‘nostalgia’ trend in popular culture” (Fregoso 1994:39); in addition, it included a more visibly pan-Latino/a cast, starring Nuyorican Esai Morales in a prominent role as Ritchie Valens’s older brother, Bob, and, as I have mentioned earlier, even a non-Latino in the main lead, Lou Diamond Phillips.

¹⁷⁷ A criminal case from 1942 involving the violent death of a young Mexican American, which has remained unresolved to this day. The film also refers to Los Angeles’ notorious “Zoot Suit Riots” (June 1943) when U.S. marines randomly assaulted Chicano/a, Filipino/a and African American youth.

¹⁷⁸ Ian F. Haney-López (2004) has discussed the lack of ethnic diversity in Los Angeles court system, which continued well into the 1960s; in effect this would fail to provide a jury of their peers for people of color (5; data referenced: Villalobos 1972: 109-10).

¹⁷⁹ See also the famous diatribe by Mexican poet and Nobel laureate, Octavio Paz, “El pachuco y otros extremos” (“The Pachuco and Other Extremes”), published in *El Laberinto de la Soledad* (1950; *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, 1961).

¹⁸⁰ Published as part of Valdez’s long poem, “Pensamiento Serpentino” (1973, in Valdez 1990). For a critical discussion of *Zoot Suit*’s depiction of the Chicano/a’s “struggle between the self and other [... as] reproduced in the Pachuco (as thought) and Hank (as being)” with attention to Valdez’s drawing on usage of an ethno-nationalist, male-centered agenda, see Fregoso 1994:32-38.

¹⁸¹ The play was very successful among West Coast audiences but failed on Broadway, even though Olmos scored a Tony nomination. Yolanda Broyles-González has argued that the play was not successful with East Coast audiences because of its blatant criticism of racism; local Latinos/as’ lack of familiarity with *pachuco* culture with its signature look of pompadour coiffures and “drapes” (oversized, broad shouldered suits and baggy trousers); and apparent reservations against successful western premieres (Broyles-González 1994: 189-95; Beltrán 2009: 115ff.).

Thus, on the one hand, by way of its sophisticated mixing of genres, its drawing on Chicano/a and other cultural traditions and its timely counter-historical project, *Zoot Suit* raised the bar for Chicano/a-Latino/a film to come while on the other hand also displaying obstacles against gaining wider visibility within a pan-Latino/a community building project and beyond (the “mainstream”), such as its pronounced Chicano/a cultural sensibility and harsh social critique. Furthermore, it underlined the industry’s only reluctant engagement with creating an arena for Latino/a film, a tendency which, as I argue, has continued in the decades to come.

2.4 Creating a habitat for Latino/a cinema

I argue that through generating more commercial, entertainment compatible formats such as the narrative feature film, Latino/a cinema entered the “field of film production,” namely, Hollywood. This highly consequential move meant it had to compete with other players in an arena by no means a level playing field. While I have to limit my discussion to some points I regard as being relevant to U.S. Latino/a film festivals, a crucial issue, as veteran filmmaker, producer and entrepreneur Moctesuma Esparza has argued in an interview in 2012, has been the lack of establishing an overall “habitat” fit to cultivate audiences for Latino/a film able both to withstand and change according to keep up with the volatility of a globalizing media landscape (Esparza quoted in Davila 2012).¹⁸² While I interpret Esparza’s pronouncement as a demand directed towards the industry – for the cultivation of an enduring “Latino/a brand,” I argue that it can also be read as an appeal to organizations promoting Latino/a film, from festivals to advocacy associations and Latino/a identified industry outlets. Esparza’s statement was made after the cancellation of LALIFF’s 2011 edition, prompting him and a number of other industry insiders to comment on the more encompassing, ongoing difficulties for Latino/a film professionals to get ahead in the business. Ironically, 2012 in turn saw the demise of Esparza’s own distribution company, Maya Productions, whose under the radar distribution of *Sleep Dealer* (2008), the celebrated and award-winning narrative feature debut of Peruvian American filmmaker Alex Rivera – one of the most important and original contributions to Latino/a cinema in the new millennium – will be discussed in conjunction with a short subchapter on Latinos/as at Sundance (A. Vargas 2014).

In fact, Esparza’s call for a Latino/a habitat recalls Marijke de Valck’s description of the more aggressive “Miramaxation” marketing procedures launched at Cannes and other business festivals in the 1990s and later. As Geoff King (2009) has argued, one decade earlier, the aforementioned transformations of the film market in terms of identifying specialty (“independent,” “crossover”) markets were parts of a more encompassing development that saw an overall commodification of cultural production,¹⁸³ also inspiring the so-called “indiewood” phenomenon of the 1990s and after, a trend

in which significant portions of an “independent” cinema defined previously as more separate,

¹⁸² “Twenty five years ago movies like, *Born in East LA*, *Stand and Deliver*, *Milagro Beanfield War*, *La Bamba*, every two years these movies were being made, reaching a growing audience. For their cost they turned profits. But only about three filmmakers were making these films and there was not enough support from studios to create a habit for audience, a HABITAT” (“The Drive”; chicanafromchicago.com; capitalization in the original).

¹⁸³ Geoff King draws on Martyn E. Lee’s (2009) observation of the 1980s as “as a period that saw ‘an enormous increase in the commodification and “capitalization” of cultural events,’ another process in which the institutionalization of indie and the development of Indiewood cinema can be seen as component parts” (Lee 1993: 135; quoted in King 9).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

alternative or in some cases oppositional, became increasingly commodified and brand-marketed, and thereby penetrated by the prevailing forms of contemporary capitalism. (King 2009: 9)

Not least of all, a culmination of this trend is symbolized by Miramax's eventual sale to entertainment giant Disney in 1993. In this context, the long-standing criticism according to which the industry and marketers never understood how to market Latino/a film resulted in insufficient marketing strategies of Latino/a film then and now (cf. Rosen 1996; Halter 2000; Miller 2010) – despite Latinos/as long-standing, continued substantial impact on domestic cinematic, media and communications markets.¹⁸⁴ As Marilyn Halter (2000) has observed, it was as late as in the late 1990s that the industry finally “beg[an] to court Latino moviegoers” (131). She has noted the industry's reluctance to invest in a more in-depth study of Latinos/as' film and television consumption habits, which in turn has resulted in continued, notoriously poor marketing strategies to these ancillary markets and “far less sophistic[ation] in their outreach strategies when trying to target this population than with their general promotional appeals” (131). Moreover, the industry's research on Latino/a film and television consumption was also hampered by its homogenization tendencies, which ignored the actual cultural, class-income, and linguistic diversity of Latinos/as¹⁸⁵; these tendencies can be seen to reflect a more general failure of advertisers to address Latinos/as, as Arlene Dávila's (2001) pioneering study has shown.

One example from the very beginnings of Latino/a feature film underlines the industry's difficulties in understanding the Latino/a film market and generating a habitat; at the same time, it also draws attention to the singular impact and demand for early Latino/a-Chicano/a cinema which also shines a light on how the diversification of film production and audience interests has made marketing Latino/a film incomparably harder; in this context, film festivals serve an invaluable role in generating attention; sometimes with the help of star power. David Rosen (1996), who has followed the distribution histories of three 1980s Latino/a feature films,¹⁸⁶ provides the example of *The Corrido of Gregorio Cortez* (1981), which, for its box office success, was to rely to a lesser degree on the run

¹⁸⁴ Marilyn Halter (2000) refers to a report from the Motion Picture Association of America according to which “in just one year, from 1996 to 1997, ticket sales to Latinos increased by a formidable 22 percent, making them the fastest-growing ethnic group among domestic film audiences” (131). She quotes a Nielsen study from around the same time according to which “in Los Angeles 45 percent of the prime moviegoing age cohort, those from twelve to thirty-four years old, were Latino” (131).

¹⁸⁵ Pointing to the historical and prevailing failure on part of marketers to investigate Latino/a film / media spectatorship and consumption patterns, Toby Miller (2010) has also emphasized that any such endeavors are aggravated due to the diversity of longer-standing and particularly immigrant Latino/a consumers: “The idea of a unitary Latino audience is especially unmanageable for capital, because so many people are recent arrivals from modern nation-states, unlike the majority of US citizens, and have varying attitudes to language retention and use. Their high aggregate numbers are complicated once the term ‘Latino’ is broken down by dominant language, region of origin, region of domicile, nationality, race and class” (144; BrE). It needs to be said, however, that some progress has been made; for instance, a Nielsen Report published one year earlier (Behr & Díaz 2009) indeed took on the challenge to sort Latino/a audiences by language preference (“English-dominant,” “Spanish-dominant,” and “Bilingual.” One important finding was that certain factors could bridge linguistic complexities, such as familial cross-generational cinematic consumption: “For Hispanics, in-home language preference – categorized as either English-dominant, Spanish-dominant or bilingual – plays a smaller role in the movie-going experience than might be expected. While language differences often exist among Hispanic families, the ability to participate in an activity as a family unit supersedes individual language preference (Behr & Díaz 2009).” Latino/a film festivals have long used this knowledge in their programming choices to enhance their cross-audience appeal, particularly in their family programs and high school show-cases.

¹⁸⁶ *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez; El Norte; and Stand and Deliver* (Rosen 1996).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

of the mill promotion techniques of its indie-industry distributor, Embassy, than on the resourceful and sometimes subversive¹⁸⁷ outreach strategies by a handful of film professionals and activists, the so-called “Cortez Group.” The latter included the film’s director, Robert M. Young, producer, Moctesuma Esparza, and, leading man Edward James Olmos. Olmos’s huge popularity was another critical factor for the “cultivati[on of] solid community interest” (1992:254). Rosen describes one such publicity event that took place in the Bay Area in 1982:

At one of the final Embassy sponsored preview-screenings at the 300-seat Four Star Theatre, the ‘Cortez Group’ (unbeknownst to Embassy) printed and distributed 3,000 tickets. Swarms of ticket holders descended on the theater and Embassy management was, to say the least, disturbed. Those who could not get in were entertained by mariachis, jugglers, fire eaters, and local activists, after being calmed by the charismatic Olmos and his consummate crowd-handling skills. (253)

Olmos’s usage of his celebrity appeal to create a buzz for *Gregorio Cortez* and his sense of mission¹⁸⁸ both foreshadow his unique role as foremost representative of a new kind of film activism that was more commodified (entertainment oriented) yet retained a traditional culturally affirming, didactic bent. As SDLFF’s director van Thillo stated, it was Olmos’s visit to his 1997 festival, *Cine Estudiantil*, which had made him understand the importance of celebrities both in terms of cultural celebration and cross-audience building (E. V. Thillo Interview 2009). Apart from the example of star power, but also in conjunction with the alternative festival circuit’s capacity to enhance a film’s recognition and marketability, there is also the more contemporary example of Cruz Angeles’ feature *Don’t Let Me Drown* (2009), to be discussed at more length in the SDLFF chapter. The film’s complicated distribution history and near-closetedness due to investor interventions shines a light on how Latino/a filmmakers, as they venture out into the field of film production, have to navigate the logic of industry (exclusivity as a means to enhance a film’s value) and own their prioritization of exhibition as a means to connect to audiences and, if possible, create a buzz through these experiences.

In addition to underlining the industry’s frequent lack of recognizing the market power of Latinos/as, *Gregorio Cortez*’s exhibition history is also an important reminder of the changed situation faced by contemporary generations of film professionals. Today, the positive development of an increased Latino/a film production (to some extent also due to the Digital Turn and an ensuing wider accessibility of filmmaking tools) also means that there are more films competing against one another in the “ethnic” specialty market, including, as I have argued earlier, frequently subsidized Latin American film productions. While today’s filmmakers have at their disposal different promotional tools (such

¹⁸⁷ Their different approaches became apparent when, after the film’s initial box office success, the distributor “decided to push aggressively for a national playoff” (Rosen 1996: 254), to the effect that audience rapport declined and the film was pulled out of theaters. Members of the “Cortez Group” subsequently formed a distribution subdivision and enhanced promotion, resulting in a sound box office revenue of additional USD 100,000 (ibid.).

¹⁸⁸ Particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, the passionate and tireless promotion of his film projects became a key characteristic of Olmos’s dual social activist-film professional public persona. Beltrán cites Pat Aufderheide’s observation according to which ever since *Zoot Suit*, Olmos had “beg[un] to receive invitations to speak for organizations in part because of the symbolic importance of El Pachuco” (Aufderheide 1983:60; in Beltrán 2009:120). Later, in regard to *Stand and Deliver*, in which Olmos played dedicated math teacher Jaime Escalante, Olmos “also engaged in countless screenings for educator associations, advocacy associations, and even-then President Ronald Reagan that played a key role in the visibility and later success of the film” (121). And in regard to Olmos’s promotion of his anti-gang film, *American Me* (1992), Fregoso has described the actor-director’s “fervor weirdly akin to an evangelist” who unleashes “sermons” onto his audiences (1994: 124).

as social media) and additional production fund generating options that sometimes help to limit dependencies (including crowdfunding), and while poor marketing on behalf of the industry may be to some extent intrinsic to smaller specialty productions at the fringes of Hollywood, what seems not to have changed is the somewhat unpredictable commitment on part of the industry beyond an interest to tap niche markets.

2.5 Edward James Olmos: Broker of “Hispanic Hollywood” to *pater familias* of Latino/a feature film

Celebrated Chicano actor, director, and social activist Edward James Olmos is of particular importance to my study since he represents the more commercial, mainstreaming, and harmonizing aspects of so-called “Hispanic Hollywood” and thus a paradigm shift in Latino/a cinema. As I have argued with reference to Kathleen Newman (2001), “Hispanic Hollywood” frequently framed Latinos/as as cultural “Others” in need of legitimation as rightful citizens. In many ways, Olmos, who, along with director Luis Valdez, has remained the most prominent Chicano/a film professional ever since Latino/a film entered Hollywood, has fulfilled these expectations. Mary C. Beltrán (2009) claims that Olmos’s distinctive role has been as much the product of his considerable professional qualities and activism as it has been media-made and, occasionally, also shaped by his own talent for self-promotion. This means that to wider audiences, Olmos’s “star image as a tireless worker for the community [...] supported the comfortable construction of the 1980s Latino films by the mainstream news media as colorful and wellmeaning, but not overly aggressive” (126).

While Beltrán’s account focuses on Olmos’s film career in the 1980s, for my study, his co-founding of LALIFF (1997) and its backing organization, the Latino International Film Institute (LIFI, since 2006; after 2018: LFI) are equally important, as is his co-founding of and continued position as chairman of Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB).¹⁸⁹ In this subchapter, however, I will show that Olmos’s previous and continuing cinematic career, his rank as social and film activist and his powerful public image and media rapport all have contributed to his obtainment of prominent and powerful positions at LALIFF as well as with LPB. One out of five such consortia in liaison with the Congress-created Corporation of Public Broadcasting (CPB), LPB is one of the prime platforms for the (production) support, showcasing, distribution and promotion of U.S. Latino/a film. Olmos’s role at LPB is highly symbolic because it fuses the more mainstream-compatible entertainment logic which has given decisive impetus to his own career in film and television with Chicano/a-Latino/a media advocacy issues. This marks the end of an era represented by the National Latino Communications Center (NLCC) – significantly shaped by Chicano/a documentary filmmaker José Luis Ruiz – during a time when the fight for access was fought by first wave Latino/a film activists in often much more confrontational ways. While NLCC’s demise was to a considerable degree the result of a number of aggravating factors, including fiscal irregularities and personal issues, I argue that LPB’s succession as CPB’s Latino/a consortium and its considerable edge over other competitors for this position is to no small degree owed to Olmos’s successful career in a more commodified and palatable Latino/a cinema, his considerable clout among Chicano/a audiences and a non-threatening media image that also appeals to non-Latino/a audiences.

¹⁸⁹ remained in this position. In some sources, the organization’s initial designation, Latino Public Broadcasting Project (LpBp) has been retained; throughout my study, I will use LPB.

2.5.1 The man, the myth

The pioneering achievements of Edward James Olmos in Latino/a and particularly Chicano/a film are undisputed, even though his role as ubiquitous pater familias has long been contested by a younger generation of artists and activists. In his satirical poster art “Not Another Latino Movie” (2000), cartoonist Lalo Alcaraz chides Latino/a feature films for having become merely formulaic, “rated R for repetition” (Alcaraz 2000) and tending towards self-stereotypization. His parody of a “typical” film advertisement for one such Latino/a movie thus includes the inevitable “mandatory role” for Olmos, whose participation is “required by law” (ibid.). And indeed, we see a grim-looking Olmos along with such stock characters as the “saintly *abuela* (grandmother),” the “incredibly stupid illegal immigrant,” as well as an “ex-con *cholo* (homeboy) with a heart of gold,” and an “assimilated cousin ashamed to be Latina” (Alcaraz 2000).

Indeed a fixture in Latino/a cinema to this day,¹⁹⁰ Edward James Olmos, born in Los Angeles in 1947 to parents of Mexican and Mexican-American descent (Beltrán 108), starred in the foreground of numerous Latino/a film productions ever since his breakthrough role in *Zoot Suit* (1981) and has long emerged as a doyen of Latino/a film. Olmos has given a face to milestone films of Chicano/a Latino/a cinema such as the aforementioned *Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*, *Seguín*, and *Stand and Deliver*; to *My Family* (1995, Gregory Nava), *A Million to Juan* (1994, Paul Rodriguez), *Selena* (1997, Gregory Nava), and *The Wonderful Ice Cream Suit* (Stuart Gordon, 1998). He directed the *American Me* (1994) and *Walkout* (2006) and also added credits as producer to his name.¹⁹¹

In mainstream cinema and television, Olmos has acted in memorable supporting roles, where he has been usually cast as “ethnic” character (Christon 1991, no pag.)¹⁹²; early films include *Wolfen* (1981, Michael Wadleigh); *Blade Runner* (1983, Ridley Scott)¹⁹³; and *Triumph of the Spirit* (1989, Robert M. Young). Olmos has worked in episodic network, public, and cable television productions. High profile roles include that of Lieutenant Martín Castillo in *Miami Vice* (1984-90); as patriarch Jess Gonzalez in *American Family* (Gregory Nava, 2002-04); Captain William Adama in *Battlestar Galactica*,

¹⁹⁰ After a miniscule role in Robert M. Young’s *¡Alambrista!* (1977), Olmos repeatedly worked with Young, including his own directorial works, *American Me* (1991) and *Walkout* (2006), both produced by Young.

¹⁹¹ In the late 1980s, enthusiastic about story behind *Stand and Deliver*, he not only decided to take the role of Jaime Escalante but also acted as co-producer (Beltrán 120). His producing assignments also encompass the more recent social drama *Filly Brown* (2012), co-directed by his son Michael D. Olmos, featuring Olmos in a cameo role.

¹⁹² Here, Beltrán has pointed to a noxious consequence of the industry’s casting strategies which usually would limit Olmos to a benevolent, desexualized ethnic character: “[...] Olmos’s status as character actor and a physical appearance that likely precluded producers from viewing him as a romantic lead, arguably ensured that his stardom did not disturb the film and television industry’s racial paradigms even while he was held up as a representative of the new ‘Hispanics’ in Hollywood. Given Hollywood’s preferred ‘Latin’ look, and the comfort of producers with casting Latina/os as a range of nonwhite ethnicities, Olmos’s tan skin tone, indigenous features, and rough-hewn skin mark him as always, comfortably ethnic” (125). Olmos’s roles as head of a Latino/a family (*Gregorio Cortez*; *American Family*; *Selena*) also conform to these limitations. The only exception is his role as *Battlestar Galactica*’s William Adama, who he has an Anglo ex-wife; however, as a more mature character, he is safely removed from being viewed as the (stereotypically!) young romantic hero. I argue that Beltrán’s observation shines a particularly problematic light on *American Me*, whose Montoya Santana (played by Olmos) is as far removed from a romantic lead as can be but whose brutal sexuality conforms to the racist stereotype of the “ethnic” villain.

¹⁹³ Olmos also reprised his role as Gaff in the *Blade Runner 2049* sequel (Denis Villeneuve 2018).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

(2004-09). There are also numerous smaller roles in series such as *West Wing* (1999/2000) and *Dexter* (2011). (“Edward James Olmos”; imdb.com)

According to Mary C. Beltrán, the first blossoming of Olmos’s career in the 1980s coincided with a shift within the film industry as Latinos/ as began to produce films [i.e., feature films, A.R.] based on their own perspective and stories and as Latina/o actors were much more likely to be cast as in compelling Latino/a roles. [Olmos’s] growing career also signaled the new possibilities for Latino/a stardom in the shifting media landscape (118).

Importantly, as “Face of the [Hispanic] Decade,”¹⁹⁴ Olmos’s impressive career had been further advanced by massive promotion through the media. Beltrán has deconstructed the many interrelations between Olmos’s achievements in film and television, talent (including his considerable ability of obtaining creative control in his television and film projects¹⁹⁵), his high-powered social activism, and the role of his long-standing courtship both by and of the media. One example involves the very episode that promoted Olmos as “Face”: Not only did he make the cover of previously quoted *Time* issue dedicated to “Hispanics”; the cover art in fact showed a specially commissioned mural showing Olmos’s countenance. While this back story underlines the to some extent ambivalent, fabricated nature of Olmos’s stardom, it is also telling of the magazine’s strategy to privilege Olmos’s voice over those of others also working in the domain of Latino/a cinema, and to authenticate his advocacy of a more reconciliatory, palatable take on the Latino/a experience while appropriating a culturally specific, namely, Latino/a public art form. Similarly, Beltrán has argued that the image proposed a “fantasy resolution” (127) to the ongoing multiple disadvantages experienced by Latinos/as and ethnic-racialized minorities:

The *Time* editors, in glibly imitating this populist art form that Chicano (and similarly, Puerto Rican) artists and community members began to take up in the late 1960s as a means to creatively express their values and struggles with oppression, arguably elide the Mexican American experience, activism and art with an art work that instead reflects a distinctly non-political “Hispanic” identity. [...] In the process, popular culture usurped politics, while *Time* created a national star. Such an artistic construction could reassure readers that “Hispanics” were not threatening because they no longer needed or wished to fight political battles. (127)

I want to turn to *American Me* (1992) as one key example illustrating that Olmos’s special relationship with the media and his overall positive public image had sufficiently solidified during the 1980s – in fact, to an extent which would allow him not only to make a harrowing and possibly alienating film on the perils of ganglife but also to star in the main role of Montoya Santana, a fictive character presiding over the real-life Chicano prison mafia, “La Eme.”

¹⁹⁴ The epithet originally goes back to the cover of *TIME*, 07/11/1988 (Beltrán 2009:110).

¹⁹⁵ One early example, which is characteristic of Olmos’s engineering of a public image that emphasized his own cultural-artistic integrity and considered the sensibilities of his audiences but also revealed what I would see as a genuine sense of mission concerns his role as a character of Mohawk origin in Michael Wadleigh’s *Wolfen* (1981). Here, Olmos was said to have made it a requirement to first make a casting call for a Native American actor; it was only after the producers had not been able to produce one that he accepted the role. Beltrán also notes the very publicity of his demands, yet adds that hat “his casting later received the official tribal sanction” (118).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

In this light, Lawrence Christon's sympathetic long editorial in the *Los Angeles Times* (1991) upon the film's release is inextricably tied to the narrative of "self-sacrifice" (Newman) defining Olmos's professional career and activism. The article hence must also be considered as a reflection of Olmos's "self-promot[ional]" savvy and "skillfu[l]" construction of his 'hardworking underdog' image" (Beltrán 2009: 126). In ways that yet again depict Olmos according to "discourses of determination and talent" (Beltrán 118), the film's genesis and production story are rendered in ways that emphasize Olmos's willpower and charismatic ability to secure the support of others by his sense of a worthy and vital mission, which is to tell a story intended as a deterrent of the "cancer [...] of [...] gangs (Olmos quoted in Christon 1991, no pag.)." For instance, there is the account of how Olmos made the administration of Sacramento's Folsom State Prison comply with his demands as to time allowed on the premises and their eventual consent as to "ag[ing] the prison, dirty[ing] it up, peel[ing] the paint," all by his sheer persistence and the persuasive power of the film's message, "Say 'No' to Gangs" (Christon 1991).

In fact, when making *American Me*, Olmos had reached a point in his career that allowed him to be linked to a film that departed from the wholesome, culturally affirming images of Latinidad. For one, the film's vital mission was highlighted by a familiar discourse of (Latino/a) self-sacrifice. Olmos's association with self-sacrifice has been first analyzed by Kathleen Newman (2001) with regard to related trends in the portrayal of Latino/a film and television characters starting in the mid-1980s¹⁹⁶. In ways resonating with her aforementioned observations on Hispanic Hollywood's championing of a meritocracy discourse, Edward James Olmos had come to embody the self-denial expected from Latinos/as on their way to earning citizenship. Mary C. Beltrán has argued along similar lines but placed a greater emphasis on Olmos's own encouragement of this image as a means to avoid being viewed as a threat to the White status quo:

In journalists' discussion of 'Hispanic Hollywood' of the 1980s, [Olmos] was framed as a self-sacrificing community leader. As such, he could symbolically reassure the (presumed white) American public that Latina/o film production – and Latina/o activism more generally – would work within and not against U.S. social institutions" (130).

In this context, it is important to remember that Olmos's key such role was that of dedicated math teacher Jaime Escalante in *Stand and Deliver*, "stress[ing] self-sacrifice and hard work rather than interrogating the racism of the U.S. school system" (126). In the same manner, the *Los Angeles Times* editorial mentions Olmos's "anguish" (Christon 1991, no pag.) as to the dual responsibility involved: as to Universal's USD 16 million budget on the one hand and the film's representation of the Chicano/a community in terms of gangs, violence and crime on the other hand, given cultural activists' long-standing fight against such debilitating stereotypes. Yet while owning his indebtedness to the commu-

¹⁹⁶ Newman (2001) has argued that the role of Latino/a self-sacrifice was part of "a specific change that took place between 1985 and 1988 in the representation of latino [sic] male actors as warrior-citizens, specifically as Vietnam veterans. On the lesser scale of the history of U.S. film and television industries, it is the moment in which a new narrative formula specifically involving latinos emerged from twists of older war story formulae: in this newer formula a latino sacrifices himself for the specific good of his anglo military comrades, even if he and his comrades are part of a multiracial group" (61). In a similar logic, Olmos's role as Martín Castillo in *Miami Vice*, Castillo, Newman notes, had been applauded as "moral center" in the media (Hamill 1986:52; quoted in Newman 2001:66).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

nity, Olmos is quoted to point at his own sacrifices¹⁹⁷. Resorting to Messianic symbolism, Lawrence Christon describes Olmos in terms of “carrying the weight of Latino community expectation, which has been building on his back ever since he first talked to a group of students at Roosevelt High 20 years ago.” Similar undertones accompany Christon’s account of how Olmos’s role as an activist is in fact inextricable from that as a film professional, even to the point of threatening to eclipse the latter:

Like *Stand and Deliver*, *American Me* is a fusion of his two lives, one as an actor and the other as a spokesman for the Latino community, where he enjoys a genuine hero's status. He speaks on average 150 times a year in schools, detention homes, juvenile halls, migrant worker camps, prisons and American Indian reservations, a practice begun early in his acting career. He was one of the first to organize a relief fund for the victims of the Mexico City earthquake in 1985. After *Stand and Deliver* was made, he worked with corporations such as Pepsico, Arco, IBM and General Motors to have the movie distributed to every high school in the country. In fact, many of the nation's leaders are probably more familiar with Olmos through his humanitarian efforts than his movies. (Christon 1991)

In *American Me*, too, Olmos was able to draw on the idea of sacrifice when playing the anti-heroic gang leader. Contrary to his equally complex and morally fraught role as El Pachuco ten years earlier,¹⁹⁸ Olmos now was able to build on his dual and intersecting track record both as a “hard-working and talented actor of the Method variety” (Beltrán 125) and social activist. All this helped when promoting *American Me*, which turned out to be another milestone though no box office hit.

Moreover, Olmos was able to conquer much if not all¹⁹⁹ resistance coming from Latino/a media activists by publicly soliciting their approval when submitting his script to the National Hispanic Media Association (NHMC, since 1986; nhmc.org). Did they really have a choice, given Olmos’s high standing in the media and his massive community fan base? As Fregoso tells, “The association did not (or really, could not), stop the production, but its chair, Esther Rentería, publicly chided Olmos, stating that the group’s members ‘regret making the film’” (Renteria quoted in García 1992: 41; Fregoso 1994:126). Despite her own reservations, such as the film’s stereotypical representations of the family (cf. 126) and problematic gender politics – which, ironically yet predictably, shift the savior role to female characters such as Santana’s girlfriend, Julie (cf. 133ff.), Rosa Linda Fregoso has stated that the film’s tantamount merit consisted of how the film had “return[ed] to ‘the aesthetics of reception,’ to the politics of spectatorship (129),” a departure from the more mainstreaming strategies of previous Latino/a feature films when “cultural specificity as mode of address takes a backseat in [a] quest for universality (130).” She notes that

[The film’s] race and gender specificity speaks mostly to young Chicano males, representing those

¹⁹⁷ “It makes me cry and overwhelms and humbles me, what people have given at this point in my life,” said Olmos. “This is my life, my barrio. I’ve given my life and soul to it” (Christon 1991).

¹⁹⁸ A notable exception was his albeit minor role as Mexican General Santa Anna in Jesús S. Treviño’s *Seguín*, also early in his career (1982).

¹⁹⁹ Luis Valdez is on record for having expressed reservations against the “street” (or gang) genre embraced by Olmos and the film’s “overriding negativism” (Lovell 1992:1; in Fregoso 1994:126). On the other hand, though, Hollywood’s Chicano/a filmmakers were disappointed by the fact that the “film did not make a profit, [...] thereby deflating the hopes of Hollywood-bound Chicanos for future studio financing” (Fregoso 1994:126).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

unfortunate Chicanos behind locked bars, the youth caught up in the urban East-bank [sic] of Los Angeles where youth unemployment tops 30 percent and high-school dropout rates are close to 80 percent. The film also addresses parents of these youth, rendering a dignity to children whose humanity has been stripped, not by their fathers, but by capitalism's inhumane disdain for the poor and disempowered. These are the viewers 'inscribed in the filmmakers' project.' (131)

For all the film's worthy intentions, the well-deserved acclaim for Olmos's inhabiting the challenging role of Montoya Santana, and the film's lingering impact on filmmakers to come²⁰⁰, it also needs to be said, and again in the light of Olmos's usual roles as "comfortably ethnic" character that the film does not disturb hegemonic racial paradigms because the film's violence occurs predominantly among Latinos/as and / or members of the socially abject caste of prison inmates. In fact, Olmos never again made a film as polarizing as *American Me*. His subsequent films returned to a stronger commitment to crossover potentialities, such as in a number of collaborations with Chicano director Gregory Nava (*My Family*; *Selena*; and the PBS series *American Family*), all of which center on the Chicano/a family and on Olmos as strict yet benevolent patriarch. Rosa Linda Fregoso (2003) has identified the political bent of these films as 1990s Chicano/a-Latino/a neo-conservative "American Family Romance," in a time when "[t]he New Right sought to cultivate the 'Hispanic vote' [...], emphasizing compatibility between the Republican social agenda and the strong family and religious values they perceived in Latino/a communities (72)." Her assessment of 1995's *My Family* speaks to all three productions mentioned, with family relations portrayed conforming to "that of the 'centrist neo-family movement': the family defined in terms of heterosexual marriage, nuclear bloodlines, and gender hierarchies" (Stacey 1996: 48; quoted in Fregoso 2003: 72). However, I see this normalizing refrain to "shared values" and the trope of a trans-border *familia* of the 1990s also through the lens of the heightened vulnerability of California's Latino/a populace with the increased rhetoric against (Latino/a) immigrants and attendant political initiatives such as Proposition 187 (Hayes-Bautista 2004: 118ff.).

In sum, I argue that Olmos has been able to draw on his immense popularity within and beyond Chicano/a audiences, his rank as accomplished actor and director, and his positive image in the media that he came to be viewed as a reconciliatory figure and a *pater familias* of Latino/a cinema. The latter were key for the realization of his more recent roles, ever since the late 1990s, in conjunction with LALIFF / LIFI as well as LPB. Particularly after the turn of the millennium, these positions further confirmed his role as a godfather of Chicano/a-Latino/a cinema while his own active role in the limelight gradually shifted to include more directing and producing assignments. In conjunction with Latino/a-Chicano/a film activism, however, Olmos embodied the more problematic aspect of a mediated, public image of social activism eclipsing his film activist potential – problematic because it continued in the vein of citizenship as something to be earned rather than a birthright.

2.5.2 As media activist

Given his successful career, media appeal as well as an image as conciliatory public face of *latinidad*, Olmos fit the bill not only when the City of Los Angeles was looking for a personage fit to "meet the demand of the Latino population and create a Latino Film Festival" (Davila 2010), future LALIFF

²⁰⁰ The film has continued to spark debate among filmmakers as to the portrayal of gang life and so-called "urban" themes. See also my interview with Adrián Nava in the Bay Area chapter.

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

(since 1997) but also in 1998, when CPB was looking for an organization to take over from NLCC as Latino/a media consortium. As Chon A. Noriega (2000: 181-86) has described in great detail, back in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as a consequence both of the privatization tendencies in the public media sector and of the heightened support granted to minority consortia after the Public Telecommunications Act (PTA, 1988), NLCC had been developed from the so-called Latino Consortium (LC; 1974-89)²⁰¹ with its ties to Los Angeles based public broadcasting outlet KCET to an independent “non-profit media arts center with its own board of directors” (181). In the mid-1990s, however, pressed by “the increasing loss of federal funding” (182), NLCC was forced to “[look] for ‘self-sustaining forms of revenue,’ staking a claim as an ‘investor’ in its funding and distribution activities” (ibid). While one important form of revenue was NLCC’s video distribution service, whose crowning achievement was the pioneering four episode, critically acclaimed documentary series, ¡*Chicano! The History of the Mexican-American Civil Rights Movement* (PBS 1996; José Luis Ruiz serving as executive producer; Héctor Galán, as series producer),²⁰² Noriega suggests that it was a combination of the organization’s fast growth, challenges both in management and service of its clients, “personality conflicts” (184) and fiscal irregularities (leading to the indictment of a former NLCC business manager) which contributed to NLCC’s falling out of grace with public broadcasting mother organization CPB. CPB responded in ways “more predatory than processual” (185), such as withholding of monies for almost two years (1997-8), thus harming individual media productions in progress; much aggression was directed against executive director Ruiz, even to the point that “a reinstatement of funds [was made] contingent on [his] firing” (185).

At the time, the case was deeply controversial. On LPB’s first, interim appointment, Noriega had questioned the suitability of Olmos for the job, a “celebrity actor with good intentions, commercial ambitions, and limited understanding of public television” (185). Noriega criticized CPB’s decision as “a publicity coup [...] den[ying] Latino producers’ equitable participation in public television” (185). On part of CPB, on the other hand, it seems that Olmos was regarded as a mediator fit to reconcile the different interest groups, including: the independent producers that had worked with NLCC; former NLCC staff; CPB; and not least of all, the public. In the Fall of 1998, LPB was appointed interim successor despite the fact that CPB had been approached by two different groups of media activists, one requesting “the release of production funds,” the other signaling their interest in continuing NLCC’s work while “reclaim[ing] the USD 1.2 million infrastructure support that the CPB had committed to but never delivered” (185). In fact, as one former Cine Acción affiliate stated (name undisclosed), other producers tried to “go after the opportunity that NLCC left” but “Eddie and his people had such pull, it was pretty hard to go up against them” (Annette Rukwied and N.N., Personal Communication, 09/28/2018).²⁰³ Noriega has claimed that “the CPB responded to neither group (which included nearly one hundred members combined)” (185). However, his criticism that the CPB did not look for “input from other Latino organizations” turns out to be inaccurate, at least according to the CPB press release publicized on September 28, 1999 in which LPB’s finalized role as successor

²⁰¹ LC had been established by KCET as a “programming cooperative of PBS stations with large Chicano audiences” (Noriega 2000: 152).

²⁰² Collaborating producers included Sylvia Morales, Susan Racho, and Jesus S. Treviño.

²⁰³ The fate of NLCC and the emergence of LPB is also connected to the foundation of media advocacy organization NALIP, the National Association of Latino Independent Producers, at the first ever Latino/a independent media conference in San Francisco, June 1999, hosted by Cine Acción (“Acknowledgements”; *The Future of Latino Media* 2000: vii.).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

was also made public.²⁰⁴ The statement praised Olmos' "long standing reputation as a national advocate for the Latino community and his efforts at reaching out to all segments of the Latino population" ("CPB Selects Organization," 09/28/1999, cpb.org) contributed to seeing him as a reconciliatory figure while also playing to the market. In this matter, CPB's advisory board pointed to LPB's "track record in fund-raising and its ability to garner positive attention to highlight Latino producing talent and their body of work, and its established connections to the Latino community" (ibid.).

The outcome shows Olmos in a somewhat ambivalent light. As was the case with LALIFF, Olmos rose to the occasion and assumed a position of great responsibility while also being able to reap the prestige and power associated with it. In the case of LPB, given Olmos's own background in entertainment formats, it seems ironic only at first glance that he of all contenders had emerged as the representative of the nation's public consortium for Latino/a film, an organization with strong educational leanings and a penchant for non-fiction, documentary formats, even though narrative features have also been supported by LPB: As someone revered by Chicano/a-Latino/a audiences; as an actor-producer-director known for crossover filmic projects and a mediated image emphasizing sacrifice, a straight-laced work ethic and conservative family values; as a professional bringing numerous professional credentials to the job and who he was known for his negotiation skills who had also proven he could navigate the interests of a diversifying Latino/a media professional community²⁰⁵ while advancing his own projects (again, *American Me* comes to mind), he was both singled out and made the race. Over the years, LPB has made a great impact on Latino/a film production.²⁰⁶ On part of the media producers, however, this also meant that Olmos's position both at LPB and LALIFF and his famously passionate and inventive promotion of for his own film projects was bound to raise the hopes of filmmakers involved as to a similar commitment, a point I will discuss in conjunction with LALIFF.

²⁰⁴ CPB stated on the selection process: "In recognition of the need to garner input from diverse Latino communities on the criteria that should be employed to select the Latino Consortium, in early 1999, CPB held forums with Latino producers and public television programmers in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami, Dallas and New York. Subsequently, in May of 1999, CPB issued the request for proposal (RFP) for a Latino Consortium that incorporated the needs and priorities identified through this consultation process. In early August, an advisory panel met to review the five proposals received as part of the national search" ("CPB Selects Organization," 09/28/1999, cpb.org).

²⁰⁵ For a contrast, see the aforementioned notes on the debacle involving Luis Valdez's abandoned Frida Kahlo project.

²⁰⁶ Between 2002 and 2017, LPB gave out 189 grants (in the "broadcast," "digital" and "community" categories and sometimes follow-up grants for one and the same project) – an average of 11.8 grants a year. While total numbers are not available, its FAQ page states that "[o]n average, LPB funds about 10 percent of the projects submitted per year" ("2018 Public Media Content FAQ"; lpbp.org). Funded projects cover content on U.S. and international *latinidad*; recipients encompass Latinos/as and non-Latinos/as and U.S. citizens and non-citizens. Among its Latino/a awardees, there are veteran professionals such as Paul Espinosa, Lillian Jiménez, Beni Matías, Lourdes Portillo, Ray Telles, Jesús S. Treviño; a middle generation such as Carlos Ávila, Juan Mandelbaum, Jennifer Maytorena Taylor, Jim Mendiola, and Ray Santisteban; a younger generation, such as Natalia Almada, Yolanda Cruz, Cristina Ibarra, Laura Varela, and Juan Carlos Zaldivar; and newcoming filmmakers such as Kimberly N. Bautista ("Awarded Projects 2002-17"; lpbp.org). Yet, in terms of perspectives: In 2017, LPB announced its funding of eight films and three digital media projects when that same year, Sundance Institute awarded 56 grants to its Nonfiction Storytellers alone, works in different stages of production ("More Than USD 1.9 to Nonfiction Storytellers"; www.sundance.org).

2.6 LALIFF: The Hollywood festival (since 1997)

2.6.1 Profile

The Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival (LALIFF) was first hosted in 1997 by its co-founders Edward James Olmos and Peruvian born Marlene Dermer, a former Paramount studio executive and producer (latinofilm.org²⁰⁷; Davila 2012). Contrary to many other Latino/a film festivals and their activist origins, LALIFF was the brainchild of the City of Los Angeles's Cultural Affairs Commission and based on a joint effort that also involved sponsorship by the *Los Angeles Times*. The project was thus in "search [...] for] readers and civic legitimacy" (Miller 2010: 215), combining city marketing and multicultural goals in order to create "an official Latino film festival to serve the cultural needs of its rapidly growing Latino community" (latinofilm.org). Until 2013, Dermer served as its executive director; Olmos, as president. Between 2014 and 2017, LALIFF was stalled. After its relaunch in June 20-24, 2018, Rafael Agustín took over from Dermer as executive director while Olmos remained on board as chairman ("Academy Award-Nominee Edward James Olmos Launches Largest U.S. Latino Film Festival"²⁰⁸; latinofilm.org).

This overview is primarily focused on LALIFF before the 2018 relaunch and, also owing to Olmos's central role in U.S. Latino/a feature film, on U.S. Latino/a film producers. Like community centered festivals such as RRAFF or East Los Angeles based Cine Sin Fin, LALIFF aspires to attract local audiences; however, its foremost imagined communities are national and international Latino/a film professionals. LALIFF's exclusive position in Hollywood enhanced the symbolism of this bridge-building effort, which has posed its greatest challenge and greatest symbolic capital: As a socio-economic site, Hollywood has continued to be a desired entryway for "international" as well as "national" Latino/a film professionals, which for the latter also includes the desire to achieve visibility and to network with studio representatives and colleagues. Indeed, as I could see for myself during my attendance of LALIFF in 2009, the festival invites the substantial Latino/a Hollywood film community to mingle with colleagues from their own country and abroad as well as with industry representatives. As to be expected considering its geographical situation and the multiple media sponsorship, LALIFF is also a celebrity driven festival. In fact, a multitude of sponsors – media (such as *Los Angeles Times* and *Hoy*; *Univisión*; *CNN*, *Telefuturo*, *Latino Weekly*, *LatinHeat*); corporate sponsors (such as Stella Artois, Coca-Cola); film and television industries and public media (Disney; Sony Pictures; HBO; Paramount; Warner; Screen Actors Guild-Indie; LPB) all have benefited from its buzz as well as enhanced their multicultural images by way of LALIFF's diversity and nurture agendas (LALIFF 2009 Catalog 115).

²⁰⁷ With festival's resurrection in 2018, the LALIFF / LIFI website, latinofilm.org, has seen a complete overhaul. Content preceding April 2018 is no longer available. LIFI also became LFI. Due to my long-standing research of the Latino/a film festival network, I had previously been able to access the old page, so all data preceding April 2018 was retrieved from the old page.

²⁰⁸ I take this claim as an example for how the organizers of the revamped festival were anxious to claim a top position in the hierarchy of the field of film festivals. Alas, I want to point out that, with LALIFF 2018 featuring under 50 films in its regular film program (features and shorts; the festival did entirely without documentaries), it is by no means the biggest such event. This assessment remains true if we add its students' festival and the videos screened in the arts sidebar. As shown in the film festival theoretical "Institutionalization" section, both CLFF and SDLFF screen more than 100 films a festival; NYILFF, too, may also be bigger than LALIFF. ("LALIFF 2018: About"; latinofilm.org)

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

Over the years, LALIFF has grown in terms of programming, duration, sponsors, visitors, and reputation. Milestones included a record duration of 16 days in 2003, and the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Science's recognition of LALIFF as a qualifying festival for its awards in the short film category in 2004 (latinofilm.org).

However, a persistent challenge has been the festival's need to address the tension between Hollywood as it stands for mainstream film and industries and its surrounding metropolitan area of Los Angeles, featuring one of the U.S.'s biggest Latino/a populations along with a long, complex history of social and cultural Latino/a-Chicano/a identified activism. In this context, the long-standing involvement of Edward James Olmos has been highly symbolical as it is comparable to that of Robert Redford or Robert de Niro for Sundance and Tribeca, respectively, in that they all bestow prestige to the festival and ensure media buzz. All the while, Olmos's enduring presence in U.S. Latino/a film and beyond, his biographical ties to the city, and his film and social activism serve as factor in his high regard among Chicano/a-Latino/a audiences in particular. And here it is Olmos's association with LPB and his many crossover successes which have raised expectations on part of the U.S. Latino/a filmmaking community as to LALIFF's heightened commitment to opportunities, access, and representations of U.S. Latino/a film professionals – expectations which, however, have always had to be balanced and harmonized along the lines of LALIFF's transnational bridging efforts.

This means that while on the one hand, LALIFF's vision has powerfully challenged the field of film production due to the way its foundation in a trans- and international *latinidad* is uniquely enhanced by its situation in Hollywood. On the other hand, however, LALIFF's cultural performance of an inclusive, "international" *latinidad* is based on an intrinsic imbalance: While it has validated the works of U.S. Latino/a filmmakers on show, this commitment has also been disrupted by the uncomfortable reality that the asymmetrical power relations and marginalization of ethnic-racialized cultural producers in the U.S. was often likely to be reciprocated when screening U.S. Latino/a and Latin American-international Latino/a film side by side. To once more provide Olivia Cadaval's definition, "cultural performances" are "dynamic area[s] where interrelationships and identities are generated, experienced, communicated, and altered" (1998:10). While LALIFF both provides an arena for such performances and engages in them itself by positioning *latinidad* in terms of a transnational community building project, the interventions and counter-performances of its filmmaking constituencies qualify and question LALIFF's performance (and poignantly so through protesting their lack of representation in Hollywood, which they see reflected in LALIFF's programming politics). To be sure, the majority of U.S. Latino/a film festivals also screens international and U.S. Latino/a films; yet I argue that the festival's proximity to the industries situation has acted like a catalyst or magnifying glass. The contrast was particularly evident when the former had to measure up to the latter, both symbolically and in the festival competition, to works including films by prestigious directors such as Paul Leduc (*El Cobrador*, Mexico 2007), María Novaro (*Sin Déjar Huella*, Mexico 2001), Arturo Ripstein (*Así es la Vida o la Perdición de los Hombres*, Mexico 2001), Fernando Solanas (*Memoria del Saqueo*, Argentina 2004), or Humberto Solás (*Miel Para Ochún*, Cuba 2002; and *Barrio Cuba*, 2006) – works, as I have noted in conjunction with the section on the New Latin American Cinema, which had frequently been supported by national film industries and / or national film boards; or which, in more recent times, had been able to secure international support (LALIFF 2009 Catalog 7ff.). This contrast became even more pronounced in the new millennium, a time of an increased La-

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

tin American presence in globalized Hollywood, for instance that of “Mexico City Directors” (Scott M. Baugh) Alejandro González Iñárritu, Guillermo del Toro, and Alfonso Cuarón who, “rather than being required to go to Hollywood to gain a larger audience, [...] enjoy the opportunity to use the studio mechanism when it benefits their work” (2012:168). LALIFF’s bridging efforts are underlined by way of celebrating these triumphs of Latin American cinema by presenting its “Gabi” (the Gabriel Figueroa Lifetime Achievement Award) to Mexican cinematographer Guillermo Navarro in 2011, who has worked both with del Toro as well as with U.S. filmmakers Robert Rodriguez and Quentin Tarantino (latinofilm.org; “Guillermo Navarro”; imdb.com).

2.6.2 Commitment to filmmaking constituencies

In a manner that symbolically claimed Latinos/as’ (national and international) place in Hollywood but also happened in immediate vicinity to the world of industry executives, LALIFF’s first festival editions were hosted at Universal Studios.²⁰⁹ Later on, the festival moved to various cinemas in downtown Hollywood, including both the TCL (previously: Mann) Chinese 6 and Egyptian Theaters, cinematic spaces with a long tradition of serving as prestigious venues both for Hollywood premieres²¹⁰ and some other film festivals. The move has been criticized by some (for instance, Davila 2012) because it also meant a greater distance to the studios and thus decreased outreach and promotion possibilities for the filmmakers. However, I see this also as one of LALIFF’s careful negotiations of its identity as a filmmakers’ festival in terms of discourses such as “underrepresentation” and “access” (applying both to LALIFF’s U.S. and international Latino/a constituencies, despite diverging production conditions and different national discourses on ethnicity and race; at the old studio locale, these discourses thus inevitably played up the “niche” character of the festival) and one that self-confidently presented itself as an arena on par with other, not necessarily specialty or ethnic defined such events, sharing their prestigious arenas of cinematic exhibition (thus framing LALIFF in terms of consumption and entertainment but also in terms of claiming its right to be there). That said, and despite this change of nuances, the older claims for opportunities and a critique of the mainstream’s representational politics remained. Accordingly, LALIFF continued to provide an arena for these conflicting issues after the move.

In more general terms, I argue that regardless of LALIFF’s situation in Universal City or on Hollywood Boulevard, the proximity to Hollywood alone underlined the more commercial and more activist facets of LALIFF’s mission as it served both as a shop window and bridge for U.S. and international *latinidad*. This festival identity was further enhanced by Olmos’s long-standing commitment. I argue that LALIFF’s overall association with Hollywood served as its symbolic capital but was also interpreted as a promise being made in particular to its national Latino/a filmmakers, which was a source for conflict.

²⁰⁹ For studios, it has not been unusual to open their premises as part of their sponsoring agenda. In 2010, Paramount was the site for the East Los Angeles Society of Film and Arts (TELA SOFA)’s youth film festival.

²¹⁰ To compare: The LA Film Fest, presenter of the Independent Spirit Awards, also features venues at a theatrical chain in Hollywood, and all of AFI Film Fest’s main venues are set in Hollywood, including the TCL Chinese 6 Theatres and the Egyptian (“LA Film Festival: Venues and Parking”; www.filmindependent.org; “AFI FEST 2018 Announces Key Dates”; www.afi.com/afifest/).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

LALIFF's commitment to its national and international filmmaking constituencies is not least of all emphasized in the festival's last official mission statement²¹¹ before the five-year break. The statement promises "to showcase, nurture and support existing and creative Latino filmmakers with diverse visions in the United States and internationally, and to act as a springboard and catalyst for the promotion and distribution of Latin [sic] films" (www.latinofilm.org). LALIFF thus recognized the traditional need for nurture as a particularly relevant issue in Hollywood as a means to address both the industry's notoriously competitive working conditions and ethnic professionals' traditional underrepresentation there. The festival's professional enhancement programs were initially tailored to its U.S. constituencies, yet in later years also included international participants. For instance, LALIFF 2009's "Hollywood Connect" sidebar presented nine professional enhancement programs, from topics relating to film production, financing ("Access to Entertainment Capital"), marketing, content ("Latino Urban Filmmaking: The New Exploitation or the New Generation?") to distribution (LALIFF 2009 Catalog 14-15). Its Latino Screenwriters Lab, in turn, targeted national and international participants; it turned out to be a milestone for Colombian filmmaker Ciro Guerra, who received the first prize for a screenplay in 2005 (latinofilm.org; Levine 2010). Guerra subsequently won international awards and accolades for narrative features such as *The Wind Journeys* (*Los viajes del viento*, 2009), screened at LALIFF 2010; and *The Embrace of the Serpent* (*El abrazo de la serpiente*, 2015).²¹² The nurture component was also highlighted by LALIFF's programming slot exclusively dedicated to LPB productions.

Furthermore, at the intersection of nurture and education, there was also LALIFF and LIFI's year-long cooperation with local universities, such as its "UCLA Cinema Workshop," (*LALIFF 1997*: 29), or 2009's "Conversation with Independent Filmmakers," a program hosted both at Los Angeles City College and UCLA ("Hollywood Connect," *LALIFF 2009*: 14). In addition, LALIFF featured high school programs; the old website's last update (2013) stated that "[an] estimate 2,500 students from elementary schools, high schools, and junior colleges [have] attended the Program since 1998." While earlier high school programs had remained largely focused on the reception level, LALIFF 2013 switched to showcasing student productions. In fact, LIFI's student programs – as LIFI Cinema – had continued well into 2014²¹³, and they were to play a prominent role in the relaunched festival in 2018.

Film blogger, festival programmer and past LALIFF volunteer Christine Davila (2012) has argued that even though LALIFF's studio based editions had provided more possibilities for interaction between filmmakers and industry executives, LALIFF's later strength revolved around its ability to

²¹¹ Even though LALIFF's web presence been completely overhauled, a Facebook fan page dedicated to the festival still features the old mission statement: "The Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival (LALIFF), is a non-profit 501c (3) organization whose mission is to support and promote the development and exhibition of diverse visions by Latino filmmakers. To showcase and nurture existing and emerging creative Latino talent while serving as a springboard and catalyst for the promotion of Latin films and filmmakers. To bring awareness through film, the most influential audiovisual medium of our time, the richness and diversity of the Latin culture. To invest in our community and develop an audience for our works." ("LALIFF [Fanpage]: About"; www.facebook.com)

²¹² *Serpiente* also reaped an Academy Award Nomination (Best Foreign Feature Film) – the first-ever such nomination for a Colombian narrative film (Fleming 2016).

²¹³ The last such entry was from October 14, 2014 (<https://www.facebook.com/laliff/>).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

provide networking possibilities within the Latino/a filmmaking community (Davila 2012).²¹⁴ Indeed, many filmmakers have commented on the great atmosphere at and the many benefits of LALIFF's nurture, particularly younger film professionals for whom LALIFF served as an important arena to screen their first films. Chicano director Alberto Barboza's *Premeditation* (2004) won Best Short in 2004; documentary filmmaker Anayansi Prado (A. Prado Interview 2010), who had also volunteered at LALIFF, screened both her immigration themed short *Children in No Man's Land* (2008) and *Paraiso for Sale* (2011) at the festival, dealing with the (Anglo) U.S. expat community in her native Panama and weighing the pros and cons of their socioeconomic impact.

However, LALIFF's Hollywood relocation may also be indicative of what several film professionals have described as a further decline of the already limited interest of the industry in Latino/a topics after the latter had lost the novelty character they had possessed in the 1980s and '90s – a trend diametrically opposed to the increase of Latino/a film professionals on the labor market (P. Nava Interview 2011). LALIFF's turn away from the studios corresponds to the observations of NALIP's then (2010) executive director, Kathryn F. Galán, according to which LALIFF was primarily an alternative exhibition arena; this somewhat puts in perspective the festival's own old mission statement and its aim to promote first hand film distribution (K. Galán Interview 2010). While its dedication to nurture has served as a strategy to amend the situation, throughout its existence, LALIFF has seen criticism from U.S. filmmakers for what a felt prioritization of its international agenda; this also includes the lore surrounding various instantiations of protest staged by U.S. Latino/a filmmakers against what they felt as LALIFF's discrimination against “its own,”²¹⁵ and which in turn once again resonates with a perceived exclusion of Latino/a cultural production from a U.S. patrimony (J. S. Treviño Interview 2010). LALIFF's task of programming national and international Latino/a films side by side was an attempt to look at similarities and invite dialog; but in its attempt to validate sometimes more humble U.S. Latino/a productions by juxtaposing them to more polished Latin American, Spanish or Portuguese films, it ignored their often more advantageous circumstances of production. All the while, I want to qualify the observations of Ben Odell (producer of the slick Jane Austen parody *From Prada to Nada*, USA 2011), who blamed LALIFF's difficulties on its programming practices, on the festival's sounding “the big drum that is ‘Latino’” (Odell in Davila 2012). Odell is quoted as somewhat polemically pointing to

the programming challenge of lumping [...] everything in one category that defies sub-culture, in this case genre and audiences. “How do you fit in Latino art house movies from Peru and Chicano shoot 'em up movies all under Latino. It's not the same audience” (Davila 2012).

While his reservations to may ring true with the challenges I have identified as LALIFF's challenging bridge-building project, they are also telling of the mainstream industry's negative and simplistic

²¹⁴ “Over the years, the industry component and exposure to studios that LALIFF use [sic] to facilitate seems to have diminished. It used to serve as a mini-market of sorts with its industry office library of Latin American films which offered studio execs the opportunity to come in and pore over hundreds of titles to consider for acquisition. On the other hand the invaluable hub of networking with one's peers remains the Festival's [sic] biggest strength and community builder. The collaboration that grows out of those dancing parties has brought countless artists together” (Davila 2012).

²¹⁵ Various locally based filmmakers (Alberto Barboza, Jesse Lerner, Esteban Zul) mentioned these protests in conversations with me. A related point of criticism came from Patrick Pérez, a filmmaker I spoke to at RRAFF, as to LALIFF's lack of organization – in terms of much too late and insufficient public relations for a film he showed at the festival (P. Pérez Interview 2012).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

attitude, who continue not to acknowledge the quality and diversity of contemporary U.S. Latino/a film. While for some filmmakers the (neo)*rasquache* “shoot them up” approach may be an aesthetic consideration or necessity²¹⁶, in the feature category alone, films like Alex Rivera’s *Sleep Dealer* (2008) (screened at LALIFF 2008); Peter Bratt’s *La Mission* (2009), Cruz Angeles’ *Don’t Let Me Drown* (2009), and Victor Nunez’s *Spoken Word* (2009) (LALIFF 2009); or Youssef Delara and Michael D. Olmos’s *Filly Brown* (2012)²¹⁷ and Aurora Guerrero’s *Mosquita y Mari* (2012) (LALIFF 2013) despite their moderate budgets nevertheless attest to Latino/a cinema’s professionalism and content-related gamut. Odell’s statement, however, underscores how high the stakes are in regard to LALIFF’s task of projecting *latinidad*.

2.6.3 Edward James Olmos’s welcome editorial

If the catalog cover of LALIFF’s very first festival in 1997 had advertised the new festival as being “presented by Edward James Olmos,” it was because Olmos’ position as artistic director of LALIFF had been preceded a search by the Los Angeles Cultural Commission.²¹⁸ His editorial for the first-ever edition also underlined LALIFF’s strategic use of Olmos’s public persona as a magnet for audiences and sponsors.

Olmos’s editorial was brief, gracious, humble; it reflected a determination to use his position of prominence in the entertainment sector and his image as man of the people in order to draw in support for LALIFF from all sides. Despite an impressive line-up of films, which suggests a massive start-up funding by the city and other sponsors,²¹⁹ Olmos embraced a non-competitive attitude as he situated LALIFF in the tradition of other Latino/a film festivals and their “networks of solidarity” (Torchin) and “look[ed] forward to [LALIFF’s] learning and growing the excellent existing Latino film festivals in other parts of the country, such as Chicago, Miami, San Antonio, and San Francisco” (Olmos 1997a:8). His reference to the fact that “We live in the Entertainment Capital of the World – the center for the most powerful and influential media we have: MOVIES [capitalizations in the original]” (ibid.) envisioned an activism prioritizing the market and consumption, as “entertainment” replaced “cinema”; “movies,” the more highbrow term, “films.” Olmos also rhetorically wondered about the “curious” fact of LALIFF’s relatively late arrival on the festival scene despite its situation in a city boasting “over one-sixth of the Latinos in the United States” (ibid.); however, this mild criticism was a far cry from the access logic of earlier Latino/a film activism as it even could be seen as a critique on local film activists’ own previous failure to establish a festival.

Lastly, in ways that resonated with his mediated roles as leader, father figure and teacher of the Chicano/a-Latino/a community, Olmos’s letter was also an exhortation to his audiences and sponsors.

In the contract-like text, Olmos declared his “five-year commitment to help build the Los Angeles

²¹⁶ One example is Chicano filmmaker Kenneth Castillo (discussed at more length in the RRAFF chapter), whose raw films of the so-called urban genre however never made it to LALIFF.

²¹⁷ The first two will be considered at more length in conjunction with SDLFF; the third in conjunction with SFLFF.

²¹⁸ Christine Davila reports in her blog that among others approached were also Moctesuma Esparza and Jerry Velasco, then president of media advocacy group Nosotros and owner of Hollywood’s Ricardo Montalban Theatre (Davila 2012).

²¹⁹ Just in terms of numbers, LALIFF 1997 showed a total of 46 long narrative features; to compare, one month later, the Bay Area’s First Annual Latino Film Festival of Marin, the later ILFF, showed 11 long features (*LALIFF 1997 Catalog*; *ILFF 1997 Catalog*).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

International Latino Film festival into one of the best run and wisely appreciated festivals anywhere” and asked audiences to do their bit as well in order to “hel[p] the festival grow and mature” (ibid.).

Olmos is to be given much credit for having stayed on with LALIFF and to for his co-foundation of LIFI in 2005. To younger filmmakers, he came to be known as a sometimes stern presence reminding them to give back to LALIFF by joining LIFI as members (Davila 2012; personal conversations with filmmakers at RRAFF 2012). Meanwhile, co-founder Marlene Dermer moved more and more into the limelight, which also included her content-related editorials and thank you notes to sponsors in the catalogs. As executive director, it was Dermer who was also in charge of most of the organizational decision-making. Yet Olmos could be spotted at LALIFF in public relations functions and when chairing panels or question and answer sessions. In sum, while Edward James Olmos has remained both an important magnet for sponsors and audiences and someone who epitomized LALIFF’s promise to the U.S. Latino/a filmmaking community.

2.6.4 Awards politics: Bridging difference; advancing an international agenda

As I have argued in the film festival theoretical chapter, while awards politics are part the film festival’s “value-adding process” (de Valck & Loist 2009: 184), they assume a particular significance for all special interest festivals dedicated both to underrepresented film art and marginalized constituencies. Due to their proximity to Hollywood, both for LALIFF as well as its Eastside counterpart, RRAFF, awards have taken on a heightened significance, and particularly career-related ones as their logic corresponds to film activists’ claims as to opportunities and politics of representation.²²⁰

In this context, LALIFF’s Gabriel Figueroa Mateos Lifetime Achievement Award (“Gabi”) shines an additional light on its mission of bridging and promoting a national and international *latinidad* in cinema. Introduced right at the beginning as part of LALIFF’s first launch in 1997, the festival’s most prestigious award was thus named for a world-famous Mexican cinematographer (1907-97) who worked both in Mexico and the U.S., and with renowned directors such as Emilio Fernández and Spanish émigré Luis Buñuel as well as with John Huston and John Ford. This made Figueroa a powerful and unifying symbol of transnational *latinidad*. The award validated the achievements of Latin Americans in Hollywood while also appealing to the city’s large Mexican origin / Mexican American population and other Latinos/as. The choice of Figueroa highlighted LALIFF’s dedication to bridging Latin America and the U.S.; it traced a symbolic lineage both to Mexico’s *Epoca de Oro*, its Golden Age of Cinema (1930s to late ’50s) and to Latino/a stars in early Hollywood; and, perhaps most importantly, it claimed a place at the table for today’s international and U.S. Latino/a film professionals in Hollywood and the U.S. cinematic circuit. Figueroa was also the first, if posthumous, Gabi recipient,²²¹ having died earlier that same year. LALIFF 1997 honored Figueroa by way of a

²²⁰ In regard to its nurture project, a consideration of LALIFF’s competitive awards and its benefits for up and coming as well as established filmmakers would make an interesting study by and in itself but cannot given its due here.

²²¹ Between 1999 and 2013, other Gabi recipients were: Raúl Juliá (actor, Puerto Rico / USA); Carlos Saura (director, Spain); Maria Félix (actress, Mexico); Anthony Quinn (actor, USA) and Nelson Pereira Dos Santos (film director, Brazil), Federico Luppi (actor, Argentina / Spain); Rita Moreno (actress; Puerto Rico / USA), Ricardo Montalbán (actor, Mexico / USA), Antonio Banderas (actor, Spain), Ignacio López Tarso (actor, Mexico), Gustavo Santoalalla (film composer and producer, Argentina), Pedro Almodovar (director, Spain), Guillermo Navarro (cinematographer, Mexico); Pablo Ferro (title designer; Cuba / U.S.A). Figueroa, Juliá and Quinn were awarded posthumously (latinofilm.org).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

tribute sidebar curated by San Francisco based film scholar and Cine Acción associate Sergio de la Mora, which in turn had premiered at Cine Acción's ¡Cine Festival! two months earlier, in September 1997.²²²

All the while, LALIFF's choice of a pre-civil rights film professional avoided placing the festival into a more direct tradition of Chicano/a-Latino/a film activism. Between 1997 and 2013, only a few U.S. Latino/a film artists were awarded the Gabi: Anthony Quinn, Rita Moreno, Ricardo Montalbán, Raúl Juliá and Pablo Ferro. On the one hand, they formed but one national category in a project that was based on establishing "Latino/a" as an international, bridge-building concept. On the other hand, given that breaking into the national industry was LALIFF's criterion for success, U.S. Latinos/as' dramatic underrepresentation in Hollywood provided a structural dilemma since this meant that the numbers of those who qualified for nomination were but few. For actors, this was aggravated by what Beltrán (2009) and others (such as *Latin Heat*'s Bel Hernandez and Disney's Director of Multicultural Programs, Efraín Fuentes in our respective interviews in 2010) have called a fundamental bias against U.S. Latino/a and particularly Mexican American actors due to the fact that Hollywood's "preferred Latin Look"

feature[s] a generic, hard-to-identify Latin appearance and European features over more indigenous, Mexican features. As such it can be seen when producers and casting directors favor foreign-born Latinos/as over Mexican American actors, even in the casting of Mexican American and Mexican roles. The casting of Paz Vega in *Spanglish* (2004) and Penelope Cruz in *All the Pretty Horses* (2000) are just two examples. (129)

Beltrán has also argued that a similar racism informs the casting politics in many Latin American countries, given that "Latin American media industries also tend to favor colonial (European) standards of beauty," which makes it easier for them to transition into Hollywood (129). Without meaning to diminish the considerable talent of Spanish born actor Antonio Banderas (Gabi recipient in 2006), his career is also a case in point. In addition, LALIFF had chosen to recognize artists whose careers were preceding Latino/a film activism. Exceptions were Raúl Juliá, honored posthumously after his tragically early death at fifty-four, and Ricardo Montalbán, would-be elder statesman of first wave Chicano/a film activism as founder of NOSOTROS and co-founder of the Screen Actors' Guild's Ethnic Minority Committee (Noriega 2000: 66; Baugh 2012: 176 ff.). A younger generation of U.S. Latinos/as, either of Olmos's own cohort or the one following, was not represented, however.²²³

LALIFF's awards politics with its logic of mutual bestowal of recognition was not immune to back-firing, and arguably the more visibly and harmfully due to its Hollywood situation and dependency on sponsors, as I was able to see for myself in 2009. LALIFF 2009's opening night screening – traditionally doubling as a ceremony to honor sponsors – was promoted as the West Coast premiere of

²²² LALIFF's Figueroa tribute thus also underlined its ties to other festivals of the U.S. Latino/a Film Festival network, many of which featured tribute films or sidebars in 1997 and 1998: Cine Acción's ¡Cine Latino!; ILFF (1997); SDLFF (1998); CineFestival (1998).

²²³ Following LALIFF's "Hollywood achiever" logic, Edward James Olmos himself would have made a worthy Gabi candidate. One is to infer that this was out of question, considering his prominent position at LALIFF. In fact, given that there were no other awardees of his own generation or the next inadvertently could have let one believe that U.S. Latino/a high achievement in Hollywood ended with the older guard, or with Olmos as LALIFF's own celebrity in residence.

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

Los abrazos rotos (*Broken Embraces*; Spain 2009), with director Pedro Almodovar, that year's Gabi recipient, honorary guest. On the very evening, the executive director was forced to announce to its audience that Almodovar had excused himself on short notice; as it turned out later, the Spanish director had instead chosen to attend the film's East Coast premiere at venerable NYFF. While commonplace in the competitive world of business film festivals since, in the words of BAFICI's Quintín, "[a]lthough infinitely interconnected, the [festival] Galaxy is no cooperative network" (2009: 44, his capitalization), to LALIFF, a festival with business ambitions but a smaller star in the galaxy, this cancellation was no easy matter. Not only did it mean a huge disappointment to its audiences but also to its sponsors and thus even more potentially harmful considering the festival's already vulnerable position in the aftermath of 2008's financial crisis. During a short exchange on the festival sidelines, Marlene Dermer, too, had confirmed to me that sponsorship indeed constituted one of LALIFF's major challenges. All the while, that night's award was then to be accepted by celebrated Chicana film and television actress Eva Longoria, attesting to LALIFF's dependable relationship with Latino/a Hollywood.

2.6.5 Diversity through the years

In closing, I want to cast a brief look at how LALIFF's diversity agenda developed over the years in order to better be able to assess the controversial subject of U.S. Latino/a cinema's (under)representation at the festival. I was able to look at data from three festivals: The inaugural edition (1997); LALIFF 2009; and 2013, preceding the five-year hiatus. What I found is that in the course of its development, LALIFF had indeed programmed an increasing number of films from the U.S., which reflected the organization's increased commitment to its national filmmaking constituencies.

LALIFF: Diversity through the years

	1997	2009	2013
Long narrative features	USA: 9 International: 34	USA: 6 International: 17	USA: 10 U.S.-int'l co-prod.: 1 International: 17
Documentaries	USA: 5 International: 1	USA: 4 U.S.-int'l co-prod.: 1 International: 7	USA: 8 U.S.-int'l co-prods.: 3 International: 4
Short films (not specified by genre)	USA: 20 International: 1	USA: 17 U.S.-int'l co-prods.: 5 International: 14	USA: 10 U.S.-int'l co-prods.: 5 International: 8
Opening Film	<i>¿Quién Diablos Es Juliette?</i> / <i>Who the Hell Is Juliette?</i> (Mexico 1997, C. Marcovich)	<i>Los abrazos rotos</i> / <i>Broken Embraces</i> (Spain 2009; P. Almodovar)	<i>Pablo</i> (Brazil/USA 2013; Goldgewicht)
Closing Film	<i>Profundo Carmesi</i> / <i>Deep Crimson</i> (Mexico 1996, A. Ripstein)	<i>Women in Trouble</i> (USA 2009; S. Gutiérrez)	<i>Nosotros los nobles</i> (Mexico 2013; G. Alazraki)
Production countries	10	17	16

(Figures based on: LALIFF 1997 Catalog; LALIFF 2009 catalog; latinofilm.org for LALIFF 2013.)

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

Here, LALIFF's ambitious first edition (1997, five days) stands out with a particularly encompassing repertoire of Latin American and Latino/a cinema, highlighting its international bridge-building project as it showed films from ten countries. LALIFF's emphasis on long narrative features was in line with Los Angeles' entertainment orientation, and the careful selection of classics and contemporary film reflected the educational goals as it both situated the emerging festival in a Latin American-Latino/a cinematic canon while also presenting the diversity of contemporary international and national Latino/a filmmaking. The total breakdown of films was 70. U.S. long features encompassed nine films, Latin American films, 34. Here, sidebars were dedicated to the national cinemas of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Venezuela. The program featured classics such as Luis Buñuel's haunting *The Young and the Damned* (*Los Olvidados*, Mexico 1950), Roberto Galvadón's *Macario* (1959); Tomás Gutiérrez' Alea's *Memories of Underdevelopment* (*Memorias del Subdesarrollo* (Cuba, 1959), and Humberto Solas's *Lucía* (Cuba 1968) and seminal Latino/a (themed) features *¡Alambrista!* and *La Bamba* and, as part of a four film sidebar on Puerto Rican features, *La Gran Fiesta / The Great Party* (1986, Marcos Zurinaga) and Jacobo Morales' *Lo Que Pasó A Santiago / What's Happened to Santiago* (1989). Then there were contemporary Latin American films, including Andrés Wood's *Historias de Fútbol* (Chile 1997); Gustavo Mosquera's *Moebius* (Argentina 1996); and Fina Torres' *Mecanicas Celestes* (Venezuela 1994). It was the Figueroa tribute, however, which served as a particularly vivid image of how the celebrated cinematographer's collaborations with exiled European, Mexican and U.S. directors underscored the many dimensions of *latinidad* as it also included, in addition to two Buñuel films, Emilio Fernández's seminal *Epoca de Oro* works *María Candelaria* (1944), *The Pearl / La Perla* (1947), *Río Escondido* (1948), and *La Pueblerina* (1949), as well as films John Ford (*The Fugitive*, 1947) and John Huston (*The Night of the Iguana*, 1964).

If Latin American features dominated in numbers, the thematic multi-facetedness and stylistic versatility both of U.S. documentary and short filmmaking was celebrated. Documentaries included Laura Angélica Simon's timely *Fear and Learning at Hoover Elementary* (TV-PBS, 1997) on undocumented immigrant children in Los Angeles' Pico Union district in the age of Proposition 187; *The Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farmworkers' Movement* (1997) by Cine Acción associates Rick Tejada-Flores and Ray Telles; and *Cachao: Cómo su ritmo no hay dos / Cachao: Like His Rhythm There's No Other* (1993), Andy García's directorial debut on Cuban mambo legend Israel "Cachao" López. In the shorts category, LALIFF even challenged its predominant focus on entertainment by including also some more experimental works; among its shorts were a four-work project by Carlos Ávila / A.P. González (*Foto Novelas*); Jim Mendiola's celebrated *Pretty Vacant* (1996); Sergio Araú and Yarelí Arizmendi's satirical *A Day Without a Mexican*; no date²²⁴); and Ela Troyano's provocative *Your Kunst is Your Waffen* (1994), featuring LGBTQ Latina performance artist (and the filmmaker's sister), Carmelita Tropicana.

Both buzz-inducing opening and closing screenings featured Mexican productions, no doubt as tribute to strong cultural and cinematic bonds between the two countries and Los Angeles' large Mexican descended population. And while LALIFF 1997 still showed a considerable numerical gap between Latin American and U.S. productions in the coveted long narrative feature category, a look at LALIFF 2009 (seven days) reveals a trend of approximation between films from and films made outside the U.S. Even though U.S. productions screened in 2009 decreased from 9 (1997) to 6, the number of

²²⁴ Turned into a feature length mockumentary in 2004.

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

international long features had in fact decreased as well, namely, to 17. In addition, LALIFF 2009's U.S. narrative features all were contemporary (2008-09) productions made by U.S. Latinos/as, including dramatic features Cruz Angeles' *Don't Let Me Drown*; Peter Bratt's *La Mission*; Leon Ichaso's *Paraiso*; Victor Nuñez's *Spoken Word* as well as two films from the more specialized horror genre, *Farmhouse* (George Bessudo) and *Dark Mirror* (Pablo Proenza). That year also featured a U.S. production as the closing film, *Women in Trouble* (Sebastián Gutiérrez).

Finally, picking up after "no show" 2012, LALIFF 2013 (5 days, 63 films) continued the trend of an increased showcasing of U.S. Latino/a films. 2013 registered more long narrative features from the U.S. (10, compared to 17 international films and one U.S.-Cuban co-production). The U.S. selection included one classic (*Stand and Deliver*) along with a wide thematic variety of films. LALIFF 2013's opening film was a U.S.-Brazilian co-production, a documentary on 2013's Gabi awardee, Cuban American Pablo Ferre. The closing film was a Mexican comedy. In 2013, there were also more documentaries shown, either U.S. made or co-productions (eight; there was one international film and three international-U.S. co-productions). Regarding shorts, ten came from the U.S., 8 were international, and 5 were U.S.-international co-productions. The increasing number of international co-productions also attested to U.S. Latino/a film producers' increased usage of foreign funding.

2.6.6 Outlook: Disruptions, continuances, and 2018 reinvention

Considering LALIFF's challenging agenda of accommodating the needs both of international and national Latino/a film(makers), its dependency on sponsors and celebrity appeal, and the overhead costs of a festival in the heart of Hollywood made the festival's decision to cancel its 2012 edition a somewhat predictable moment; after all, the 2008 crash had heightened both the strain on sponsorship relations and the vulnerability of celebrity driven festivals. In 2009, the Bay Area's ILFF had been already terminated; in 2013, NYILFF was halted until 2017.

LALIFF's cancellation for 2012 was announced just one month prior to its scheduled August 2012 date and attributed to "a fundraising shortfall" with executive director Dermer being reported to envision the cancellation as an opportunity for "regrouping" (Johnson & Makinen 2012; archived 2014, nalip.org). After its return in 2013, promoted as a delayed "sweet sixteen" anniversary, the festival was once more discontinued, coverage in the usual news and industry outlets suspiciously amiss. In April 2018, media announced a relaunched LALIFF, with new executive director Rafael Agustín.

A quick glance at relaunched LALIFF (2018) shall suffice to point to how this festival was addressing its old challenges while navigating the grey zone between a solidarity inspired festival network and a more competitive field of international film festivals. In their announcements of the upcoming relaunch of LALIFF, this aim was expressed by Olmos, who voiced his concern with how "[f]or too long we've been talking about issues of inequity and lack of diversity in our industry" and his hope for LALIFF's "being part of the solution." Similarly, Agustín said that the festival's "mission [was] to pave the way for Hollywood's multicultural future" ("Academy Award-Nominee Edward James Olmos Launches Largest U.S. Latino Film Festival"; latinofilm.org). Agustín, one of the writers of the hit dramedy *Jane the Virgin* (CBS / Warner, since 2014), also emphasized the need to create more writers and thus, more Latino/a related content (Bushman 2018). However, irrespective of these pro-

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

nouncements, LALIFF chose to direct its nurture towards the newly created Youth Cinema Project, “a gift from the Latino community to all children” while the support of its grown filmmakers fell to the wayside. While this decision could have also been a result of the organization’s need to hedge its even more modest resources, it looked odd, even like a backlash, as if there were no grown up filmmakers in need of or deserving of support.

In fact, if LALIFF’s development in recent years had tentatively signaled a willingness to provide a bigger arena for its U.S. Latino/a filmmakers, 2018 – judging from the line-up and the publicity available – was a reversal of this trend. Perhaps this was also due to austerity measures since some of its previous sponsors, such as the City’s Cultural Commission; the Los Angeles Times, and Hoy) were no longer on board.²²⁵ All in all, there seemed to be a dual focus on entertainment content and social justice/empowerment, with the nurture reserved for youth programs. This means that LALIFF 2018 boasted a satellite festival dedicated to film made by high school students (partnering up with Disney and AFI) and branched out into other genres (music and art, the latter containing a worthy project of audio-visual media made by undocumented immigrants²²⁶). All the while, the generation in between the more established and the youngest filmmakers was neglected, and the documentary category also missing apart from the immigrants’ media art project. In the feature film category, the presence of U.S. Latino/a made film had also decreased (4 out of 15). And finally, LALIFF’s prestigious Gabi Award was also missing. It will be interesting to see what the future for LALIFF holds in stall.

3. One step beyond? U.S. Latinos/as at Sundance

At first glance, this section might appear to sit squarely to this chapter on Latino/a film activism. However, in the face of the continuing obstacles for Latino/a film professionals in finding support for their projects, I have found it important to take a brief look at a number of Latino/a filmmakers each of whom have with some (if different and varying) success navigated Sundance’s support system, the “mother ship for the independent movement” (Turan 2002:35). After all, Sundance has long turned into an organization with considerable symbolic and economic capital as the U.S.’s foremost marketplace for specialty or “indie” film in the U.S. Some of the film professionals mentioned here have benefited from the prestige granted by festival exhibition and awards, some also from the nurture provided by the Institute. Still, this overview reveals that finding success more often than not has continued to be challenging for these filmmakers, and particularly those of a younger, more numerous generation; and while their success may have been further promoted by Sundance, other factors, such as finding their niche (market / audience), also has had crucial impact on their careers. Furthermore, I argue that these observations also grant insights into how the situation for Latino/a filmmakers has changed over the three and a half decades ever since Sundance Institute’s foundation; to some extent an individual film artist’s success at Sundance was also a result of their own match with Sundance’s own organizational development.

²²⁵ There are some inconsistencies, which may be accounted for by legal issues: The festival’s name was reduced to its new/old acronym, LALIFF; Latino Film Institute (LIFI) to LFI; the students’ showcase, from LIFI Cinema to “Youth Cinema Project” (“LALIFF 2018: About”; latinofilm.org).

²²⁶ “LALIFF ART: Con Camaras Y Sin Papeles: A Decade of Undocumented Visual Storytelling” (“LALIFF 2018: About”; latinofilm.org).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

In general, its dedication to nurture²²⁷ has always one of Sundance's strongest points and made it a coveted habitat for filmmakers. Similarly, the Sundance Institute has expressed its commitment to diversity.²²⁸ The most prominent example is the unfaltering support of Indigenous film, such as by its respective Native and Indigenous Storytellers' and Producers' Lab fellowships and through an annual Native Forum.

Sundance's overall mission and business agenda have been informed by the festival's function as a key market for the specialized ("indie," "indiewood") cinema ever since the 1990s; here, a prioritization of diversity and minority cinema was frequently met with pragmatism. Thus, when the festival's Native programming category (1994-2004) was eventually discontinued and merged with the general schedule, this was explained by pointing at the increased cross-over potential of Native cinemas, its "evolution," and as "a way of introducing a broader audience to Native cinema" (sundance.org). Moreover, there are no distinct programming categories for Latino/a or African American cinema. In contrast, Latin American cinema has been viewed in terms of world cinema and exhibited in specialized showcases such as the New Latin American Cinema series.²²⁹ Sundance Festival's embrace of a vision both globally diverse yet somewhat colorblind regarding U.S. minorities may be read in terms of breaking down the barriers around ethnic and other niches and is more than worthy of a more detailed discussion than what is possible here.

Then again, Sundance Institute has supported numerous nonwhite and / or minority filmmakers and established ties to a number of ethnic media organizations over the years as part of its Diversity Initiative, such as the National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP), Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB), and the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture (NALAC). In addition, it has collaborated with CineFestival on the aforementioned, annual Latino Screenwriters Project (since 2013), a three-day workshop headed by leading Latino/a film professionals. As to Latin American film, there are ties to New York City based Cinema Tropical (founded in 2001), and to *Ambulante*, the Mexican film organization and itinerant festival of documentary film, founded in 2005. That these are indiscriminately listed among other Latino/a collaborations again underlines Sundance's pragmatic perspective on *latinidad* as a potentially international category, despite its own refutation of minority programming categories and the different working conditions for U.S. and international Latino/a film producers.

²²⁷ According to Peter Biskind (2005), Sundance Institute founder Robert Redford "understood that the most creative filmmakers were increasingly shut out of the system. He also recognized that if a would-be filmmaker were brown, black, red, or female – forget it; his or her chances of getting a project produced were virtually nil (10).

²²⁸ Diversity is "defined [...] as one of the core values driving the Institute's work. The Diversity Initiative at Sundance encompasses our efforts in all programs of the organization to reach into new communities of storytellers and audiences across regions, genres, ethnicities, gender and orientation. Our goals include deepening and expanding our connections to diverse communities, cultures, languages, and regions across the United States. In doing this we hope to increase the diversity of projects submitted for consideration to all Institute programs, and inspire new artists to tell their stories" ("Diversity Initiative," www.sundance.org).

²²⁹ The series, conceived in the 1990s, featured contemporary Latin American film (to be distinguished from the previously discussed political film movement of the same name).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

As to the support provided to Latinos/as over the years, it is possible to establish certain tendencies. Sundance Institute was founded in 1981 and incorporated a local film festival in 1985.²³⁰ Two noted Latino/a film professionals were part of the founding board, Moctesuma Esparza and Victor Nuñez (Biskind 2005:36). There is a telling proximity of early Sundance's "New Hollywood"²³¹ and emerging "Hispanic Hollywood." One result is *Milagro Beanfield War* (1988), Robert Redford's adaptation of the John Nichols novel set in a rural New Mexican Chicano/a community, produced by Moctesuma Esparza. Also in the 1980s, Edward James Olmos participated as an advisor in Sundance Institute's Directors' Program (annually, 1981-83), while the Olmos-starring *Stand and Deliver* was screened at the festival and nominated for the Grand Jury Dramatic Prize (Baugh 2012: 256).²³² Sundance was also an important arena for Chicano and (Austro-)Anglo husband-and-wife filmmaking team, Gregory Nava and Anna Thomas, who had participated at its Directors' Lab in the Institute's inaugural year, 1981. Nava's groundbreaking feature film *El Norte* (1983) received a retrospective in 1999, since the festival had merged with Sundance later, in 1985; Nava's *My Family* screened in the year of its release, 1995 (sundance.org).

Apart from "Hispanic Hollywood," the list of first-generation Latino/a filmmakers establishing a relationship with Sundance during its own first decade includes also celebrated documentary and experimental filmmaker Lourdes Portillo. The internationally acclaimed, Academy Award nominated and Emmy awarded *Las Madres: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo* (1986, with Susana Blaustein Muñoz), with its timely focus on the peaceful protest of the mothers of Argentina's "Disappeared," in turn resonated with Sundance's championing of alternative voices and histories and received its Special Jury Prize (1986). Both *La Ofrenda: Days of the Dead* (1988, again with Blaustein Muñoz) and *The Devil Never Sleeps / El Diablo Nunca Duerme* (1994) were nominated for the Grand Jury Prize upon their respective screenings in 1989 and 1995, respectively. *Missing Young Woman / Señorita Extraviada* (2002), which had also received a production grant by the Institute in 2001, saw its U.S. premiere at the festival in 2002 and was awarded the Special Jury Prize. That being said, and despite Sundance's key position for the documentary genre so often embraced by Portillo (cf. also Turan 2002:37), she has by no means limited her festival activities to the one provided in Park City. Indeed, a selection of premieres of some of her work reveals a careful selection of festivals attuned to very specific audiences, attesting to the wide world she is navigating. They include venerable Venice (*My McQueen*); feminist Filmes de Femmes in Creteil, France (*The Devil Never Sleeps*), and Chicano/a targeting CineFestival San Antonio (*Después del Terremoto; Vida*) (lourdesportillo.com). In addition,

²³⁰ Founded in 1978, the festival had predated the Institute and was going through a number of name changes (including U.S. Film Festival in 1985) until it took on the official designation "Sundance Film Festival" in 1991 (see also Turan 2002:35).

²³¹ I argue that from the beginning, Sundance was founded on contradictory discourses. On the one hand, it was focused on reinstating artistry, creativity and truly independent voices to U.S. film; on the other hand, it necessarily capitalized on Redford's recognition and fame to attract industry insiders to workshops; sponsors to the festival; and tourists to Park City, Utah taking advantage of its film and skiing opportunities. This means that Redford and his team were convinced that, "film had [once, i.e. before the studio system] been a medium for genuine artists and could be again if only they could be sheltered from the marketplace long enough to nurture their skills and find their voices" (Biskind 11). At the same time, Redford seemingly heeded the advice by director-producer Sydney Pollack, who suggested they move the festival to winter in order to take advantage of the ski season (Turan 2002:35).

²³² In later years, Olmos has continued to star at films screened at Sundance, such as *The Wonderful Ice Cream Suit*, *My Family* and *Filly Brown*.

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

Portillo also contributed to Sundance's nurture programs in various functions²³³, and it was Sundance that paved the way for a menteeship with Latina filmmaker Natalia Almada, then an up and coming (cf. Berger 2016).

Early in the 1990s, when the festival joined ranks with the international film festival circuit while reinventing itself as an "indie" marketplace, Robert Rodriguez's legendary *El Mariachi* (1992) was screened at Sundance in 1993 and garnered both the Grand Jury Prize and an Audience Award. The film has regularly been cited as typical Sundance film – also by Sundance itself²³⁴ – because like few other films, it epitomizes the festival's "alternative" image, its championing of shoestring budget films, and quirky outsider themes.²³⁵ However, while the film's success at Sundance further promoted the film to audiences, *El Mariachi* had already been courted by the studios before Rodriguez's two-year deal with Columbia (Kelley 2015; Rodriguez 1995).

El Mariachi has established Rodriguez's fame as "Rebel without a Crew"²³⁶ who made his Spanish-language debut long feature on a sensationally low budget of USD 7,000,²³⁷ a reputation henceforth used by Rodriguez to promote his films and his insider/outsider image in Hollywood.²³⁸ And an outsider he was not least of all in regard to U.S. Latino/a filmmakers: Rodriguez himself has described an early such encounter when he received unsolicited censure of "preachy" Latino/a Hollywood (Berg 2002:245). He then was appalled by what he felt to be the entitlement of a community "act[ing] like everyone owes them something, and I don't even want to work with them" (Berg 2002: 256). Instead, Rodriguez's long-time wife, Elizabeth Avellán, was one of his closest collaborators²³⁹ (Caro 2003), as were noted Mexican film professionals such as cinematographer Guillermo Navarro and directors Guillermo del Toro and Alfonso Cuarón (Berg 2002: 256) whose careers he helped to establish in Hollywood.²⁴⁰

Thus, Rodriguez's rise to fame did not necessarily come from his *Sundance* exposure, even though it helped, but may be owed to his considerable talent, keen sense of retaining artistic control²⁴¹, and

²³³ Portillo was a documentary competition juror in 1997, and a panelist ("Personal Documentary," 1995; "Changing the Subject," 2004). ("Lourdes Portillo"; sundance.org)

²³⁴ Upon its 2013 retrospective, a press release called *El Mariachi* "an iconic independent film [...] continu[ing] to inform and inspire independent filmmakers and audiences alike" (John Nein, quoted in "2013 Sundance Film Festival...", sundance.org).

²³⁵ For a critical perspective on "typical" Sundance films, see Turan 2002:46ff.

²³⁶ See also Rodriguez's memoir, *Rebel without a Crew. Or How a 23-Year-Old Filmmaker with \$7,000 Became a Hollywood Player* (1995).

²³⁷ Rodriguez famously had raised part of the budget as a "human lab rat" for pharmaceutical research (Rodriguez 1996: 10 ff.) The additional sum of USD 300,000 spent by *El Mariachi*'s Hollywood distributors are often missing from the legend; however, as Baugh has asserted, these "blow-up costs" constitute "a pittance for most studio productions" (235).

²³⁸ # In a video manual, *The Robert Rodriguez 10 Minute Film School* (USA 1993, Philip Day), the director stresses creativity and improvisation over big budgets and academic knowledge. *El Mariachi*'s production circumstances and its celebration of lowbrow genres such as the Western and Mexican B-movies can also be traced back to a *rasquache*, Chicano/a-Mexican working-class sensibility.

²³⁹ She joined him as a producer with *Desperado* (1995). Her roots in a family linked to the Venezuelan television industry (by way of her grandfather) puts Rodriguez's outsider image somewhat in perspective ("Elizabeth Avellán: Biography"; imdb.com).

²⁴⁰ This qualifies LALIFF's claim to (exclusive) credit for introducing del Toro and Cuarón, along with Alejandro González Iñárritu, to Hollywood's "major studios" in 1998 and after (Olmos quoted in Bushman 2018, no pag.)

²⁴¹ Such as by having co-founded with Elizabeth Avellán their jointly owned Troublemaker Studios.

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

no doubt also to happy circumstances: *El Mariachi* was made at a “post-sex lies and videotape” era when indies were highly promoted by the industry in search for conquering new markets. Rodriguez was able to capitalize on his fame, build a network of top-notch collaborators, and define his own niche market. Tellingly, Rodriguez’s more commercial later work was not shown at Sundance, even though *El Mariachi* saw an anniversary screening in 2013. Sundance was not only a milestone in regard to the festival’s “value-adding” (de Valck) capacity; it was also at Sundance where he first met fellow director Quentin Tarantino, who shares many of Rodriguez’s artistic sensibilities and enthusiasm for popular genres, and who has become a frequent collaborator.

As to the generation of Latino/a filmmakers entering the scene later in the 1990s and in the early 2000s, the careers of Miguel Arteta and Patricia Cardoso provide further insights into the extent and limitations of Sundance’s nurture. Arteta, born in Puerto Rico in 1965 and raised in the United States, can be called a more typical “Sundance filmmaker” since he has been able to create an enduring relationship with the festival in addition to his work as a director / producer for episodic television formats including *Six Feet Under* (HBO 2001-04), *Ugly Betty* (ABC; 2007) and *Getting On* (HBO 2013-15; “Miguel Arteta”; imdb.com). Arteta, whose low-budget, long feature debut *Star Maps* premiered at Sundance, is particularly suited for Sundance’s “indie” philosophy owing to his predilection for stories centering on outsider characters. Even though *Star Maps* did not receive an award at the festival, the film’s popularity at the festival inspired its distribution by industry giant Fox Searchlight (Baugh 2012:24). Despite an “extremely limited theatrical release,” the film “effectively multipl[ied] its budget by more than seven, and found more profits in homes sales as well as a cult-like following” (ibid.). While Arteta has repeatedly referred to the way the film’s focus on a young male Latino/a hustler selling “maps to the stars” serves as an allegory for Latinos/as’ futile attempts to gain access to the industry²⁴², it was only much later, in 2016, with *Beatriz at Dinner* (featuring Salma Hayek in the lead) that he returned to a Latina protagonist; however, many of his films have starred Latinos/as in supporting roles. Most of his subsequent filmic work has been shown at Sundance as well, such as *Chuck and Buck* (2000; nominated for Sundance’s Grand Jury Prize in Drama), *Good Girl* (2002), *Cedar Rapids* (2011), and *Beatriz at Dinner*. Arteta has also been a recurring contributor to the Institute’s professional enhancement programs (sundance.org).

While Colombian born Patricia Cardoso’s coming of age social drama-comedy *Real Women Have Curves* (2002) was a striking success at Sundance and scored well at the box office, she found it more difficult to continue in this vein. Upon its premiere at Sundance, *Real Women* received a Special Jury Prize (Acting) for the film’s mother-daughter duo, actresses América Ferrera and Lupe Ontiveros, as well as an Audience Award²⁴³ and was also nominated for a Grand Jury Prize. At the time, Cardoso had been able to look back at a substantial previous relationship with Sundance. A graduate of UC-

²⁴² In an article in the industry magazine *Latin Heat*, Arteta is quoted saying that the film “was meant to be an allegory for frustrations I felt at the time being a Latino trying to get into the film industry. The son allowing to have his father [...] prostitute him was meant to represent my own willingness to do the wrong thing to get ahead. And the film was a plea for self respect and love which always starts with forging your own family and circumstances” (“Miguel Arteta’s *Star Maps* Celebrates 20th Anniversary,” latinheat.com). In its tribute to Arteta as first ever recipient of their career-related Trailblazer Award, this point was also made by RRAFF (RRAFF 2004 Catalog 5).

²⁴³ The film, which will be discussed in conjunction with the RRAFF chapter, boosted the career of new-coming, young actress América Ferrera; for Ontiveros (1942-2012), a fixture in Chicano/a-Latino/a feature film who was also a familiar face had also countless supporting roles in mainstream film and television, the film was also a landmark role in what turned out the last decade of her career.

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

LA's School of Theater, Film and Television, Cardoso's short film, *The Air Globes* (1990), had won a Best Student Film Award at Sundance (González 2015, no pag.). In the 1990s, she had been Director of the Institute's Latin American Screenwriter Lab for five years, in the course of which she had hired Brazilian director Walter Salles, as well as Guillermo del Toro and cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki as creative advisors for workshops when they were still at the point of establishing themselves in Hollywood (ibid.).²⁴⁴ All the while, for herself, Cardoso was to encounter more challenges as to securing projects which would help her build on the success of *Real Women*. Cardoso, whose most recent projects include television, shorts, a film for Disney and a feature produced in Colombia ("Patricia Cardoso," imdb.com), has stated in an interview that she had reached the point of being almost hired in seven different cases for a film project but each time the job eventually went to a white, male competitors, which underscores the continued difficulties particularly for ethnic minority women in Hollywood (González 2015).

Sundance's manifold nurture has been beneficial for a number of filmmakers throughout the years, including many documentary filmmakers,²⁴⁵ even though feature films posed greater challenges. Sundance has also been able to support filmmakers who defy easy labels²⁴⁶ and speak from the margins both of their birth country and their adopted home in the U.S. As a representative of transnationally mobile, Indigenous American communities, there is Yolanda Cruz, a Chatina from Cieneguilla in rural Oaxaca. Cruz came to the U.S. while still a teenager and later graduated from UCLA's School of Film, Television, and Digital Media (MfA 2002); while she said that she had learned a lot from her Chicano/a professors, she differed from her Chicano/a fellow students who had come into their political and ethnic identity in the course of their academic careers due to her own formative experiences as part of an Indigenous community and member of an activist family (cf. Rukwied, "Transnational Vistas: Filmmaker Yolanda Cruz"; Interview, forthcoming). Her experimental short, *Entre Sueños* (USA / Mexico 2000), was selected by the festival when she was still a student. In the early 2010s, in her transition from documentaries (such as 2008's critically acclaimed *2,501 Migrants*) to narrative feature film, Cruz benefited from the encompassing support by the Institute both as a Native Screenwriters Lab Fellow and through a Sundance-Cinereach Grant (sundance.org). On the one hand, she was able to further hone her traditional storytelling art through building community with fellow Lab participants from across the Americas, when she was "realiz[ing] that despite the fact that we came from very different places in the Americas, what united us was that we are all deeply steeped in non-'Western' story-telling traditions" (Rukwied, "Transnational Vistas"). On the other hand, she gained further insights into industry storytelling techniques and conventions thanks to "relationships

²⁴⁴ Cardoso had been particularly helpful in the case of Salles, whose script for *Central Station* she had translated into English and whom she had nominated for a cash award he eventually won (González 2015).

²⁴⁵ Award-winning documentaries included Natalia Almada's *El General* (2009), about her great grandfather, Plutarco Elías Calles, Mexican president 1924-28. The film received substantial support by Sundance prior to its reception of the Directing Award: U.S. Documentary in 2009 upon its premiere. Nominated documentaries (Grand Jury Prize) included *César's Last Fast* (2014, Richard Ray Pérez and Lorena Parlee), on César Chávez, Chicano union leader and civil rights activist; the film had also received support by the Institute (sundance.org).

²⁴⁶ Telling of to the multidimensionality of her identity and work is the way that Cruz's work has been shown in the Latino/a film festival circuit (such as SDLFF), at Native-Indigenous festivals (National Geographic's All Roads Film Festival, Washington D.C.), and generalist festivals in the U.S. (such as Sundance and the Santa Barbara International Film Festival) and abroad (FICM-Morelia International Film Festival; Semana de Cine Experimental, Madrid; and GIFF-Guanajuato International Film Festival, among others), and at selected museums and art spaces (cf. Rukwied, "Yolanda Cruz." Interview, forthcoming).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

the Institute has established with notable media professionals on an international scale.”²⁴⁷ The result, a number of short narrative films²⁴⁸ released in the last few years, has enabled Cruz to further build momentum for her first long feature film, titled *La Raya*, a dramedy to be set in her native Oaxaca and envisioned to conquer more encompassing audiences.

Another poignant example that stands for how a younger generation of filmmakers benefit from Sundance’s support and the prestige on the one hand yet must deal with the ongoing changes of the film industry in the Digital Age is that of Alex Rivera. His first long narrative film, the sci-fi, romantic and eco drama *Sleep Dealer / Traficante de sueños* (Mexico / USA 2008; the original language version is Spanish), had received support from Sundance Institute’s Screenwriters Lab (2001) and other arts organizations through different stages of its making (cf. Bernstein 2014). The film premiered at Sundance in 2008 and received both its Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award (presented to Rivera and co-writer David Riker) and Alfred P. Sloan Award and was nominated for the Special Jury Award (Drama).²⁴⁹

While Scott M. Baugh has rightfully claimed that Rivera, upon *Sleep Dealer*’s 2008 premiere, “stirred up as much interest in Latino media studies [...] as Jim Mendiola did around 2000 with *Come and Take It Day* and Robert Rodriguez with *El Mariachi*” (233), his Sundance success, as Baugh himself has shown, did not come as a total surprise. In fact, Rivera had been able to build a reputation as a highly original and versatile media artist and filmmaker ever since the mid-1990s.²⁵⁰ His earlier work had been screened at national and international film festivals, including many Latino/a film festivals and the Flaherty Seminar; and at museums such as the Guggenheim Museum (alexrivera.com). In the academia, too, Rivera, who also has a background in political science and media theory, had soon emerged as a darling of sorts. His multi-layered, witty and critical explorations of the interlocking topics of immigration, identity and labor tied right in with related interests in the 1990s and 2000s arts and humanities.²⁵¹ Thematically, *Sleep Dealer* was a culmination of some of the themes discussed in earlier works. There is *Why Cybraceros?* (experimental short, 1997), which takes the U.S.’s historical Bracero Program²⁵²#####²⁵³ The experimental documentary *Sixth*

²⁴⁷ In our interview, she described her motivation for moving into narrative formats – and Sundance’s role in this – in ways that shed light on the way she negotiates her own craft and traditions and the ambition to create more mainstream oriented content as follows: “Right now, I am at this point in my career where I want to change. It is a very personal thing: You have to work on something that you know well. People can tell if you don’t know your subject. They will know the weaknesses, the stupidities [...]. And I think my work has lasted because I was always very close to my subjects. [...] Now my interest lies in making more ‘central’ films; I don’t want them to be just about my culture. I want them to be entertaining for a new generation. I feel like I don’t want to be giving information on my culture all the time. But that’s where I have come to now after I have become more confident of myself as a filmmaker, that I have a grasp of the technicalities of the discipline, knowing that I will always be communicating in the cinematic language” (Rukwied, “Transnational Vistas”).

²⁴⁸ *Echo Bear* (USA 2012); *El Reloj* (USA / Mexico 2013); *Las Lecciones de Silveria* (Mexico 2015) (“[Yolanda Cruz:] Films”; petate.com).

²⁴⁹ It was also the recipient of Berlin’s Amnesty International Award (2008) and Neuchâtel International Fantasy Festival’s R. Giger “Narcisse” Award for Best Feature (2008) (alexrivera.com).

²⁵⁰ His rapid and enthusiastic rapport with the film festival and film arts network is also underscored that his first experimental short, *Papapapá* (1995), was shown at Cine Acción’s ¡Cine Festival! that same year.

²⁵¹ *Sleep Dealer* alone, as Christine Davila has estimated in 2013, brought Rivera “to over fifty campuses and continues to do so” (Davila 2013).

²⁵² Established in 1942 as a contract labor program based on agreements by The U.S. and Mexico, and continued until 1964, the Bracero Program enabled the import of temporary Mexican labor primarily for the agricultural industries (“Bracero History Archive: About”; braceroarchive.org).

²⁵³ *Why Cybraceros?* was recognized by an award as Best Experimental at CineFestival 1997 (alexrivera.com).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

Section (Sexta Sección, PBS 2003), in turn, focuses on the vital contributions of immigrants to the economies in their old and new homes in the age of globalized labor; here, Rivera has used his digital filmmaking skills to visualize the virtual and actual presence(s) of the Mexican (im)migrant community in Newburgh, New York, and their five-neighborhood hometown of Boquerón, Puebla. In an interview, Rivera has admitted to his fascination with the possibilities afforded by the Digital Age, recalling recollections of the first proto-Skype conversations he had overheard among immigrants in the Queens neighborhood of Lincoln Heights in the late 1990s; he has pointed to these transnational communities' pioneering usage of extended digital communication networks in their attempts "to stitch the family back together" ("IUC Interview: Alex Rivera"; youtube.com). These communications savvy transnational communities correspond to how, as Juan Flores (2003) has observed,

[t]he economic restructuring of world capitalism that took off in the mid-1970s along with the further revolutionizing of telecommunications ha[s] made for radically new levels of interactions and interconnectedness among populations at a regional level. The growing mass migrations generated by these changes are also affected by them, and in their circular and transnational character differ markedly from the migratory experiences of the early 1970s (194).

However, *Sleep Dealer*, Rivera's first long feature and most ambitious work to date, puts a different, highly imaginative if profoundly chilling spin both on the possibilities of the Digital Age and the future of global capitalism, particularly in ways as it is shown to further reinforce the "North-South" divide. In ways (albeit satirically) anticipated in *Why Cybraceros?*, Memo, the film's protagonist from a rural town in what used to be Mexico, no longer makes the move across the border in body but is instead connected to nodes that transport his labor to the desired destination somewhere up North. At the same time, his home community has lost the control over its most valuable natural resource, water.

Considering the extent to which the Digital Turn has figured as a theme and a tool in Rivera's work, it is both ironic and logical that *Sleep Dealer's* distribution journey, too, was massively impacted by it. Around the same time of its premiere in 2008, "the film industry started to transform or come apart at the seams" (Rivera quoted in Bernstein 2014); one key factor being the continuing triumph of cable but increasingly also the more recent, internet based streaming formats. One result was that there were less distribution firms around; yet Rivera had been able to secure a deal with Maya Entertainment, Moctesuma Esparza's distribution company. However, in 2009, in the course of *Sleep Dealer's* theatrical release, the film did not do well²⁵⁴. Also in the light of Esparza's own criticism as to the industry's failure to promote Latino/a film discussed earlier in this chapter, the question remains whether Maya had done all they could in terms of creating a habitat for *Sleep Dealer*. As Rivera himself has put it diplomatically, "Maybe it wasn't handled correctly. One way or another, it wasn't a theatrical release that connected with audiences" (Bernstein 2014). If *Sleep Dealer* was lacking a celebrity vehicle and targeting more specialized audiences, there was also the enormous appeal of contemporary Spanish language film among famously film loving Latino/a constituencies; the film's popular and topical blend of sci-fi, romance and intersecting border-immigration and ecological-social justice themes; and not least of all, a compelling story and cinematography. In other words, there was ample

²⁵⁴ On a budget of 2,500,000 it made USD 75,727,000 nationally ("Sleep Dealer"; imdb.com).

III. Historical Overview: Determining the environment of the Latino/a film festival

crossover appeal to be tapped for marketing purposes.²⁵⁵ To make things worse, Maya Entertainment closed down two years later, promising an uncertain future for *Sleep Dealer* since it was going to be part of the bankruptcy assets to be transferred to its new buyer. To Rivera, this presented an altogether “frightening situation because this film had 10 years of my life in it as well as the support and help as countless other people and institutions who backed it” (Bernstein 2014). Eventually, Rivera and his producer were able to regain the film rights helped by lawyers and “a very prudently negotiated opt-out clause in [its] distribution contract” (Vargas 2014). Rivera was eventually able to distribute the film via the new Sundance Artists Services initiative, “an already negotiated digital pipeline available for all films that went through Sundance” (Rivera, qtd. in Bernstein 2014). In addition, Rivera’s digital crowdfunding campaign – further supported by the film’s substantial cult status and in recognition of its political relevance²⁵⁶ – not only raised monies to promote the relaunch but eventually also led to a week-long return of *Sleep Dealer* to Los Angeles’ Downtown Independent Theater in August 2014 (“Sleep Dealer (2008) Re-Release!”; downtownindependent.com).

²⁵⁵ As Christine Davila has suggested, Maya may have focused on showing the film at its own theaters, thus limiting *Sleep Dealer*’s potential for discovery by more diverse audiences (Davila 2013).

²⁵⁶ One of its most prominent supporters was in fact CNN “Crossfire” co-host Van Jones, a former green jobs adviser in the Obama White House (Montgomery 2014).

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

1. Core Facts

Name:	San Diego Latino Film festival (SDLFF)
Established at:	University of California-San Diego (UCSC); San Diego State University (SDSU), 1994
Locations:	1994-1997: San Diego (USCS and SDSU), with additional sidebars in various places in Baja California, Mexico ²⁵⁷ ; 1998-99: San Diego (main venue: United Artists Theaters at Horton Plaza, with additional sidebars at UCSC, as well as in Baja California, Mexico); 2000: Chula Vista, Cinema Star Luxury Theaters; 2001-2014: San Diego: UltraStar Theaters at Hazard Plaza, Mission Valley.
Founding director:	Ethan van Thillo
Frequency, duration, and number of films screened:	Annually, in March; 1998: 5 days / 49 films; 2005: 11 days / 149 films; 2010: 11 days / 185 films.
Producing organization:	Media Arts Center San Diego (MACSD, since 1999, and also founded by Ethan van Thillo). MACSD also features a year-round extensive educational and entertainment program that is key to promoting and supporting the festival. MACSD's motto: "Changing Lives Through Film."
Supporters:	Numerous corporation and media sponsors. Community partners. Extensive network with cultural and educational institutions in the greater San Diego-Tijuana region. Public, i.e. city and state support. Private foundations.
Target films:	"Latino/a film" as an international, non-essentializing category. Productions from the U.S., Latin America, Spain, Portugal; or other countries focusing on Latino/a themes.
Non-cinematic sidebars:	Recurring non-cinematic events include galas; art showcases; mixed-media family programs. Professional enhancement workshops for filmmakers.

1.1 Location in the Latino/a film festival network

Together with San Antonio's CineFestival and the Chicago Latino Film Festival (CLFF), SDLFF is one of the oldest continuing Latino/a film festivals in the U.S. Alongside with CLFF, the New York International Film Festival (NYIFF) and the Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival (LALIFF), it is also one of the largest in the country.

Locally, SDLFF has obtained a mere monopolist position in the film festival scene. It has cooperated with a number of San Diego based festivals; tellingly, many of these are also festivals targeting local communities and maintaining a focus on ethnic minorities.²⁵⁸ Even though it is a special interest and non-competitive festival focused on local audiences, SDLFF is also part of the international film festival circuit due to SDLFF's long-standing international ties by virtue of its dedication to "international" Latino/a cinema; the scouting of films (for instance by long-time programmer Lisa Franek) at

²⁵⁷ Until 2009, the festival has featured sidebars in Mexico at a number of different community centers, university locations, and commercial cinemas in Tijuana and Mexicali, Baja California.

²⁵⁸ Same-size partners include the slightly older San Diego Jewish Film Festival (SDJFF; since 1991), such as on the Jewish Latino showcases (both the SDLFF sidebar, 2011, and the terminated San Diego Latino Jewish Film Festival, 2010-12); another occasional cooperation partner is San Diego Asian Film Festival (SDAFF; since 2000); and the smaller San Diego Black Film Festival (SDBFF; since 2002). Interestingly, SDLFF, SDJFF, and SDAFF all have more films on exhibition, a longer festival duration, and are longer established than the San Diego Film Festival (SDF, about 100+ films), which was founded in 2001, and is dedicated to (U.S.) "independent" film, but has fashioned itself more in terms of a "business film festival" (Peranson) in terms of its prioritization of glamor and tourism (sdfilmfest.com).

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

other festivals such as the Guadalajara International Film Festival (FICG), Cannes or Sundance; and a strategic usage of its border situation as an entryway for Latin American film producers. Smaller festivals, in turn, including SFLFF and RRAFF, have sent scouts to SDLFF. SDLFF is well-connected with other U.S. based Latino/a themed film festivals, including also San Francisco's terminated ILFF, where van Thillo was repeatedly listed in the "friend of the festival" category.

Yet, SDLFF is primarily an audience festival which taps the high demand for Latino/a content among a broad range of constituencies and which has also long established itself as one of the main cultural venues in the region; local media on both sides of the border are important festival sponsors. Festival director Ethan van Thillo and other festival associates have regularly been featured in the local public media. SDLFF's popularity with the local media, too, corresponds to the need for a forum for communities in the San Diego-Tijuana trans-border region; the medium of film serves as the catalyst for mutual exchange and community-making.

1.2 Legacies

Cine Estudiantil, which became SDLFF in the late 1990s, was able to tap two particularly influential film activist legacies. One goes back to Bay Area based Cine Acción, the nation's first film board for Latino/a and Latin American film, and its seminal transnational exchanges with Latin American, and particularly Mexican women filmmakers and scholars of the late 1980s, such as the aforementioned conference at the nearby Colegio de la Frontera Norte (COLEF) in Tijuana in 1990 (*Encuentro de Mujeres Cineastas y Videoastas Latinas: México-Estado Unidos*). Festival founder and director of its backing organization, the Media Arts Center San Diego (MACSD), Ethan van Thillo is native to the cultural landscape of San Diego-Tijuana's borderlands, having been raised just north of San Diego County in the seaport town of San Clemente, Orange County. Of great importance for his calling as a festival organizer were his studies in Northern California at the University of California-Santa Cruz²⁵⁹ (UCSC), where he graduated with a thesis on the programming of a Chicano film festival in 1993²⁶⁰, and Cine Acción's transnational, non-essentializing and intersectional activism; he programmed the organization's 1995 ¡Cine Latino! film festival when his own festival was in its second year. One is to infer that these formative experiences were to inspire his own – often unorthodox – strategies of steering SDLFF through its formative phases.

The most immediate model for SDLFF, however, no doubt has been Chicago's CLFF (which had been around for ten years when SDLFF started out in 1994). It was CLFF's festival director José "Pepe" Vargas whom van Thillo has referred to as a mentor when he first created the festival (E.v. Thillo Interview 2009). Among the similarities between both festivals are their mutual eschewal of ethno-nationalisms in favor of a non-essentializing transnational perspective; their championing of Latin American film and transnational communities ("immigrant" at CLFF, "border" at SDLFF); and

²⁵⁹ To provide an idea of close-knit academic web of exchanges that the festival was able to tap, van Thillo's *alma mater*, University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC), was also the workplace of Rosa-Linda Fregoso, who had been one of the initiators of the 1988 conference. The other organizer of the seminal conference was Norma Iglesias Prieto, of COLEF, who had helped facilitate venues of SDLFF on the Mexican side of the border.

²⁶⁰ Ethan van Thillo, "A Guide to Understanding Chicano Cinema and Organizing a Chicano Film Festival." Senior thesis, Latin American Studies, UC Santa Cruz, Winter 1992. (Noriega 2000: 237 n. 56.)

their readiness to embrace commercializing strategies for the sake of a wider visibility as well as a more solid financial basis.

1.3 Key points

SDLFF is the longest running festival analyzed in the course of my fieldwork, and ever since its foundation in 1994, it has undergone three main stages from campus festival (1994-'97 to a downtown San Diego based event incorporating commercializing strategies (1998-99) to a phase of consolidation and growth balancing “glitz and education,” the situated on the commuter friendly fringes of the city and backed by its own Media Arts Center San Diego (MACSD, since 1999). Since my on-site fieldwork phase took place between 2009 and 2011, including two visits to MACSD (2009 and 2011) and one visit to the festival (2010), and given also the festival’s longevity, I have decided to predominantly concentrate on a time span between 1998 and 2011, when I visited MACSD’s new location in San Diego-North Park.

These stages were characterized by the following developments:

- A long-term process of growth and consolidation. The foundation of MACSD in 1999 served as an important milestone in this process, engendering a symbiotic relationship between festival and organization: While MACSD has been able to enhance SDLFF’s focus on education and nurture through its perennial programs, some of which form festival sidebars, SDLFF, in turn, has emerged as MACSD’s flagship event promoting the organization’s manifold activities to audiences, patrons and sponsors alike. MACSD’s lack of ethnic affiliation further underlines the organization’s non-essentializing version of *latinidad*, which in turn also reflects back on SDLFF.
- An emphasis on an encompassing imagined community of underrepresented and “underserved” constituencies. While this strategy has emerged as a means enabling outreach to a wide range of stakeholders and the formation of cross-audiences, it should be read in terms of empowerment. On the one hand, the organization thus counters Hollywood’s representational politics and the industry’s continuing lack of opportunities for people of color; on the other hand, in terms of self-preservation, presenting these alternative vistas is also a powerful marketing tool as the organization thus offers cinematic fare with a certain exclusivity factor. In terms of audience development, this move has resulted from the transition of a focus on a predominantly academic clientele to more encompassing audiences.
- The challenge to balance “glitz and education” (Van Thillo). The focus on (cross) audience building has resulted in an increase and diversification of festival venues, and with it, a growing reliance on and exchange of symbolic and economic capital with a wide range of sponsors. Here, commercialization via star power has served as magnet for sponsors and audiences; so have educational programs. Ethan van Thillo’s restaurant trope emphasizes the festival’s aim to create a crossover appeal, while it also situates SDLFF’s envisioned atmosphere (welcoming and integrative, uniting commercial and culturally affirming aspects).

Moreover, SDLFF has relied on three resources which are closely interconnected.

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

- The border, which is tapped as a symbolic and factual resource. The creativity and resourcefulness of Tijuana's film and video arts community has been inspirational in terms of SDLFF's vision of Latino/a film that is frequently not tailored towards but an alternative to Hollywood. Sponsors, in turn, are attracted to border communities. In terms of programming, on the one hand, the festival has drawn on the border's traditional interpretation as a "synecdoche of the two nations it divides" (Fox 1999:69), namely, Mexico and the U.S., and used it to expand its initial focus on U.S. Latino/a film to include a multitude of cinemas from Latin America and beyond. On the other hand, the recognition of border communities as multiple subjectivities has been used as a point of departure for the festival's aim to foster an appreciation of diversity. All the while, MACSD's dedication to its local and particularly, its underprivileged communities attests to its acknowledgment of these uneven power relationships. Here, the festival serves as a metaphorical (through its films) as well as physical "contact zone" (Pratt 1991), a "social spac[e] where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other" (34).
- In this latter context the overall organization's dedication to education – such as the festival's arena for a critical assessment of various aspects of *latinidad* and for exchange – assumes a particular urgency and makes for another potent resource as it may serve, on the one hand, as a sponsoring incentive and, on the other hand, and as a means for empowerment.
- Lastly, atmosphere poses another symbolic resource in terms of branding vis-à-vis sponsors and in terms of making good on MACSD's motto, "changing lives through film" through a performance of culture, the instigation of exchange and solidarity, and community building in a "festival communitas" (Cadaval 1998). Atmosphere is a factor to (potentially and temporarily) unite the festival's vastly different constituencies. Among the factors that contribute to festival atmosphere are its situation in one encompassing venue and stars, who attract audiences, sponsors and media and "make the films special" (van Thillo) both in the commercial sense (signaling exclusivity) and as role models and to celebrate and affirm *latinidad*.

1.4 Restaurant trope

Over the years, SDLFF has changed from a festival with a focus on a more limited audience of academia to a more encompassing clientele of audiences, attracted by its educational as well as entertainment appeal. In order to describe today's SDLFF, festival founder Ethan van Thillo has repeatedly used the consumerist simile of restaurant patronage. In fact, SDLFF's non-essentializing interpretation of *latinidad* and its goal to increase the festival's crossover appeal both are pithily expressed by his assessment that "[i]n order to take your family to an Italian restaurant, you don't necessarily have to be Italian." (E. v. Thillo Interview 2009) This rhetorical strategy does not prioritize a view of Latino/a culture as something embodied but instead attempts to break down such ethnic boundaries; in a comparable fashion, the likening of SDLFF to a restaurant also manages (at least to some extent) to erase ethnic and class-income distinctions and thus upholds the festival's primacy of inclusivity. Not least of all this philosophy also corresponds to the way the festival was started by a cultural insider yet ethnic outsider: In our interviews, van Thillo, himself not Latino, was frank about how the course the organization has taken has "little to do with the 'identity crowd'" (E. v. Thillo 2009). Instead, the aim had been to push the festival as "an *international* cinema [...] in order not to deter people who think the festival is not for them because they are not Latino or don't speak the language" (E. van Thillo

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

Interview 2009; my emphasis). Here, the cross-section of the city's population patronizing the restaurant may also refer to the way the festival may bring together people from a different background and thus create cross-audiences. At the restaurant, a familiar dish may trigger a range of emotions, from comfort to nostalgia; alternatively, hitherto unknown palatal delights possess the potential to challenge and expand one's taste spectrum. Seen this way, the festival may be used by the cultural insider as way to affirm his / her culture, including upwardly mobile classes wishing to "sho[p] for identity" (Halter 2002) as well as the cultural outsider, who may have a taste of Latino/a culture. Van Thillo envisions the festival as a place both for cultural nurture and affirmation, as "a comfortable place for people to view themselves" (E. van Thillo Interview 2009) and, I would like to add, to see one another: The festival is also a place for exchange – as a place to experience different points of view and lifestyles in a "safe environment" (E. van Thillo Interview 2011). All these attributes are used in order to place the festival experience in a nonthreatening, inclusive context of communal consumption. They underline the festival's utopian promise to allow for the building of festival *communitas*, "unity in diversity" (Cadaval 1998:38) in its special, "craz[y]" atmosphere (E. v. Thillo Interview 2011), facilitating encounters which may inspire social change or, as the MACSD motto puts it, "Changing Lives Through Film." In fact, the image of the restaurant as "a comfortable place" open to everybody also links SDLFF to civil rights struggle of the 1950s and 1960s when activists resorted to a consumer citizen's logic in their fight to end the segregation at countless lunch counters, hotel bars, movie theaters and other such spaces of public consumption. As Lizabeth Cohen (2001) has argued,

[...] the firm connection [...] established between citizenship and consumption gave African-Americans a vehicle by which to direct pent-up frustration from wartime discrimination into concrete action. [...] The federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, barring discrimination in all public accommodations throughout the nation, emerged out of – rather than launching – a grassroots movement for, literally, an equal place at the table. (217)

In fact, civil rights' groups demand for equal service is taken literally by van Thillo, who has repeatedly described the overall organization's constituencies as "underserved communities," such as in the welcome editorial to the SDLFF 2011 catalog, when he describes MACSD's mission of "helping to fulfill an essential need for underserved communities to learn new technology skills, media literacy, and to explore opportunities to express and listen to new voices; while preserving culture through community story-telling" (van Thillo 2011:3).²⁶¹ It is important to stress here that in truly democratic fashion, both the festival and its backing organizations extol their services to great spectrum of constituencies, as a restaurant would. And even while for some, the ability to assume one's place at the table may be limited for lack of financial means – a structural dilemma which persists, given the festival's need to create revenue to sustain itself – these limitations have been mitigated the festival and overall organization's range of venues at reduced admission rates or free of charge, such as its high school and family programs in the U.S. and its long-time sidebars south of the border. Finally, the restaurant image not only evokes the special, celebratory moment of dining out; on a more basic level, this may also draw attention to our basic human need for food and drink. This interpretation

²⁶¹ Another example is MACSD's mission statement, according to which "[e]ducational, creative and production-oriented programs reach underserved youth and residents while providing MACSD with opportunities for community-based collaborations and the ability to fulfill our mission" ("About Us: Mission – Vision – Programs"; mediaartscenter.org).

also corresponds van Thillo's above pronouncements as to the way the telling of stories is an essential means for cultural, communal, and psychological survival.

2. History of SDLFF and MACSD

2.1 Cine Estudiantil (1994-1997). Incubation on campus, gradual transnational orientation

The festival's first four years on campus were marked as a phase of "incubation" (E. van Thillo Interview 2011), self-definition, and growth, if only according to what was possible for its current environment. From 1994 to 1995, the first two years of its existence, the festival was held under the somewhat long-winded name Cine Estudiantil: Chicano / Latino and Native American Student Film & Video Festival. The festival then reached out to a primarily academic target audience in accordance with its showcases at two different campus locations in the city of San Diego, the University of California San Diego (UCSD) and San Diego State University (SDSU).

Back then, the festival's programming scope evolved from a national, Chicano/a-Latino/a centered perspective to a wider, transnational spectrum that also included Mexican short films. The Native American category would soon be abandoned for its lack of rapport with local audiences, a move underscoring the decisive impact of audiences on the programming scope right from SDLFF's early days (E. v. Thillo Interview 2009). From 1996 on, the festival also branched out to several different educational venues south of the border, such as the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (UABC) in Tijuana, Baja California (continued until 2009). The festival's name kept up with the widening programming focus, changing to the even longer Cine Estudiantil: International Chicano / Latino Native American Student Film & Video Film Festival), 1996-97. The catalog of the 1997 edition, the last year before the festival's move into the commercial space of San Diego downtown, listed main venues located in San Diego as well as sidebars in Baja California's Tijuana, Ensenada, and Mexicali ("Festival Memories"; *SDLFF 2008*:10). Also in 1997, Edward James Olmos paid an impactful visit to the festival.²⁶² While the dramatic increase in attendance caused by Olmos's appearance has repeatedly been cited by Ethan van Thillo as an explanation for his subsequent decision to commercialize the festival by star power (E. van Thillo Interview 2009; Medina 2014, no pag.), the campus environment increasingly felt too restrictive both in terms of the festival's identity and audience development. Van Thillo also mentioned a minor dissent with the sponsoring universities some time along the way concerning the creation of the aforementioned Mexican venues (E.v. Thillo Interview 2011). In the same conversation, however, he emphasized the great value of academic institutions regarding both "incubation – and also for gathering experience and developing your skills within a small institution." But at some point, one had to "take those skills and go somewhere else."

²⁶² This visit was preceding the founding both LALIFF (that same year in October); his appearance is thus both indicative of a more commercial (star powered) turn of the Latino/a film festival network – which also saw the creation of the Bay Area's ILFF – and of Olmos's own publicity and networking mission for LALIFF.

2.2 Cine '98 to SDLFF (1998-99). Growth and commercialization in the Gaslamp Quarter

1998 signalled the beginning of a two-year transitional phase which started by way of the festival's gradual exit from the university campus and move into commercial spheres, namely, the relocation of SDLFF (as it was named from 1999 on; cf. "Festival Memories"; *SDLFF 2008*:10) to a number of multiplexes at mall structures, first at downtown San Diego's Horton Plaza, then suburban Chula Vista, and, eventually, in phase 3, to its long-standing location in Mission Valley's Hazard Center mall, on the fringes of San Diego, in 2001. (In 2014 the festival relocated once more to another commercial outskirt in San Diego's Fashion Valley, but since this happened beyond my fieldwork phase, it will only be considered in passing.) Also, from 1998 onward, the festival substantially broadened its base of supporters (sponsors and collaborators) and extended its target audiences. Along the way, the Media Arts Center San Diego (MACSD) was founded in 1999 and has served the festival's institutional backbone ever since.

Thus, in 1998, advertised as "Centro Cultural de la Raza's Cine '98 San Diego – Baja California Latino Film Festival" on the cover of the catalog, and referred to as "Cine '98" inside, a festival edition that served as a milestone in SDLFF's development was co-presented by the renowned Chicano/a-Latino/a arts organization (since 1970), while the name of its main corporate sponsor was also given: Pacific Bell, the communications provider. These two very different main supporters of Cine '98 both stand for how, from 1998 on, SDLFF has been engaged in "balanc[ing] the glitz and education" (E. van Thillo Interview 2011 interview). From the vantage point of organization theory, film festivals frequently need to negotiate between competing logics (cf. RÜling 2009); in the case of Cine '98, these were commerce (and its most important vehicle, star power) and education / cultural affirmation while appealing to recognize the needs of new and old stakeholders. The latter included the festival's growing and diversifying audiences as well as its increasing network of corporate and media sponsors. Accordingly, this negotiation involved, on the one hand, the creation of bigger and more celebrity driven events in order to satisfy the needs of sponsors for sufficient media attention and in order to conquer more encompassing audiences. On the other hand, however, as the festival continued to pursue its educational agenda, it also sought to augment its symbolic capital by collaborations with various educational and arts activist community partners. Not only did education and the affirmation of Latino/a culture appeal to festivalgoers, it also attracted those sponsors tapping education as a symbolic resource for their own branding according to agendas driven by parameters such as diversity / multiculturalism, philanthropy, and / or social justice.

By becoming both more commercial and celebrity driven, SDLFF also followed a more general trend and thus reflected changes in the "environment" (RÜling 2009) of U.S. Latino/a film festival organization. Edward James Olmos's compelling participation in 1997 had been an indicator of how, in general, the second half of the 1990s was seeing an increased dedication to the attention economy involving Latino/a identified stars at newly founded festivals such as Olmos's own LALIFF, in Los Angeles, and Sylvia Perel's ILFF, then still the County of Marin Latino Film Festival, both of which had been inaugurated in 1997. SDLFF's new venue at Horton Plaza was a watershed moment since it enabled the much-desired increased outreach possibilities and sponsor attention but also resulted in a bigger need for sponsors and other supporters of the festival (cf. Ethan van Thillo Interview 2011).

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

The festival's success made it possible to gradually build relationships and a reputation, all of which van Thillo and his team were able to capitalize on in the future, including the creation of MACSD. Accordingly, in his welcome address, festival director van Thillo expresses the festival's gratitude to the sponsors and even associates these relationships with symbolic capital by calling Cine 98 an event "privileged by a diverse group of corporate, educational, grant and government sponsorships" (van Thillo 1998:3, my emphasis). And in fact, the relationship with Pacific Bell, a company with a strong interest in reaching out to Latino/a customers (which is also due to Latinos/as' traditionally high consumption of communication services, a fact, one is to infer, also owing to frequently transnational familial networks)²⁶³ was just one among a number of corporate and media sponsorship relationships. The cooperation with the Centro Cultural de la Raza,²⁶⁴ in turn, was one of shared resources as well as of cross-validation²⁶⁵: The Centro, as a focal point of San Diego's Latino/a identified artistic community, heightened the festival's symbolic capital and visibility, both for audiences and in the city's cultural landscape; the festival, in turn, presumably not only added to the Centro's prestige but also provided much-needed links to sponsors and their economic capital. Despite the fact that the Centro figured as one of the two official presenters, the two seemingly remained on equal footing, as a closer look at the festival catalog reveals. Here, the words "Cine 98" figure prominently on the cover of the catalog and also stand out typographically throughout the welcome address by festival director van Thillo while there is no similar such address by the Centro's director ([*SDLFF 1998*] *Cine '98*:3).

The programming was diversified in regard to venue locations and content, again balancing education and entertainment. There were commercial venues (1998 being the first year the festival charged admission) showing feature films at the United Artist Cinemas in recently redeveloped downtown San Diego's Horton Plaza Mall²⁶⁶ as well as free of charge venues at SDSU and two locations in Baja California, at Universidad Autónoma de Baja California and a commercial cinema in Mexicali. The selection of films had become even more international; thus, in 1998, narrative features from Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Cuba were screened alongside U.S. Latino/a productions. Cine '98 was also branded differently, underlining a shift from its more academic-didactic focus to one also geared towards entertainment; examples were celebrity-attended showcases and galas (such as a "*Noche Colombiana*"). All the while, at the level of content, many of the features shown tackled a wide array of political issues, such as *favela* life, immigration, or the struggle of *campesinos*. At its university

²⁶³ While I do not have numbers on Latinos/as' communications usage in the 1990s, in a recent study commissioned by Columbia University's Center of the Study of Ethnicity and Race, Frances Negrón Muntaner and Chelsea Abbas (2017) argue along the same lines when they claim that "Latinos are among the most connected and media-savvy Americans: They use smartphones, buy movie tickets, and listen to radio at higher rates than any other ethnic or racial group" (1). And in regard to smartphone use, the authors state that "Latinos adopt smartphones at a higher rate than any other group. By 2014, 72% of Latinos owned smartphones, which is 'close to 10 percent higher than average in the U.S.'" ("Nielsen Report: The Digital Consumer," 2014: 12; www.nielsen.com; in Negrón Muntaner & Abbas 2017: 6).

²⁶⁴ From the beginning, famous artists had committed themselves to the establishment and then survival of the Centro, among them Chicano poet Alurista, and, in the late 1980s, multimedia artist and border theorist Guillermo Gómez-Peña, when the Border Arts Workshop / Taller Arte Fronteriza was established at the Centro. Gómez-Peña also co-edited the organization's catalog on the occasion of the Centro's fifteenth anniversary in 1985 (*Made in Aztlán*, edited with Philip Brookman. San Diego: Centro Cultural de la Raza 1986).

²⁶⁵ The way the Centro benefited from the cooperation could also have been due to the way the organization had been weakened by a combination of internal and external problems at the time. They included fiscal problems due to the state's defunding of culture and the arts in the mid-1990s and the resulting need for a new business strategy (E. van Thillo Interview 2011) as well as crucial internal conflicts as to leadership and a generational identity crisis (Ollmann 1995; Sanchez 2000).

²⁶⁶ Today's Westfield Horton Plaza Mall.

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

and community center venues, in turn, Cine '98 featured documentary, narrative, and experimental shorts. Among those dealing with issues particularly relevant to Chicano/a-Latino/a activism was a documentary revolving around the historical background of Luis Valdez's *Zoot Suit*; it focused on 1942's infamous Sleepy Lagoon incident and featured aforementioned veteran labor activist Alice Bloomfield McGrath, the model for the film's Alice Bloomfield character. As to its programming politics, the festival thus continued to pursue its cultural affirming and social justice agenda. The 1998 catalog also included a number of contributions from renowned scholars and arts activists, further boosting the festival's symbolic capital.

Arguably, the transitional 1998 and '99 editions were particularly demanding in terms of negotiating between highly conflictive logics of commerce, of identity, and place. The change of location also meant a re-contextualization of SDLFF's goals – particularly as to its serving underrepresented communities. In retrospect, one point made the festival's time at Horton Plaza in tow with the Centro somewhat challenging in terms of negotiating its own identity. Now located at San Diego's historical downtown, at its newly redeveloped Gaslamp Quarter, the festival claimed a very different social space.²⁶⁷ The neighborhood had just emerged as one of San Diego's major tourist attractions, featuring upscale commercial and entertainment venues such as restaurants, shops, nightclubs, and theaters, and “offer[ing] locals and tourists a legible way to conceptualize the previously neglected urban core by offering a semi-public space in the medium of themed architecture.” (Ervin 2007: 189). Urban historian Jordan Ervin likens the reinvented downtown to an “urban Disneyland” (189), intensely “militarized and scripted” (190) by the city, developers, and the newly arrived entrepreneurs. All the while, the quarter's remaining original residents never had been involved in the relevant decision-making processes and were hitherto rendered undesirables. The case of the Gaslamp Quarter bore resemblances to what had happened in other cities around the time and often at the expense of poor and non-white communities, as well as in San Diego's long established neighborhood of Barrio Logan – in its day “the vital core of the second-largest barrio on the West Coast” (Villa 2000: 172). As Raúl Homero Villa tells, “[...] the depredations of urban development in the 1950s and 1960s transformed the area into a wasteland of space underneath the intersecting constructions of the Interstate 5 freeway and the on-ramp for the Coronado Bridge.” (172) In the history of the city's Latino/a social and arts activism, the neighborhood's deterritorialization became a catalyzing moment that led to the one-site foundation of Chicano Park and, incidentally, to the creation of SDLFF's co-presenter in 1998 and '99, the Centro Cultural de la Raza.

Eventually, however, the festival evaded further incorporation into this ambivalent chapter of San Diego's urban history by its move to the outskirts of the city. This meant that only SDLFF's galas have remained in the Gaslight Quarter.

²⁶⁷ As Ervin (2007: 188-93) has explained, the area, which still boasts many buildings from its founding Victorian era, had witnessed severe deterioration in the mid-twentieth century, which was at its worst at the onset of the 1970s. Inhabitants of the quarter were by then predominantly elderly and poor, many of whom living in the quarter's cheap residential hotels. It was mostly because of their low socio-economic status that they had not become part of the huge wave of migration into the newly built suburbs. From the 1970s until the mid-1990s, the area experienced intense urban renewal and was registered as a historical landmark in 1980.

2.3 SDLFF and MACSD (2000-2014). Consolidation: Chula Vista to Mission Valley

The third phase was a phase of further growth and diversification of programs, a development to no small degree thanks to the creation of Media Arts Center San Diego in 1999. MACSD was founded as a community center for teaching media literacy and production in the tradition of similar organizations that had been created all around the country ever since the 1970s. The organization was not explicitly Latino/a designated but aimed at a more encompassing public. To this day, it has a high percentage of working class non-white people as their main constituency (P. Espinosa Interview 2010; E. van Thillo Interview 2011).

Through the years, the film festival and MACSD have become increasingly supportive of one another in a symbiotic partnership; my study of SDLFF must to therefore also investigate the role of MACSD. MACSD was to carry SDLFF's mission one level further by creating a year-round presence for the festival through regular screenings and the hosting and coordination of many media related events and creative partnerships. After an interim location at Cinema Star Luxury Theaters in the affluent suburb of Chula Vista in 2000, the festival moved again in 2001. The new location turned out to be SDLFF's longest-enduring "home" venue to date, UltraStar Cinemas, a small multiplex inside the Hazard Center shopping mall on the fringes of city in Mission Valley. Like Horton Plaza, the new location was embedded in a shopping and recreational landscape; yet it differed a substantially from Horton Plaza's upscale and touristy chic due to its more affordable, down to earth appeal and the way it catered to locals and families while also offering fewer (entertainment) distractions from the festival. Further advantages included a better access via public transportation and the geographical proximity to a Latino/a dominated neighborhood (M. Khurana Interview 2010). From an organizational perspective, too, Mission Valley provided a number of benefits that were key to SDLFF's growth and consolidation: Both a more affordable rent and a range of six screens made it possible to accommodate the needs of the ever-expanding festival, including also the hosting of non-cinematic sidebars in its foyer, such as art exhibitions, dance shows, and live music; accordingly, the festival was grew from six to eleven days ("Festival Memories"; *SDLFF 2008*: 10).

Both the festival's arrival at its long-time destination and the creation of its own organization may be interpreted in terms of a synthesis of sorts that combined and challenged previous politics of identity and commerce. The new venue did away with the barriers previously posed, on the one hand, by class and education that had limited the festival's previous outreach possibilities at the various university locations, and, on the other hand, not only by Gaslight Quarter's more limited affordability but also by its particular history of urban redevelopment. One could also argue in favor of declaring a fourth phase of further stabilization and professionalization which, however, can only be considered in passing due to my study's more limited fieldwork phase, namely, ever since MACSD's relocation to a bigger facility in San Diego's North Park in late 2010, which in turn had enabled the organization to introduce even more programs under the umbrella of its "Digital Gym," an eventual expansion of

staff and, in 2014, the festival's move of SDLFF from Mission Valley to the adjacent Fashion Valley to an AMC (American Multi-Cinema) multiplex since the old location was being rededicated.²⁶⁸

3. Engine behind SDLFF: Media Arts Center (MACSD, since 1999)

The creation of the Media Arts Center San Diego, MACSD, in 1999, marked the second important turning point in the history of SDLFF in terms of growth, diversification, and professionalization. As I have argued previously, talking about MACSD's decisive role as SDLFF's institutional backbone necessitates a look at the mutually dependent and affirming relationship between the organization and its festival, as well as moments of rupture. In this context, my discussion of MACSD will prioritize on aspects that reflect back on SDLFF, rather than attempting to analyze the organization in all its complexity.

Here, one important point revolves around matters of identity and place. Contrary to the festival, its backing organization is not ethnically designated. On the one hand, this makes it possible for the organization to reach out groups both underrepresented and underserved, including those who do not identify as Latino/a. While this strategy is particularly relevant in regard to some of its underprivileged constituencies and resonates with the way the organization understands its situation on the border in ways that foreground its asymmetric power relations, it also attracts well to do constituencies who use other services, such as year round cinematic exhibitions or children's programs, and who may then become return patrons of SDLFF or even sponsors. To cast a net this wide is particularly important in a county with an income gap that is particularly wide between White and non-White and / or Latino/a constituencies.²⁶⁹ On the other hand, at its most extreme, this move could threaten the affiliated festival's identity as a Latino/ festival and its celebration of Latino/a culture/s and turn it into randomness.

Connected to this is another point I want to make, namely, the way MACSD, as a not for profit, has deliberately branded itself in terms of a consumerist and a business logic, which again resonates with van Thillo's usage of the restaurant metaphor in order to describe the organization's services. This ties in with MACSD and SDLFF's usage of education as a symbolic and factual resource, to be discus-

²⁶⁸ That SDLFF's relocation to Fashion Valley also suggests a further step towards professionalization is further suggested by the assessment in the local print news media, according to which "[t]he hop across the valley opens a floodgate of potential business partnerships" and "many more stores and restaurants to work with." (Marks 2014: no pag.) SDLFF's new director of exhibitions, Phil Lorenzo, too, was quoted, sharing his vision of "fashion shows, concerts, tech partnerships, and many other things that simply could not have happened at Hazard Center" (Marks 2014).

²⁶⁹ See for instance the report issued by San Diego based Center on Policy Initiatives, a non profit advocacy group, according to which in 2016, overall "poverty rates dropped [...], but inequity persists." The difference between San Diego City, frequently ranked as one of the wealthiest cities in the U.S., and San Diego County becomes apparent by how poverty in the former "fell in 2016 to 13.1%, a drop of 2.5 percentage points from the previous year and the lowest rate since pre-recession 2007" while poverty rates in San Diego County "dropped more modestly from 13.8% to 12.3% in 2016." The report makes clear that "[d]espite the overall improvement in poverty rates, stark inequities persist. Poverty increased among Black and Asian families throughout the county, and poverty rates for both Black and Latino people remain at more than double the rate for non-Hispanic White people. Almost 1 in 4 Black and Latino children and nearly half of Native American children lived in poverty, compared to only about 7% of White children." ("San Diego Poverty Rates"; www.cpisandiego.org)

sed later. But the business logic is also supported by the lack of ethnic affiliation as there is less of a hindrance in terms of programs that could be created. This also means, however, that MACSD is also seen in terms of a business logic by others.

3.1 Naming and inclusivity

The choice of designation “Media Arts Center San Diego” for SDLFF’s producing organization is highly meaningful since it reflects how MACSD’s educational agenda, prioritizes inclusivity and a crossover appeal – rather than narrowing down its target communities by usage of ethnic markers such as “Latino/a,” “Hispanic,” and so forth. But this also means that MACSD deliberately departs from any direct (semantic) reference to the connection with SDLFF. MACSD thus departs radically from similar organizations, as the designations of, respectively, LALIFF’s Latino International Film Institute (LIFI), San Francisco based ILFF’s International Latino Film Society (ILFS), or CLFF’s International Latino Cultural Center (ILCC) suggest. The use of “Latino/a” not only associates these organizations with their respective festival events; moreover, the ethnic marker, with its performative force,²⁷⁰ functions diachronically as well as synchronically. On the one hand, its usage underlines a discursive situation in a shared history of a site-specific type of activism, claiming each organization’s roots in struggles for recognition, political participation, and social mobility of Latinos/as. On the other hand, the reference to *latinidad* is a means for community building as it not only establishes a link between these different organizations but also to transnational Latino/a communities. Though many of MACSD’s goals are fairly similar to those of other festival organizations – in addition to putting up the festival, they revolve around education, nurture of filmmakers, and a year-round film program – the organization’s media literacy programs and their commitment to citizen journalism go well beyond the services and activities offered by the other festival organizations. Thus, as van Thillo himself has admitted, while a name such as “Latino Film Society” would have been a more straightforward branding choice, it was abandoned due to the goal of “creat[ing] a space that is there for all cultures, not just about Latino film or about the film festival but about workshops, fiscal sponsorships, about the Teen Producers project” (E. van Thillo Interview 2011) and one which responds to the mission statement’s deliberate width, according to which “Media Arts Center San Diego promotes access to film and video as tools for community self-expression and social change and supports the professional development of media artists” (MACSD website). Accordingly, Ethan van Thillo remarked that “[i]f you look at the mission, you can grow into that mission. And I really feel we are still growing. We keep growing.” He not only cited the board’s mutual agreement on this matter but explicitly referred to the approval of fellow board member Paul Espinosa, renowned Chicano scholar, filmmaker and San Diego native, presumably as to further qualify this decision.

3.2 Business logic

MACSD’s endurance, particularly after the 2008 financial state crisis, and its continued success as to earning a professional reputation both have been due to the fact that it had successfully transformed

²⁷⁰ Here, I read “performative force” along the lines of Judith Butler’s argument that “[...] the ‘at’ by which a name authorizes or deauthorizes a set of social or sexual relations is, of necessity, a *repetition*. [...] What this means, then, is that a performative ‘works’ to the extent that it *draws on and covers over* the constitutive conventions by which it is mobilized. In this sense, no term or statement can function performatively without the accumulating and dissimulating historicity of force” (1993: 227, the author’s emphasis).

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

itself from a volunteer based, grassroots film festival into an independent non profit media arts organization. In ways to be discussed in more detail in a later subchapter, MACSD's key strategy for its upkeep has been its successful alignment with a number of educationally minded sponsors from the corporate world, from the state, and private foundations. In this respect, SDLFF plays a key role as MACSD's tantamount fundraising event. In fact, ever since the festival's leave from campus, sponsorship relationships have gained an increased importance for both SDLFF and MACSD, as have considerations of marketing. Accordingly, van Thillo has candidly talked about the ongoing creative challenges involving "finding new forms of revenue" to keep MACSD going and evolving (E. v. Thillo Interview 2011).

MACSD's reliance on a commercial logic is also related to how the overall organization's beginnings as Cine Estudiantil / Cine '98 has been one of changing affiliations and obligations on the one hand, and the striving for autonomy on the other hand. For Ethan van Thillo, examples of several struggling cultural arts organizations of the mid-nineteen nineties, including SDLFF's former cooperation partner, the Centro Cultural de la Raza, served as a warning of sorts both against the embrace of an all-too-limiting identity and the eschewal of implementing a business logic fit to reckon with the changing tide for such fragile organizations. In fact, at the time of their partnership (1998 and 1999), the Centro was facing severe fiscal challenges as to its support from the city and the waning funding of what seemed to be its main support, coming from the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA). Furthermore, the Centro seemed to have encountered difficulties to attract fiscal sponsors.²⁷¹ As a result, the future organization, MACSD, had taken away the lesson that that no organization whatsoever should ever be associated "with just one person, one program, or one sponsor" (E. van Thillo Interview 2011). Moreover, as I will show later, even in its pre-MACSD days, SDLFF had been able to summon an impressive line-up of sponsors for Cine '98. Van Thillo emphasized "the importance of creating an earned income, and to diversify [MACSD's] income, so once the organization goes down, there will still be an organization." (ibid.)

Thus, over time, MACSD has established far-reaching public support from the county (van Thillo's estimate in 2011 was USD 6-7,000), NEA (USD 15,000), and in particular from the city's arts programming commission. Van Thillo counts himself lucky since "some cities want their cultural budgets to be slashed; not this one." There has been a more or less stable income coming from this source (in 2011, MACSD received USD 50,000 USD; in 2010, USD 85,000); this means that "[...] even if the budget goes down, 5 % or even 10 %, it never goes down [completely] and is slashed" (E. van Thillo 2011 Interview). However, van Thillo and his team have remained on the look-out for creating new sources of revenue for the organization, since even such successful programs as MACSD's poster child, its digital story station, have a limited lifespan. This became apparent in 2011 when, after its third year of running, the income generated through the organization's statewide contracting services to libraries and other educational institutions (co-sponsored by the state of California) was "slowly drying up," something van Thillo attributed to "late effects of the state budget crisis." Accordingly, there is also a considerable reliance on corporate and other types of sponsorship, "a mix of small local businesses and big sponsors like Disney." (E. van Thillo Interview 2011) At the same time, the MACSD director admitted to the "bit of a gamble" that the general budgetary situation had always

²⁷¹ According to Leah Ollmann, the tense relationship between city authorities and the Centro at the time resulted in substantial drawbacks such as an overcharged rent and a long-time exclusion of San Diego's official map of sights (Ollmann 1995).

involved. Thus, at the time of our interview, in May 2011, the organization did not know yet if they were getting money for the following year. This degree of fiscal insecurity has also impacted staffing.

3.3 Staffing: Continuity and professionalization

As I have already discussed in conjunction with the demise of ILFF and LALIFF, and unlike the relative stability and self-sustainability that scholars such as Marijke de Valck (2007) have attested to business festivals such as Cannes, Venice, Busan, or Berlin, the world of smaller scale, specialized minority film festivals and their backing organizations is marked by many inconsistencies in regard to support and alliances which constantly threaten their survival. The continuous twenty-something years of SDLFF's existence and its transformation into an actor of local, national and transnational dimensions was possible owing to a vision focused on a broad range of "underserved" local constituencies while also acknowledging the need for change in order to allow for growth, consolidation, and the creation of a sustainable supporter relationships. To a substantial degree, this vision is the result of the successful and continuous direction of its founder as well as a professional team of media technology creators and instructors and not least of all the support of numerous committed volunteers.

As I have discussed in earlier sections of my study, festival organizers have a unique function because, ideally, they shape a festival's mission and seek to expand and develop it over the years when the festival grows and consolidates. While changes in staff may be inspirational and sometimes necessary to keep up with changing requirements such as an organization's growing professionalization, too much fluctuation may prove harmful in terms of a potential drainage of ideas and the ongoing need to train new staff. Conversely, if a festival is managed by only one person, there is the danger of the festival's becoming too dependent on this person, his or her ideas, abilities, networks, and creativity. In this respect, Ethan van Thillo has remained a key figure for both SDLFF and MACSD, particularly in the course of the backing organization's professionalization. Van Thillo may have been largely responsible for the organization's enduring success as to securing a solid economic basis and a substantial recognition; however, he, too, has adapted to its changing needs for a specialization of tasks: While he continues to develop programs for MACSD, he has increasingly shifted a large proportion of his time to administrative tasks such as the development of sponsorship relationships and the identification of other revenue possibilities for the organization (E. v. Thillo Interview 2011). His stance reflects MACSD's cultivation of a pragmatic, down to earth and egalitarian idea of leadership. With regard to SDLFF, he thus has been encouraging Lisa Franek to build her own profile as SDLFF's director of exhibitions in 2010/11 (E. v. Thillo Interview 2011), including his acknowledgement of Franek in the 2011 festival's welcome editorial (van Thillo 2011: 3). That said, van Thillo is fully cognizant that in terms of branding since "the public wants identifiable leaders" and has remained the organization's most important spokesperson from the festival's welcome editorial to his role as main point of contact for the media and for sponsors.

Generally, staffing is seen as one of the "big challenges" (van Thillo Interview 2011), and MACSD's handful of salaried associates are expected to be committed and to be able to multi-task. The multitude of volunteers owing to the popularity and visibility of the festival and their enthusiasm and dedication is one of SDLFF's greatest assets, also considering the situation of other festivals (such as

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

RRAFF) and their need to create other alliances in order to secure the (wo)manpower necessary to stage the festival.

However, it is also through its hiring practices that the organization boldly pushes the boundaries of its promotion of a non-essentializing *latinidad* in ways that interrogate Latino/a film festivals' traditional association with Chicano/a-Latino/a film activism's demand for a creation of "our own institutions" (Jesús S. Treviño) and job opportunities for Latino/a film and media professionals. (We may also recall the words of CLFF's Pepe Vargas and his similar demands.) In contrast to other Latino/a film festivals where associates' own Latino/a cultural identity has been a strong motivational factor for their commitment, in 2010-11, none of MACSD's (small) core staff was Latino/a. All the while, SDLFF has remained MACSD's flagship event, and staff is immediately associated with the festival – to quote Lisa Franek, "[a]t the festival, we all are volunteers" (L. Franek Interview 2010). Accordingly, among MACSD's core team were young media technology professionals such as director of exhibitions Lisa Franek, a filmmaker with degrees both in music and film from the UCSD; and Morgan Sully, responsible for outreach programs and with a degree in media technology and design under his belt. Sully has described his professional field as "community technology, creative technology," which in this context may be taken for a shorthand for the not for profit sector serving underprivileged groups; his work has taken him to work with Aboriginal youth in Australia and as part of the Digital Arts Service Corps.²⁷²

It seems that the director stayed true to his own declaration as to the festival's having "little to do with the 'identity crowd'" and that he has even attempted in the recent years "to push the festival as an international event" (E. v. Thillo 2011). This is consistent with the MACSD's screening of non-Latino/a film as part of its "Digital Gym Cinema," and it is also consistent with the fact that van Thillo himself is a cultural insider yet ethnic outsider, even while he had grown up in a family where Latino/a culture was deeply appreciated (his mother was a teacher of Spanish) and dedicated his entire career to the promotion of Latino/a culture. That being said, to the visitor in 2010, these hiring practices remained somewhat controversial. If we once again return to the restaurant metaphor, they are reminders of the way patrons are likely to favor Italian cuisine one day and Chinese the next, without any degree of "brand loyalty." Even if we take border culture as so pervasive that it does not necessitate the hiring of Latinos/as "in the flesh," a striking asymmetry remains, even though but one that has been remedied in the meantime.²⁷³

3.4 Programs: Education, nurture, entertainment

Originally located in San Diego's Golden Hill area, on 921 25th Street, in a modest two storey residential house, the organization moved to a bigger facility, a former car shop, in the North Park neighborhood (2921 El Cajon Boulevard) in the summer of 2010. After the move, the organization's year-round activities increased, introducing its "Digital Gym" and a number of other media literacy and production programs. In interviews, van Thillo has situated MACSD in the tradition of similar

²⁷² The Digital Arts Service Corps is affiliated with AmeriCorps, one of the core programs sponsored by the U.S. federal agency, Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS, established in 1993). ("CNCS: Who We Are"; www.nationalservice.gov)

²⁷³ In 2015, MACSD increased its staff and in its course hired a Latino/a, Phil Lorenzo, for the position of director of exhibitions (Khurana 2015). MACSD / SDLFF's current (2018) staff, too, features a number of Latino/a associates.

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

organizations which, frequently driven by a social justice agenda, had been created since the 1970s and '80s all around the U.S. to bring media technology to a variety of communities – particularly to underrepresented, working class, ethnic and racial minorities – while also teaching a critical appreciation of the media.

One MACSD milestone project was its aforementioned “digital storytelling station,” created by van Thillo and outreach specialist Morgan Sully in order to enable individuals to tell their life stories. By such “citizen journalism” initiatives, MACSD has tended to underrepresented communities, a task even more daunting and relevant after the economic crisis-induced cutbacks in arts education and related fields in the late 2000s (E. van Thillo Interviews 2009; 2011). MACSD has also dedicated itself to what is considered a pillar of ethnic film activism – the nurture of filmmakers. As a local journalist has argued, MACSD supports filmmakers “full circle, from incubation to the completion of their films” (M. Khurana Interview 2010). I will discuss this point at more length in conjunction with the organization’s usage of nurture as resource; at this point, let me just mention MACSD’s “Teen Producers” program, also present at SDLFF through a programming slot, and “Youth Visions”; the bi-national forum for filmmakers from both sides of the border, *Frontera* Filmmakers. MACSD also continues to provide access to technology, equipment, counselling, and the possibility of fiscal sponsorship in order to back film projects – services expanded ever since the move to North Park.

Finally, MACSD’s in-house program, initially called “Cinema *en tu idioma*” (“Cinema in Your Language”), after the move: “Digital Gym Cinema”) mirrors the organization’s negotiation of commercial and educational aspects. Here it is important to know that MACSD has emerged as an important local secondary distributor in the metropolitan San Diego area due to its year-round screenings of national and international independent productions. The organization thus filled an important gap since San Diego lacks a cinematic infrastructure for independent and arthouse productions (L. Franek Interview 2011). While many of Digital Gym Cinema’s films have already been shown at previous festival editions where they excelled as critical successes and / or audience favorites, others bear no relationship to *latinidad*. Here, MACSD’s lack of ethnic specificity allowed a wider programming range and a stronger crossover appeal.

However, the self-fashioning of MACSD as an alternative cinematic exhibition space also meant a growing recognition as a financial resource by film distributors. In our 2011 interview, van Thillo said that even though films today often came in more convenient digital formats, the overall costs associated with exhibition were still very high, as they may include shipping, rental of the films and, in the case of the festival, also of the movie theater; for SDLFF, they constitute the second biggest item on the budget, with FedEx alone at least USD 20,000 a year. On the role of film distributors and sales agents in this matter, he remarked that “[t]he situation has changed: now, they are seeing film festivals as a revenue and calculate how much they can make out of each festival.” He pointed at the particularly steep screening fees demanded by European distributors, which frequently come up to more than 1,000 EUR for two screenings alone. Thus, it had been prohibitive to bring back Carlos Saura’s *Flamenco, Flamenco* (Spain 2010), a huge audience success at SDLFF 2011 and one of the favorites of the MACSD team that year. Van Thillo’s criticism fits in with similar observations by Marc Peranson (2009), according to whom film sales agents expect smaller festivals to “pay through the nose” in screening fees, while the same productions will be free of charge at the major business

festivals (30ff.) According to this logic, while exposure at a big festival promises prestige, exhibition at smaller events is seen as a loss of a film's novelty value. Clearly, the latter reasoning views films only as perishable commodities, whose "newness" is their decisive quality, without acknowledgment of returning or word-of-mouth audiences; indeed, the festival and MACSD have taken great care to foster this kind of bottom up promotion, as SDLFF 2010's successful additional short-notice screenings of the Mexican intergenerational drama *El Estudiante* (2009) showed. This clash of mind-sets is quite ironic: While van Thillo would prefer distributors to acknowledge the fact that alternative distribution platforms such as MACSD and SDLFF "are providing them a huge service" (E. van Thillo Interview 2011), thus drawing on an logic of empowerment through promotion and exhibition that harks back to the traditional goals of Latino/a film activism, such thinking is incompatible with the industry's own commodification logic.

4. Border as resource

A substantial part of the festival's success lies in the many different ways it has tapped its geographical situation in the greater binational San Diego-Tijuana border region. Both for the festival and later also for MACSD, the border has served as a potent symbolic and economic resource in order to establish associations with supporters, including those from the corporate and media world, as my later overview of its sponsorship relationships will reveal. But the border has also been instrumental in the organization's development of its vision and identity, promoting SDLFF as an audience-centred festival seeking to provide an alternative to Hollywood – both through showcasing U.S. Latino/a film and establishing a vision of solidarity and "bridges of understanding" (E. v. Thillo) to Latin American and quality world cinema. Lastly, the border has also inspired its vision of cinema as an appreciation for diversity.

From its very beginning as Cine Estudiantil, SDLFF has refuted and challenged traditionally negative views of borders and border communities once prevalent both in social studies as well as in common belief, views which, according to border theorist Claire Fox (1999), would see the adjacent U.S.-Mexican border as a divisive line and conceive of border communities as "culturally diluted and marginal to the interests of the nation-state" (2). On the contrary, SDLFF's organizers have recognized and embraced the border's significance as a potential middle ground, assuming an "interstitial perspective" (Bhabha 1994:3) onto competing hegemonic national (and other) narratives. In fact, SDLFF has used its unique position on the border (both in factual and symbolical ways) in order to advance its agenda of celebrating diversity and inclusiveness – by promoting a non-essentializing, trans-border *latinidad* that acknowledges subjectivity as fluid, contextual, and hybrid. According to this point of view, border communities are recognized as possessing a particular bi-cultural competence, a "tolerance for ambiguity" (Anzaldúa 1987:79). As I will discuss later in this chapter, both the border and its communities have been tapped as resources by the festival.

In the same vein, the region's relative geographical and socio-economic distance from Hollywood, arguably the world's foremost epicenter of audio-visual media industries, could be seen in terms of marginality. However, I argue that this has in fact provided the festival and MACSD with a considerable amount of freedom. SDLFF's situation on the border and, to some extent under the radar of Holly-

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

wood, meant that it could turn its gaze southward, for instance to the immense creativity of Tijuana's video and filmmaking community. Not surprisingly, the very first turning point in programming mid-1990s Cine Estudiantil was signaled by the decision to add Mexican films – “short films from the film schools there [because they] were so good” (E. v. Thillo Interview 2009). I argue that SDLFF's border-inspired turn towards Mexico and, by extension, Latin America and an international *latinidad* has substantially shaped the festival's vision of diversity; in the same vein, the border has also impacted its idea of subjectivities as multi-dimensional, fluid and contextual and thus inspired a programming politics that reflects an understanding of the inner diversity of the Latino/a experience, subsequently inspiring its intersectional programming categories. All the while, the decision for the celebration of a transnational *latinidad* was not an opportunistic move to ignore the needs of U.S. Latino/a filmmakers and their demands for opportunities; as I have previously shown, nurture has always been part of the joint agenda of SDLFF and MACSD, and the organization has frequently worked with U.S. Latino/a advocacy associations such as NALIP and the Latino/a consortium LPB. But it is the border as a “laboratory” (cf. García Canclini 1990:293) and a place for exchange that has crucially impacted these efforts; one of the foremost examples being the organization's *Frontera* Filmmakers project as a forum for filmmakers from both sides of the border. Lastly, the lessons taught by the border begin and end with an appreciation of its local communities. In a way that resonates with the social activist, culturally affirming and commercial repercussions of the attribute “underserved” as discussed in conjunction with van Thillo's usage of the “restaurant” trope in his description of SDLFF, the organization has tailored the festival to their needs and interests, as reflected by its programming (from education, such as in the wealth of social justice themed films, some of them explicitly border themed, to glitz, as underlined by the attendance of telenovela celebrities); on behalf of MACSD, one could also add the organization's many media literacy programs.

In this vein, SDLFF has also vitally contributed to and benefited from the local trans-border San Diego-Tijuana cultural and academic scene. It is this scene which has afforded, in the 1980s and after, the border and emerging discipline of border studies a wider recognition in the arts and in academia – such as the seminal work of Tijuana's COLEF (including the seminal 1990 conference featuring Mexicana and Latina filmmakers and scholars), but also of the San Diego based universities, UCSD and SDSU, where the festival was initially hosted, and the Border Arts Workshop / *Taller de Arte Fronterizo* (BAW / TAF; 1983-1990) which, in the decade before SDLFF took off, had frequently collaborated with SDLFF's later cooperation partner, San Diego's Centro Cultural de la Raza. I will briefly introduce two festivals that emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the – hitherto terminated – Bordocs film festival and the Imaginería Audiovisual de la Frontera (IAF) multimedia fest since they stand for how Tijuana's vibrant film/video scene has inspired and provided a foil for SDLFF's own agenda of challenging the marginal position Latino/a made and themed film has been relegated to by Hollywood.

All the while, similar festival events (if much smaller in scale and more compartmentalized in terms of audiences and genres) in Tijuana either are or were more subversive and artistic (such as IAF) or appealed to an academic clientele (such as the documentary festival, BorDocs). Here, it is important to keep in mind how the film and arts activism in the two cities has shaped itself vis-à-vis different national cultural political discourses – something which, in effect, has also curtailed SDLFF's project of forging transnational community. Thus, early SDLFF/Cine Estudiantil was inspired by a film activist

tradition that strategically took issue with ethnicity as it targeted Latinos/as' systematic underrepresentation and lack of opportunities in the film industry. Its later "restaurant" identity with the intentionally wide definition of target audiences as "underserved" and the increasing strategic concessions to sponsors and the attention economy fueled by celebrity "buzz" have been in line with an increased self-fashioning in terms of consumer citizenship. Tijuana's activism, in turn, was directed against the geo-political marginalization of the region's filmmaking and other artistic communities in a country where much cultural production is dependent on the state; it celebrated the outsider "rawness" and the improvisational spirit of the city's artists and with it, that of its inhabitants.

All the while, SDLFF and MACSD have been able to conceive of the border first and foremost as a point of connection between the would-be twin cities of San Diego and Tijuana – as well as the U.S. and Mexico and by extension, Latin America. In the course of its more than twenty years of existence, SDLFF, and, since 1999, the affiliated MACSD, have been able to establish an extensive local, national, and international professional network with media, cultural and educational institutions, film festivals, and with many more supporters (collaborators as well as sponsors). As a showcase of international Latino/a themed and made film, SDLFF occupies a unique, semi-monopolist position in the area, and one further enriched through its many ties to other, if smaller, cultural actors on both sides of the border. This exceptional role is further enhanced through the additional visibility provided by the year-round presence of MACSD's programs, including its film showcases which are a vital contribution to a local cinematic scene otherwise dominated by blockbuster centered franchises (cf. L. Franek Interview 2011).

4.1 The border's "polyvalence" (Fox): "Place" vs. "space"

Images of the border have experienced a discursive paradigm shift in the late 1980s: From a site of cultural insignificance, populated with inhabitants frequently described in terms of abjection, the border has seen a validation from all kinds of different sectors such as free trade and globalization advocates and by the academia and arts. As Claire Fox (1999:119) and Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez (2005:38ff.) have observed, terms such as "border," "border crossing," and, later, (border as) "contact zone"²⁷⁴ have gained a high currency among postmodern and multicultural artists and writers ever since the 1990s (119). The term, "border," was first associated with Chicano/a-Latino/a cultural production and scholarship,²⁷⁵ where it has come to replace the older Aztlán (the mythical homeland of the *aztecas* and, subsequently, Chicanos/as)²⁷⁶; as I have previously noted in conjunction with my observations on filmmaker-media artist Alex Rivera in the historical overview chapter, the border pa-

²⁷⁴ "Contact zone" was first theorized by Mary Louise Pratt (1991) as a "term to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today" and in view of "models of community that many of us rely in teaching and theorizing and that are under challenge today" (34).

²⁷⁵ Fox credits Chon A. Noriega (1992: 6) for this this observation, who has noted that both "border" and "border crossing" were first used in 1960s/'70s Mexican and Chicano/a scholarly writings on the experiences of undocumented Mexican immigrants in the U.S. (Fox 119).

²⁷⁶ Fox cites *Criticism in the Borderlands: Studies in Chicano Literature, Culture, and Ideology*, ed. Hector Calderón and José David Saldívar as one example, with Gloria E. Anzaldúa's mixed-genre manifesto *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987) as the groundbreaking work that inspired the paradigm shift (Fox 163 Fn. 4).

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

radigm has subsequently been appropriated by a more encompassing circle of voices in the academia, the arts,²⁷⁷ and beyond.²⁷⁸

And yet, in the course of the border's rise as a key trope in cultural studies, there are certain ideological inconsistencies arising as a result of what Fox calls "the border's duality between 'space' and 'place' [with only the latter being site-specific, A.R.], ephemerality and permanence" (1999: 2). Fox has noted that in most cases, the evocation both of "the border" and "border crossings" has taken place at the figurative level (as "space" rather than "place"), despite the fact that the trope's origins indeed go back to the factual Mexican-U.S. border. Instead, the border

[...] is invoked as a marker of hybrid or liminal subjectivities, such as those that would be experienced by persons who negotiate among multiple cultural, linguistic, racial, or sexual systems throughout their lives. When the border *is* spatialized in these theories, that space is almost always universal. (119)

Fox's observation conveys a subtle criticism as she points at how such writings on figurative borders / border crossings run the risk of sugar-coating harsher realities, particularly when put into perspective with the traditionally abject image of border communities in the cultural imaginaries both of U.S. and Mexico and, one is to infer, world over and in effect makes us aware of an important dissonance in these seemingly ubiquitous celebratory renderings.

There are many factors in favor of promoting a positive image of the San Diego border region. There is the city of San Diego's situation on the world's arguably busiest economic metropolitan border intersections, with its traditional wealth, important seaport and navy base, and status as center of trade as well as tourism. There is also the region's overall strategic significance, which has further increased ever since the implementation of North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Canada, Mexico and the U.S. in 1994, nevermind its overhaul and replacement by the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) as of July 1, 2020. None of these factors, however, manage to eclipse the often harsh realities, limited access to financial capital and asymmetrical power relations that mark life on the factual border for many. And, importantly, for all the celebration of the border in the academia and arts, in the popular imagination, it was never able to shed its traditionally negative connotations. American / Minority studies scholar Gabriele Pizarz-Ramírez (2005) has noted that contrary to the shared border with Canada, the Mexican-U.S. border has been viewed as a "precarious space" ("*prekärer Raum*"; Pizarz-Ramírez 24), an image that continues to be conjured up by anti-immigrant groups. Such groups have used to their own ends the (convenient) truth that it is here that "the implosion of the Third world into the first" happens (Rosaldo 1993: 78; qtd. in German in Pizarz-Ramírez 24). The late 1980s into 1990s, immediately preceding the creation of Cine Estudiantil / SDLFF, in fact saw a new peak of nativist and anti-immigrant rhetoric and activity in California and other border states, with the media and politics conjuring up a "popular narrative of national crisis" (Saldívar 1997:x, cf. Pizarz-Ramírez 24), including actions such as "Light up the Border" (1989/90) which had participants use their cars' headlights in order to expose nocturnal border-crossers, an in-

²⁷⁷ For a sample overview of academic writings that draw on the border paradigm, see Fox 1999:163, Fn. 5.

²⁷⁸ For a critical evaluation of the border paradigm's triumph in Chicano/a studies and its wider discussion as border / contact zone in the so-called "theoretical mainstream," see Pizarz-Ramírez 2005: 38ff.

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

initiative which was, cynically, framed in artistic discourse by some of its participants (Fox 1999: 92 FN 69).

SDLFF has always been aware of the socioeconomic heterogeneity of its imagined “underserved” communities, and its particular obligation to the region’s numerous constituencies in need, both in the city of San Diego itself and in the surrounding, poorer municipalities such as San Ysidro and Imperial Beach (cf. Fox 1999: 167). This obligation is also trans-border: Even though the festival has lately discontinued its showcases south of the border, Tijuana, too, including its poor, disenfranchised communities, has traditionally figured prominently in the films screened at the festival, including also films by MACSD’s own “Teen Producers.” As I have shown above, there is a wider gap between the county’s White and Nonwhite / Latino/a constituencies; there is also related gap between richer and poorer communities in comparison to cities such as Los Angeles, the metropolis to the north.²⁷⁹ With regard to the region’s Latino/a populace, it won’t suffice to attribute the continuing poverty and political invisibility solely to their frequently first generation immigrant status (L. González Interview 2011); it is also important to look at the historical displacement and disenfranchisement of longer established local Latino/a communities, with the aforementioned erasure of San Diego’s Barrio Logan serving as just one such example.²⁸⁰

Thus, throughout their existence, SDLFF, and later also MACSD, have continued to support local Latino/a – and other disenfranchised communities – first at the level of representations (through the festival’s film showcases) and later through the organization’s year-round programs. While border “enthusiasts” have sought to validate, even authenticate, their narratives through referring to the real border as a place, SDLFF’s proximity to local communities has been undisputed, particularly after its establishment of MACSD. In fact, this proximity has emerged as another resource since it made it possible for the festival and its organization to bestow a specific kind of symbolic capital to its supporters in conjunction with its educational programs. This is particularly important in the light of pro-NAFTA discourses (incidentally, the official inception of NAFTA happened in the same year when SDLFF was first hosted, in 1994).

Thus, SDLFF has used the border as a valuable resource that provides the festival with a symbolic vocabulary acknowledging the border in all its site-specificity as particular geographic and socio-economic “place” in the San Diego-Tijuana area. For the festival’s self-definition as an audience centred festival, it has been particularly significant to draw on both of these discourses. Its audiences possess a specific competence – which means that they are particularly sensitized and competent due to their experience of the border. As I will explain later in greater detail, other significant actors-stakeholders of the festival and MACSD, such as sponsors and film producers, in turn, seek to tap this knowledge in a number of ways.

²⁷⁹ This point was also made by various San Diego based interviewees, such as L. González 2011; A. Gonzales 2010; E. van Thillo 2009.

²⁸⁰ Fox has pointed to the criticism articulated by Robert Alvarez back in 1984 as to his fellow historians’ frequent prioritization of the study of immigration, arguing that this happens at the expense of longer established local Latino/a communities (not to mention others, Native American, Chinese, and African Americans, AR) (Alvarez 1984: 240, in Fox 1999: 2).

4.2 SDLFF's "underserved" border communities

A closely related challenge which both the festival and MACSD have been able to turn into symbolic capital is the creation of a festival that is audience centred. As has already been pointed out with regard to festival director van Thillo's usage of the restaurant metaphor, the term "underserved," repeatedly used by the festival and MACSD, implies a dual logic based both on politics of identity (read: in terms of representational politics) as well as commodification, based on the proposition that SDLFF is providing its constituencies a unique service that resonates with specialty film's "unique" symbolic-cultural capital.

It is important to once more consider "underserved" in the light of SDLFF and MACSD's symbiotic relationship: This means that the organization has built its brand and identity on the high demand among substantial local constituencies for a film festival, SDLFF, offering a cinematic program seeing to a wide range of (frequently intersecting) interests and needs, which may range from cultural affirmation and contestation to quality entertainment and education. Thanks to its growth and diversification over the years, the festival is able to serve these communities. SDLFF is also MACSD's yearly highlight event and a magnet for sponsorship and client outreach. Through sponsors and patrons attracted to the festival and its organization, and through the incoming revenue (minus expenses), MACSD's many more year-long educational programs are kept afloat financially, and the organization is thus able to continue to serve its clients, particularly (yet not exclusively) its poorer constituencies.

At the festival, a desired effect is the emergence of cross-audiences. They symbolically underscore the festival's diversity agenda and underline the fact that the festival is for everyone. In addition, the generation of cross-audiences is of course also highly desirable in terms of box office records and outreach, including the outreach efforts of collaborators frequently on board. SDLFF and MACSD's joint motto, "Changing Lives through Film," thus highlights their dedication to underserved, underrepresented communities, and it unites both the festival and its institutional base. The motto underlines the festival's commitment to giving visibility to films that are underrepresented in the U.S. cinematic circuit, and it raises awareness of life experiences distorted by or largely absent in the cultural mainstream. It is a manifestation of border culture which, upon closer inspection, draws our attention to the merits both of diversity and complexity; it is a meditation not on divisions but an invitation to question the narratives that have shaped what is perceived as a given culture's mainstream or hegemony.

4.3 Border lessons: SDLFF's advocacy of diversity

As I have stated before, SDLFF has drawn on its geographical situation on the U.S.-Mexican border as a resource. It has used its own interstitial position in an attempt to act as a bridge or common ground between various contradicting and or complementary discourses. SDLFF has used the aforementioned increased scholarly and economic interest in the border to the advancement of its own goals – in terms of its consolidation as an organization and the diversification of its programs and audiences, and for its ongoing dedication to local border communities, Latino/a defined but also beyond. As the previously cited example involving the festival's abandonment of its Native American component

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

tells, in terms of programming, rapport coming from their audiences has frequently served as a reality check and overruled individual didactic and curatorial ambitions. Even though he was somewhat disappointed at the time, as van Thillo put it laconically, he had to realize that “people here engage more with films from Mexico” (E. v. Thillo Interview 2009). Remarkably enough, this decision was made before commercial aspects and box office records began to matter (which was later often used as an indicator for “success”), since in the festival’s early years, screenings had been free of charge. The festival organizers’ reaction attests to an overall pragmatism while also validating the needs and interests of its audiences, who are seen as being on par with the festival organizers. This dynamic is also underlined by van Thillo’s reminder that “[a]s soon as you lose your roots to the community, you lose your identity as a festival” (E. v. Thillo Interview 2011) His words may also reveal a certain critique of bigger festivals which are basically arenas for the international film industries and the media; here, his words also correspond to an observation by Marc Peranson (2009), who has criticized the randomness characterizing the programming politics of many business festivals such as Cannes and Sundance; in fact, he concludes “[t]he larger a festival gets, the more weakly it is able to define its own space” (34).

In order to analyze how SDLFF has been drawing on its geographical border situation when implementing its agenda of cultivating an understanding and appreciation of diversity, I would like to invoke Homi Bhabha’s often-quoted pronouncement from the opening chapter to his *The Location of Culture*, appropriately named, for the purpose of my argument, “Border Lives: The Art of the Present.” Here, Bhabha argues that “[p]olitical empowerment, and the enlargement of the multiculturalist cause, comes from posing questions of solidarity and community from the interstitial perspective” (1994: 3). Bhabha takes the geographical border (“place”) as a point of departure in order to theorize on borders in a figurative, metaphorical sense, as mere subjectivities, while pointing at the possibilities such a perspective may afford:

Social differences are not simply given to experience through an already authenticated cultural tradition; they are the signs of the emergence of community envisaged as a project – at once a vision and a construction – that takes you ‘beyond’ yourself in order to return, in a spirit of revision and reconstruction, to the political conditions of the present. (3)

Keeping in mind the festival’s own agenda of diversity, I read Bhabha’s pronouncement as a refutation of essentializing notions, as underlined by his reference to “already authenticated cultural tradition[s],” while emphasizing the processual, heuristic, constructed and liminal nature of such community-building. However, the project’s lofty, utopian aspirations are held in check by the ongoing dynamics produced by the same asymmetrical power relations that are part of “the political conditions of the present” and their impact on these subjectivities.

SDLFF, too, has continuously been pushing boundaries in regard to its community building project in what I would call outward extension and inward diversification (or contingency and hybridity). Its interpretation of the border in terms of contingency resonates with Claire Fox’s observation as to a long-standing tradition of conceptualizing the Mexican-American border as a “synecdoche of the nations it divides” (1999: 69). Citing a long standing tradition in U.S. cultural production, from the macabre picture postcards of the Mexican Revolution circulated among U.S. Americans to countless

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

films and books, she explains that “[...] developments on the border are perceived to be symptomatic of the overall status of U.S.-Mexican relations, and the importance of border events is presented from the points of view of national actors rather than local inhabitants” (ibid.). This also led to “marking the border as an internationally strategic site also involv[ing] representing it as a militarized zone” (ibid.). Indeed, throughout its existence, the festival has drawn on a similar *pars pro toto* interpretation of the border but situated the festival as creative middle ground, or a bridge, while focusing on people, not nations. The festival has thus advanced its educational and community building projects. This has been evident in a longstanding thematic focus on the Mexican-U.S. borderlands; its long-time satellite film screenings in Mexico; and its fostering of young filmmakers from both sides of the border, to name but a few examples. Moreover, speaking from the interstitial space has given further legitimacy to the festival’s extension of its programming scope to film from all over the Americas and Caribbean, Europe, and world over. Thus, while SDLFF’s actual situation in the “place” of the U.S.-Mexican borderlands has provided the festival with a template for its outward movement, these additional territories, too, have been marked by the label Latino/a in its audacious and visionary community building project.

On the other hand, the festival’s celebration of hybridity has also been inspired by the borderlands’ interstitial perspective. While the geographic borderlands may create a heightened awareness of difference among its inhabitants, this awareness of subjectivity as multi-dimensional is of course not the sole privilege of border communities, nor is this particular sensitivity exclusively found among minorities. Quite on the contrary, an awareness of difference is shared, if to different degrees, by members of all societies. SDLFF’s border awareness becomes apparent in the festival’s refutation of essentialisms and its embrace of *latinidad* as diversity, for instance regarding its programming (its *Cine Gay*, *Jewish Latino/a*, and *Cine Mujer* sidebars).

The festival’s non-essentializing approach towards *latinidad* with its ultimate goal of fostering solidarity and community building corresponds to Luz-Ángelica Kirschner’s (2012: 34ff.) coinage of “*latinidad* in the flesh.”²⁸¹ Kirschner’s concept draws on Cristina Beltrán’s (2010:9) writings on *latinidad*, which in turn have been inspired by Judith Butler’s (1993) theorizations of “woman” as “‘permanently open, permanently contested, permanently contingent in order not to foreclose in advance future claims for inclusion.’” Accordingly, Kirschner argues in favor of an

understanding of *latinidad* depart[ing] from the assumption of a dynamic, living, breathing, multifarious political site that I call ‘*latinidad* in the flesh,’ which is necessarily open-ended and yet can be an important unifying force in our collective struggle against racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, homophobia, religious intolerance, and other types of prejudice. (34)

²⁸¹ Kirschner refers to a number of additional theorists whose works, besides that of Beltrán, have inspired this coinage, the most important among them “Gloria E. Anzaldúa, Juan Flores, Miriam Jiménez Román, Cherrie L. Moraga, and Marc Sawyer” (34 Fn.70). I find her conceptualization, “*latinidad* in the flesh” particularly helpful in order to grasp the underlying dynamics that make *latinidad* a valuable tool for coalition-building (and as regards my subject of study: for arenas seeking to give visibility to underrepresented groups and their cultural production) while also drawing attention to the term’s discursive limitations as an ever-contested site. My only reservation is against the epithet “in the flesh,” which might provoke misleading associations of *latinidad* as something “embodied” or “intrinsic.”

Despite its potential, this concept resists essentialisms and all too easy harmonization and instead privileges debate, happening at a fragile site of instability in which varied ideas of *latinidad* [...] and its cognates are open to debate and contradiction; where incongruity and difference are not subjects for pathology and criminalization; where agreement is never guaranteed" (34). Lastly, as will become evident, both the festival's expansion and diversification under the heading of *latinidad* has been complemented by discourses of other stakeholders, particularly sponsors, who made such growth possible; in the light of globalization tendencies (expansion) and corporate sponsors' increased interest in the multiculturalist cause for the sake of increasing their symbolic capital.

4.3.1 Diversification of programs and sponsorship relationships

Throughout its history, the festival has seen an exponential growth both of films screened and other non-filmic sidebars (art showcases; galas) and relationships with sponsors and other supporters. In order to grow and in order to position itself as a bridge / meeting ground for a growing amount of mostly, but not exclusively, local constituencies, the festival needed such an increased network of supporters. The festival's geographical situation on the border and in the economically thriving border city of San Diego both played a decisive role as to the existence of supporters in turn seeking to advance their goals: outreach to diverse audiences and / or validation in conjunction with *latinidad*, as a shorthand for their respective philanthropic or multicultural agendas. As Ethan van Thillo has remarked, orchestrating the intense exchange of symbolic capital informing these relationships has required some diplomacy: "This is a challenge for some sponsors who all want to be at the top of the list mentioned but there are so many of them" E. van Thillo Interview 2011). Accordingly, the festival has dedicated different screens to major sponsors and made special mention of their support of events, entire sidebars or galas.

Parallel to the growth of the festival, there was also a proliferation of different designations for sponsors. While the numbers attest to the growth of the economic capital available to the festival, these multiplying designations moreover help us understand the different instantiations of symbolic capital exchanged by the festival and its different supporters, as a diachronic glance will show: In 1998, there were two organizations listed as festival "presenters" (Centro Cultural de La Raza and Pacific Bell). In addition, there were twelve so-called "major sponsors," nine "media sponsors," seven "additional sponsors," nine more assorted coming from the public / state sector as well as private foundations – a total of forty-nine supporting organizations and corporations. In addition, sixty-five individuals were listed by name. Seven years later, in 2005, the festival again thanked two "presenters" and two "major sponsors." Furthermore, the list included sponsors according to the following categories: "festival day" (four), "official hotel" (one), "screen" (three), "showcase" (six), "award" (three), "radio" (three), "student outreach" (two), "film" (eight), "newspaper" (four), "stage" (three), "television" (two), "gala" (one), "internet" (one), "printer" (one), "café / lounge" (one), "table" (six), four more state and private foundations: fifty-seven supporting organizations in total. In addition, the festival gave thanks to ninety more individuals and to its volunteers. And in 2010, there was a further diversification, featuring seventy-one corporate and community sponsors. New sponsoring categories included "Spanish language radio," "Spanish language TV," "English language radio," and "mobile."

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

Furthermore, this growth and diversification of the festival's support network provided the basis for both its growth and diversification of programs. While Cine '98 showcased forty-nine films from six different countries, that is, nine long features and forty short films, in 2005, the total number of films shown had increased to exactly one-hundred more: forty-three long features; seven feature-length documentaries, and forty-nine shorts of various genres. Lastly, SDLFF 2010, which I attended, presented one hundred and eighty-five films: fifty long features, sixteen long documentaries, and one hundred nineteen shorts. As these figures show, not only did the festival increase its output of filmic genres, what is more important, during the two last mentioned festival editions, the number of countries of origin had also grown exponentially.²⁸² This development becomes apparent in the following table:

FESTIVAL EDITION	CATALOG	FILMS	SPONSORS (SPACE)	GUEST CONTRIBUTIONS	SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS (AMOUNT AND CATEGORY)
Cine '98	44 pages (big format)	9 long features 40 shorts (different genres) Total: 49	21.5 pages	5	Presenters: 2 Major Sponsors: 12 Media: 9 Additional: 7 State and private foundations*: 9 SDSU: 10 Total: 49 Acknowledgements: 65 (individual persons) Endorsal* by city / state representatives: 1
SDLFF 2005	82	43 long features 7 feature-length docs 49 shorts (different genres) Total: 149	44 pages	3	Presenters: 2 Major Sponsors: 3 Festival Day Sponsors: 4 Off'l Hotel: 1 Screen: 3 Showcase: 6 Award: 3 Radio: 3 Student Outreach: 2 Film: 8 Newspaper: 4 Stage: 3 Television: 2 Gala: 1 Internet: 1 Printer: 1 Café / Lounge: 1 Table: 6 State foundations*: 2 Private foundations*: 1 Total: 57 Acknowledgements 90 + individuals and volunteers
SDLFF 2010	84	50 long features 16 feature-length docs 119 shorts Total: 185	49.5 pages	1	Major Sponsors: 3 Screen: 3 Showcase: 11 Award: 3 Off'l Airline: 1 Off'l Spanish language TV: 2 Off'l Spanish Language Radio: 3 Entertainment Suite Sponsor: 1 Film Sponsors: 18 Gala: 9 Off'l Hotel: 1 Off'l Stage: 1 Internet: 1 Off'l Magazine: 1 Mobile Sponsors: 3 Newspaper: 4 State and Private Foundations*: 3 Off'l English Language Radio: 2 Total: 71 Community Partners: 71 Endorsals* by city / state representatives: 2

Development of SDLFF's programs and sponsorship relationships, 1998 – 2005 – 2010

(Sources: Festival catalogs [*SDLFF 1998*] *Cine '98*; *SDLFF 2005*; *SDLFF 2010*)

²⁸² This growth in numbers of country of origin was further enhanced through additional factors such as the booming of national film industries in, and the subsequent proliferation of films from, Latin America, and the increase of multi-national collaborations as a result of a globalization of film markets.

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

This table also reflects a development from a festival both in search of its identity / brand and in need for legitimation by stakeholders from the academia and / or ethnic and film activism to an event increasingly building on its reputation with a multitude of different supporters, among them many media and corporate sponsors, even though these other stakeholders have continued to play a role as well. To provide an example, in 1998, the five long guest contributions had included an article by Bay Area based film scholar Sergio de la Mora on Emilio Fernández's celebrated Mexican Golden Era feature, *María Candelaria* (1943) (de la Mora 1998: 39-40)²⁸³; an extract from Chon A. Noriega's forthcoming key work on Chicano cinema, *Shot in America* (2001) (Noriega 1998: 32); an essay on *Crucero / Crossroads*, a border themed short by Canadian Latino filmmaker Guillermo Verdecchia, by Kathleen McHugh (McHugh 1998:36); an interview with Chicano film producer-activist Mocesuma Esparza by the Centro Cultural de La Raza's artist in residence, Victor Payan (Payan 1998: 18-19), and an interview with actor-director Jorge Cervera Jr. (Guzman López 1998: 35). Not least of all, this line-up reflects SDLFF's scholarly-artistic perspective at the time. As I will describe in more detail with regard to the Bay Area's Cine Acción, this corresponds to the way how – particularly in the 1980s and 1990s – scholarly contributions to the catalogs were part of an intense cross-validation when festivals provided a platform for pioneering scholars to promote the burgeoning academic field of Latino/a film studies. SDLFF in the 2000s, in turn, saw fewer and less detailed guest contributions, which also reflected its consumerist turn: even though specific programming slots tended to feature short introductions (such as on the Jewish Latino and Cine *Mujer* showcases), most texts were primarily tailored to help the reader navigate the many programs advertised in the catalog; in addition, a growth in sponsoring relations also required more space to acknowledge these. Thus, while in 1998 the festival featured five guest contributions, there were three shorter ones in 2005, and only one in 2010.

4.3.2 Borders, bridges: Programming diversity

As a glance at a number of editorials by the festival director reveals, SDLFF's ongoing diversification has found its discursive correlation in the way it frequently draws on the image of the border as a common ground between different national and other discourses. In his welcome editorial to SDLFF's transitional Cine '98 edition, van Thillo describes the festival's aim to act as a bridge: the gap between academic audiences and the more encompassing audiences in the Gaslamp Quarter; education and entertainment as well as commerce; the old and the new (established and emerging Latino filmmakers; Horton Plaza as newly redeveloped, commercial heart of the city's historical downtown) and of course the national divide signified by U.S. and Mexico / San Diego and Tijuana:

Connecting across borders, Cine '98 combines the already existing student component, **Cine Estudiantil**, with a broad scope of feature works by established and emerging Latino filmmakers. The festival is proud to have these films screened at United Artists Theaters in Horton Plaza, located in downtown San Diego's historic Gaslight District. (van Thillo 1998: 3, emphasis in the text)

Indeed, as I have pointed out, this was the first year the festival started charging admission to the film programs shown at the commercial cinema; the festival already featured a substantial line-up of

²⁸³ The venue belonged to the aforementioned Gabriel Figueroa retrospective curated by de la Mora for Cine Acción's ¡Cine Latino!, traveling the U.S. Latino/a film festival circuit in full or in part between 1997 and '98.

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

sponsors and films from six different countries. Furthermore, the bridging enterprise – here, between Latino/a cultural arts activism and the corporate world – was underscored by the way Cine '98 was co-presented by its two main sponsors, the non profit community arts organization and communications corporate sponsor.

Seven years later, in the 2005 catalog, festival director van Thillo again refers to the image of a bridge connecting film / the festival not only with the Mexican-U.S. borderlands but as well with the world through fostering an understanding of other such cultures, and their inherent diversity, world over: “Cinema continues to provide a wonderful bridge for promoting an understanding among our various cultures and embracing the tremendous cultural and social diversity that makes our beautiful region so special” (van Thillo 2005:1). Furthermore, by acknowledging how the border shines a light on asymmetrical power relations between and within the nations thus divided, he underlines the festival’s celebratory yet critical stance and the organization’s commitment to a social justice agenda:

Here at the intersection of the so-called First and Third worlds, we strive to play an important role in highlighting and celebrating the contributions and achievements of the diverse Latino communities in Mexico, the U.S., Spain, Argentina, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Chile, Costa Rica, Brazil, Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, the Middle East and nearly everywhere Latinos live today. (van Thillo 2005: 1)

As I have pointed out, SDLFF’s celebration of diversity works two ways. On the one hand, it celebrates the diversity of border culture as a paradigm for an appreciation of post-modern multidimensional subjectivity. On the other hand, shown above, the border is the point of departure for SDLFF’s community building project. Accordingly, the festival has continued to feature films from an increasing number of countries. In both cases, the festival / organization’s dedication to its local communities, through film, but also through other types of media, is taken to be the point of departure. In many public statements throughout the years, van Thillo has articulated his belief in film / media as tools with the capability to engender a deeper understanding of and connectedness with other cultures, solidarity and democratic values, as well as diversity. There is his 2010 festival opening statement, where he refers to the current “challenging times” through which “we continue to feel an energy that reveals the spirit of lasting relationships and support for one another” (van Thillo 2010:3). He then describes how news reports from recently earthquake struck Haiti had elicited responses from all across the world. And in 2011, in his editorial, he cites the example of 2011’s Arabic Spring in order to passionately make the case for media literacy as a way to join democratization processes: “If we the people don’t document our experiences, who will?” In another section of the same editorial, he draws attention to the connection between festival (alternative distribution) and the organization (media production), referencing U.S. Latino/a film activism’s traditional demands when once more proclaiming the organization’s transnational perspective and its work: “Should we wait for Hollywood and mainstream media to produce stories about Latin America, Mexico, Central America, Spain, and the U.S. Latino Experience, or can we join forces to produce and distribute these films ourselves! [sic]” (van Thillo 2011: 3). I read this statement, and affirmative exclamation mark, not so much as a rhetorical question but as an invitation extended to festivalgoers and a challenge to join the organization in their explorations of “questions of solidarity and community” (Bhabha) either as clients or supporters.

4.3.2.1 National diversity and border theme

One way SDLFF's emphasis on the diversity of Latino/a experiences was translated into the program was to feature spotlights on different national cinemas. Its short film program's traditional focus on Mexican films was soon complemented by a second one on Spanish productions (*cortos españoles*). Later, entire sidebars were dedicated to national cinemas from Argentina (2008), Spain (2009), Venezuela (2010), or Brazil (2011), usually supported by their respective national film boards, such as the National Film Board of Venezuela (CNAC), Mexico's IMCINE, and / or national consulates, such as the Consulate General of Brazil, Los Angeles, with the collaborating agencies usually given the opportunity to use the festival arena in order to promote their national cinemas. Accordingly, in his introduction to "Cinema Brasileiro" (2011), Consul General José Alfredo Graça Lima drew attention to the economic success of more recent Brazilian film (an increase of its share in the international film market by 30 % in 2010) and the international renown of its film talent (cf. Graça Lima 2011:27). In pursuit of enhancing its diversity agenda and creating cross-audiences, SDLFF thus also functioned as an important platform for international cinemas searching for distribution in the U.S.

Needless to say, SDLFF also featured a long-standing thematic focus on the border. In 2010, SDLFF's "Borders on Film" programming slot (established in 2007) featured works from Mexico, U.S., and Spain, thus moving beyond the Mexico-U.S. relationship. Another programming slot had been dedicated to shorts from the MACSD's own "Frontera Filmmakers" group. The border theme also permeated much of the festival's programming. The following examples from SDLFF 2010 provide a glimpse into the wide range of works dealing with the border topic and their potential to attract many different and intersecting audiences; yet they also show how despite its international scope, the U.S.-Mexican border was still a dominating theme at the festival. Among narrative features were low budget *Norteados* / (*Northless Mexico* 2009, Rigoberto Pérezcano.), about a young Oaxaqueño stranded in Tijuana after a futile attempt to cross the border and his becoming part of a community of people whose lives, too, have been touched by the border and its lure of a better life. Carlos Carrera's *El Traspasado* / *Backyard* (Mexico 2009), set against the real-life background of femicides of Ciudad Juárez, had been a contender for Best Foreign Language Film in the 2010 Academy Awards and was bound to attract bigger crowds as it featured popular Mexican actress Ana de la Reguera in the leading role as investigator alongside U.S. Latino actor Jimi Smits. Documentaries that dealt with the border included Yolanda Cruz's *2501 Migrants: A Journey* (USA / Mexico 2009), on the conception and creation of a momentous project by Oaxacan artist Alejandro Santiago (1964-2013), an army of near life size clay statues dedicated to the memory of all those who had left his native village for a better future in the U.S. and perished along the way. Finally, *The Tijuana Project* (Mexico/USA 2009; John Sheedy) combined border and educational themes by casting a light on a community that survives by picking trash in one of the city's biggest dumps, including the a number of children who are the focus of the film, and whose hopes for a better future are connected to a school established by a U.S. social worker and a nun.

4.3.2.2 Showcases of diversity: *Cine Gay*, *Cine Mujer*, and Jewish Latino

SDLFF's diversity programs, too, further highlight its reconceptualization of *latinidad* as multi-faceted and complex, characterized by many intersecting issues and subjectivities and thus meet its goals

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

of education and celebration, one step closer to van Thillo's idea of a film festival being about "the celebration of the genre of film" (E. v. Thillo Interview 2009) and alternative to the Hollywood blockbuster fare; its attempts to create cross-audiences which would register positively at the box office, satisfy collaborators and sponsors and function as an approximation to "festival communitas," diversity in unity. All the while, labels such as "*Cine Mujer*" or "Cinema Brasileiro" are also marketing categories, branding these sidebars according to a logic of specialty cinema. One felicitous example were SDLFF 2010's showcases of the celebrated romantic drama, *Contracorriente / Undertow* (Javier Fuentes-León, Peru / Colombia 2009). The film attracted visitors due to its LGBT subject matter, love story content, Peruvian setting and Sundance accolades, where it had garnered a World Cinema Dramatic Audience Award that same year, in 2010. Screened twice at the festival, audiences ranged from "people in drag to the local Miss Perú" (Ethan van Thillo Interview 2011).

Throughout the years, programming categories I will call intersectional Latino/a categories, included "*Cine Gay*," "*Cine Mujer*," and 2011's "Jewish Latino" showcase. Sometimes just filed under the larger rubric of "showcases of diversity" (such as in the 2009 catalog), they were frequently featured in cooperation with at least one community partner on board for financial reasons as well as in order to enhance outreach potential.

"Cine Gay" was first introduced in 2005 when it encompassed a sidebar of shorts ("*Cine Gay Shorts*"). It was frequently featured as a multi-genre programming category as well, such as in 2009 and 2010. In the 2009 catalog, SDLFF reiterated their overarching aim to "[c]halleng[e] the historical exclusion of under-represented communities in the media" by shedding light on "experiences of gay life in different corners of the world." (Stillman 2009: 27). In the catalog, Patric Stillman, "*Cine Gay*" curator and then MACSD associate, reiterated SDLFF's philosophy of audience rapport, arguing that the former had further validated the showcase. Even though LGBT films had been a festival mainstay, being part of the festival's overall "embrace[ed] diversity in independent film," it was "the audience interest in the "*Cine Gay*" Showcase the past four years [that] really pu[t] a face on the community, internationally and right here in San Diego.'" (ibid.). It was to be expected that local audiences would also be able to appreciate some films specifically programmed because of their relevance to local LGBT communities, as for example a Spanish documentary short dealing with same sex marriage, an upcoming topic in California's courts that year (Andrés Rubio's *Campillo Si, Quiero*, Spain 2008). Accordingly, the film was co-presented by FilmOut San Diego, a local LGBT film festival.

Another long-standing social diversity category was covered by "*Cine Mujer*." In early editions, it included both films by and on Latinas; later, with the festival's rising renown, multiplying screenings and submissions and, as is to be hoped, increased focus on Latina agency, the category was narrowed down to female made film. In 2010, "*Cine Mujer*" was a special festival highlight; sponsorship by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences added prestige; the showcase consisted of fifty films in total: seven long narrative features, eight feature-length documentaries, and thirty-five shorts. A further validation came from Martha M. Lauzen, Executive Director of SDSU's Center of Women in Television and Film (CWTF). In her introduction, she drew attention to the persistent underrepresentation of women directors in Hollywood and praised the role of alternative arenas such as film festivals in general and SDLFF's "*Cine Mujer*" in particular by calling them "far more welcoming venues for female storytellers" (Lauzen 2010:41). Lauzen quoted from recent research made

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

by CWTF, according to which “behind-the-scenes women accounted for 22 % of directors and 19 % of writers working on feature-length films appearing at festivals” – as opposed to the mere “9 percent of directors and 12 percent of writers working on the top 250 domestic grossing films” (ibid.).

Another important intersectional spotlight was the Jewish Latino showcase. On the one hand, this was a topically category, corresponding to the recent proliferation of Latin American Jewish themed and made films that passed through the arthouse theatrical circuit with some success, attesting to a more recent interest in such explorations of identity,²⁸⁴ films such as *Anita* (Argentina 2009, Marcos Carnevale; shown at SDLFF 2011) and particularly *Cinco Días Sin Nora / Nora's Will* (Mexico 2008, Mariana Chenillo; shown at SDLFF 2010); on the other hand – once again underscoring SDLFF’s attention to its audiences – to the high popularity of Jewish themed cinema among local groups, such as SDLFF’s loyal following of a local Jewish Argentinian enclave (E. v. Thillo Interview 2011). Like SDLFF’s spin-off Jewish Latino Film Festival (held annually, 2010-12), this programming slot was co-sponsored by the Leichtag Foundation (leichtag.org), a private foundation specializing in education, and co-presented by the San Diego Jewish Film Festival (SDJFF).

Here, the Jewish Latino/a focus resonates with the focus on representational strategies traditionally upheld by Latino/a themed film festivals. Guest curator and contributor Ilene Goldman (Goldman 2011:17) reviewed the changing narrative strategies in regard to the presentation of Jewishness. If older productions had shown Jewish Latinos/as in self-contained isolation within the larger narrative of the nation state, such as as immigrants and / or ethno-religious outsiders, she noted what I would interpret as a more recent normalization and, perhaps, depoliticization of Jewish identity positions, namely, outsider status being relegated from the public domain to the private sphere of the family. This also means that identifying as Jewish became one possible identity marker among others, telling of a perspective seeing identities as multi-dimensional and constructed rather than monolithic and intrinsic.²⁸⁵ Importantly, Goldman draws attention to the way these more recent films advance the argument as to Jewish Latinos/as’ changed rank within the larger socio-political fabric of Latin America: “They demonstrate, perhaps, Jewish Latin Americans have found a more comfortable position within the dominant culture. And yet, in each film the subtexts of exile, identity and family are heightened by the character’s Jewishness” (ibid.). In her conclusion, however, she stresses that despite their focus on Jewish characters, these films explore quintessentially Latin American identities: “Like the best of Latin American cinema, they form part of a rich tapestry created by films that came before and films that accompany them” (ibid.).

²⁸⁴ Incidentally, MACSD also produced an annual festival of its own for three years – the Jewish Latino Film Festival (2010-12).

²⁸⁵ Goldman describes the evolvement of Latino/a (here: Latin American, and not U.S. Latino/a) film dealing with specific Jewish Latino/a experiences and stories as a phenomenon of the 1990s. These films depicted Latin American Jewish identities as “outsider” identities in struggle with national discourses and different, hegemonic Christian faiths, “suggesting that the Latin American Jewish experience is multi-layered – Jewish in predominantly Catholic lands; frequently an immigrant; and often further set apart by dietary laws, language, and other cultural traditions.” Goldman points to a changed perspective apparent in films from the early 2000s and after, films from Mexico, Argentina, and Chile: “The films posit that Jewish ethnic identity in Latin America is shaped from within the microcosm of the Jewish family.” She observes that “[a] sense of exile remains, but rather than being an ‘Other’ in the greater community, the Jew is the ‘Other’ in his or her family.” This shift is also underlined in the films on show, none of which “center[ing] on the Jewishness of the protagonist” (Goldman 2011: 17).

Goldman's conclusion may be symptomatic not only for the changed representations of Jewishness in Latin American cinema. It is also an important contribution to SDLFF's promotion of *latinidad* as being part of a complex and intersectional fabric of diversity rather than being one-dimensional and marginal. However, it also underlines differences in the national perceptions on ethnic identity in Latin America and the U.S. since in Latin America, different versions of *mestizaje* (the amalgamation of indigenous and Christian-European groups) have dominated hegemonic discourse. This strategy attempted to harmonize a vastly heterogeneous society while not only erasing ongoing asymmetrical power relations but also groups that sat squarely to this ideal, such as the many African, Arabic, Asian, and Jewish groups. Against this historical background, the normalization of Jewish Latin Americans may be read as an audacious and liberating move, because it attempts to integrate them into the larger national narrative. However, it could also be read as a way to relegate ethnicity to the background, to the private realm of the family; the danger here lies in the fact that it thus could be easily cast as sheer personal eccentricity. (Obviously, here and in all considerations of *latinidad* and Jewishness as ethnic identities a comparison between the two ultimately points to their a priori constructedness.)

All the while, in the historical-political context of the U.S., the foregrounding of a Jewish Latino/a ethno-religious identity may require placing such identities in an intersectional framework often out of tune with the ways ethnicity is seen, literally, in everyday life. Obviously, too, contradictory social norms may also make a "privatization" of ethnicity (in the sense of ethnicity as "choice"), as suggested by Goldman, difficult if not impossible. While for San Diego's Jewish Latino/a constituencies, these showcases were likely to affirm their own respective experiences, thus once more making the festival a safe space where such matters could be debated, for others they were a lesson in the inherently intersectional nature of *latinidad*.

4.3.2.3 Challenging the semantic boundaries of *latinidad*: "Guest Director" slot

In 2004 and 2005,²⁸⁶ SDLFF featured a showcasing category that shook up preconceived notions of the programming fare usually associated with Latino/a film festivals. The category had a renowned Latino/a filmmaker curate a sidebar of exemplary films "that have influenced his / her career in a profound way" ("Guest Director: Luis Mandoki"; *SDLFF 2005*: 11). Importantly, in their programming choices, the directors were not restricted to usage of the label Latino/a. Thus, in 2004, internationally celebrated Mexican filmmaker Arturo Ripstein chose Buñuel's *Nazarín* (Mexico 1959), Federico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* (Italy 1960), and Akira Kurosawa's *The Seven Samurai* (Japan 1954) (E. v. Thillo Interview 2009). Next in line was another Mexican director, Luis Mandoki, who was praised as "one of the first Mexican directors of the current generation to successfully break into Hollywood in the 1980s" ("Guest Director: Luis Mandoki"; *SDLFF 2005*:11).²⁸⁷ Mandoki selected *The Human Condition: No Greater Love* (Japan 1959; Masaki Kobayashi); *Rocco and his Brothers* (Italy / France 1960; Luchino Visconti), and *The Battle of Algiers* (Algeria / Italy 1965; Gillo Pontecorvo) (ibid.).

²⁸⁶ The "guest director" category was continued for three more years but then was a mere retrospective of the chosen filmmaker's work.

²⁸⁷ One is to infer that his role model status was further confirmed by the way Mandoki had just returned to Latin American themes by way of acclaimed and Mexican made *Voces Inocentes*, released one year earlier, in 2004, and set during the 1980s Salvadoran Civil War.

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

The guest director programming slot was a way for the festival to challenge the possibilities and limitations mapped out by its ethnic designation. After all, according to the ethnic or identity logic of the festival, Latino/a was its programming criterion by default. However, by introducing a miniscule number of non-Latino/a films to the festival (in 2005: three out of altogether 149 showcased films), SDLFF toppled preconceived notions of cultural hegemony: By presenting a programming category whose legitimacy was solely based on contingency (namely, based on the fact that its creators were outstanding Latino/a filmmakers), SDLFF challenged the limitations of *latinidad* as a culturally-ethnically bounded category, while at the same time arguing in favor of its potential to forge alliances in manifold ways, as it had done in its “showcases of diversity” programming. That said, it also radically deviated from the way U.S. Latino/a film festivals had served Latino/a film activism’s creating a counter-public for Latino/a film and experiences, according to the narrowest or broadest possible interpretations of the designation.

In fact, SDLFF’s “guest director” category took the notion of cultural hybridity one step further. It advanced the argument according to which an individual’s artistic (and any other) experience and overall identity formation is by no way reducible to its immediate ethnic-cultural environment; this logic also ties in with Bhabha’s aforementioned refutation of social differences as a product / experience of an “already authenticated cultural tradition” (1994:3). Such a notion also resisted a *quasi* “one-drop rule” perception of identity formation which would see one’s ethnicity (“nonwhite” ethnic identity) as marked / dominant, paradoxically upheld both by white supremacists and ethnic essentialists, that would regard an ethnic (“non-white”) affiliation as the only legitimate such determinant. In conjunction with SDLFF’s project of providing alternatives to the Hollywood mainstream, such programming choices underscored the potential of cultural production to build bridges based on shared experiences, on contingency. In other words, there was a shift to a “[coalition] politics [...] informed by *affinity* rather than identity” (Phelan 1994:140; qtd. in Beltrán 2010:161; qtd. in Kirschner 2012:35; my italics). This basic humanity is also underscored by Mandoki’s own notes on Luchino Visconti’s *Rocco and His Brothers*, which Mandoki describes as a film about “family,” and as “a complex movie that deals with the love and also the pain and the conflict. [...] [*Rocco*] could almost take place in Mexico, the same story, same characters, except they’re a little louder than the Italians” (Mandoki 2005: 11).

To be sure, factors like artistic meaningfulness – in keeping with van Thillo’s vision of the festival as a “celebration of the art of cinema” (E. v. Thillo Interview 2009)²⁸⁸ – and timeless themes, often with an underlying social justice aspect – were not cited to undermine the ethnic-specific by hegemonic “humanism,” but to forge a common ground and to stake “niche” productions’ claims in a shared artistic heritage that was “consecrated” (cf. Bourdieu 1996: 122ff.) by the keepers of established culture. It is not without a reason that Mandoki decided to choose films in the neorealist tradition, a genre which he describes as being “very close to Mexico” (Mandoki 2005: 11).

Lastly, the “guest director” slot could also be seen as a way both for the festival and for MACSD to strategically promote “Latino/a” as a default category for underrepresented voices and visions, including films beyond the blockbuster mainstream. This ties in with the organization’s having carved out a niche for such cinema over the years by means of its year-round cinematic program. At the same

²⁸⁸ Despite the fact that festival has indeed made concessions to its audiences’ tastes, such as by inviting *telenovela* stars, as Ethan van Thillo has made clear, the organization has drawn the line as to *Pirates of the Caribbean*-type-Hollywood blockbusters (E. Van Thillo Interview 2011).

time, the guest director category may also have served as a testing ground for MACSD's increasingly diversifying cinematic exhibitions, which led to the inclusion of cinema beyond the "Latino/a made and / or centered" formula. As mentioned before, MACSD's in-house film program was eventually stripped of the ethnic marker implied by "Cinema *en tu Idioma*," renamed "Digital Gym Cinema" and thus to some extent normalized, albeit within the "outsider" status of independent / art house productions.

4.4 Foil and Hollywood alternative: Tijuana's "*cultura de la necesidad*" (Monsiváis)

Throughout SDLFF's existence, and even more so ever since the creation of MACSD, there has been a pronounced focus on representations of life on the border, which includes Tijuana's communities, as well as many points of exchange and collaboration with artists from south of the border. Many of the programs shown at SDLFF, particularly MACSD's own "Youth Visions" or the festival's programming slot occupied by trans-border *Frontera* Filmmakers, take a critical look at some of the harsher realities faced by the inhabitants of the borderlands, at the many ways they are the victims of globalization, but also their resilience, resourcefulness, and solidarity. Until 2009, SDLFF also hosted festival sidebars south of the border.

While these multiple points of connection are not only beneficial to these artists but also to the entire transnational San Diego-Tijuana trans-border community, whose experiences are thus acknowledged and validated in many ways, Tijuana, in turn, also holds in stall yet another, powerful utopian vision: that of the possibility to create outlets different from those of the cultural mainstream, particularly Hollywood. In this respect, Tijuana is paradigmatic of the promise of the transcultural vision of *latinidad* as a means to encourage and bring to light different vistas and perhaps change – just like the organization's motto, "Changing Lives through Film."

For a long time, San Diego's twin city, Tijuana, one of Mexico's fastest growing cities, has enjoyed an otherwise marginal status in the country's cultural imagination. Traditionally – and specifically in the U.S. – it has always been seen as a tourist city, known for its vibrant night life of clubs and casinos. Arguably, Tijuana's border city notoriety may have worsened in the 1990s, with the increased nativist vigilante activity north of the border, in conjunction with what has been discursively framed as the threat of a never-ending influx of "illegals" taking away jobs and involved in drug trafficking (cf. Fox 1999: 92ff.; Hayes-Bautista 2004: 126ff.).

Over the years of its existence, Tijuana has become the object both of heightened attention and even myth-making by the mass media as well as by scholarly discourse. In 1990, shortly before the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was introduced, Tijuana was hailed by Argentine anthropologist Néstor García Canclini as "*uno de los mayores laboratorios de la posmodernidad*" ([one of the greatest laboratories of postmodernity] 293), the urban epitome of irreconcilable extremes, mirroring like perhaps few other cities the asymmetrical power relations that reverberate in Gloria Anzaldúa's famous allegory of the Mexican-U.S. border as "*una herida abierta* [an open wound, A.R.] where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds." (1987:3, her italics)

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

Indeed, on the one hand, Tijuana was to play a crucial role in the implementation of NAFTA (1994), featuring the largest number of *maquiladora* services – particularly important as a site for both auto and computer industry suppliers. On the other hand, there is Tijuana’s association with the extreme poverty of many of its more recent inhabitants, for the most part economic refugees from poor rural parts of the country or other Latin American countries, many of whom have come to the city with the longing to cross into the U.S. Their impressive survival skills have been the object of praise and marvel by many. There is also a certain element of local “grassroots audacity” (Davis 2000: 26). According to urban theorist Mike Davis, “Tijuaneneses are consummate *bricoleurs* who have built a culturally vibrant metropolis from the bottom up, largely using recycled materials from the other side of border” (26). To Davis, a particular apt symbol of this attitude – audacity and making do with limited means – is Tijuana’s famous landmark of vernacular architecture, *La Mona* (the doll), a five-storey edifice with the proportions of a curvy, stark naked female.²⁸⁹ Not least of all, *La Mona* invokes “*la cultura de la necesidad*,” culture of necessity“), a term attributed to the influential Mexican writer and cultural critic Carlos Monsiváis by Chicano arts scholar Tomas Ybarra-Frausto (Ybarra-Frausto 1990: 148; no reference to the original). The phrase describes how marginalized artists have often had to contend themselves with situational, improvisational aesthetic strategies rather than being able to rely on one”monolithic aesthetic" consecrated by the keepers of the institutionalized cultural mainstream.

This expression, *cultura de la necesidad*, forms one of the key elements in Ybarra-Frausto’s groundbreaking observations on *rasquachismo*. A term with roots in vernacular Mexican and Mexican American Spanish, *lo rasquache* stands for a cultural sensibility on both sides of the border re-appropriated (its reappropriation by the 1970s Chicano/a arts movement will be discussed in the next analysis chapter on Reel Rasquache [sic] Arts and Film Festival, Los Angeles). Tijuana culture, too, has frequently been referred to as “*rasquache*” (alternative spelling: “*rascuache*,” “*rascuachi*”), a term whose older meanings are pejorative and range from “cobbled together” to “cheap,” “trash,” and “unauthentic.” As *Tijuanero* writer and journalist Federico Campbell (1995) observes,

The volatile combination of brothels and velvet paintings of Elvis Presley or Emiliano Zapata seems to underlie the put-down “It’s so TJ,” which is frequently heard among Californian Mexican-Americans. For many people TJ embodies a flagrant and tasteless “*rascuachismo*.” Others suspect that the garishness is all part of the act, a way of playing to expectations from the other side. (5)

In ways similar (if, arguably, less programmatic than in the case of Chicano/a art activism), *lo rasquache*, in the cultural production of Tijuana, has been strategically validated since it is reputed to convey something of the city’s propensity for improvisation, irreverence, and making do despite a lack of resources. This move has to be seen in the context of how Campbell, with a glance at the seminal border fieldwork of anthropologist Néstor García Canclini, has described Tijuana’s branding itself as “TJ,” a commodity for the U.S. citizens in search for “difference”:

²⁸⁹ “Distressingly – to the gringo eye at least – she looks like the statue of liberty stripped and teased for a Playboy centrefold. In reality, she is the home of Armando Muñoz García and his family. [...] ‘Give me enough rebar and an oxyacetylene torch,’ he boasts, ‘and I’ll line the border with giant nude Amazons.’ In the meantime, he eats in *La Mona*’s belly and curls up to sleep inside her enormous breasts. When asked why he built a house with pubic hair and nipples, he growls back, ‘Why not?’ (Davis 2000: 25)

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

If familiarity with the United States has mitigated the glamour of the other side, the Tijuana businesspeople are still well aware that a large part of their city's revenue derives from maintaining a glamour of their own, an image of “difference” that will draw the tourists. So a bit of Spanish is mixed in with a bit of slightly distorted English, making the adventure both homey and defamiliarized at the same time, or the “rascuache” elements are played up, all in an effort to meet tourists' expectations. Unlike the southern parts of Mexico, say García Canclini's survey respondents, where the local people can count on the pyramids to pull in the tourist dollars, Tijuana never had much of anything to work with. Thus, says one Tijuana, "It's like we have to invent something for the gringos. (7, BrE)

The writer's somewhat exoticizing undertones aside – I argue that it is, on the one hand, the lack of recognition by Mexico's traditional guardians and supporters of much cultural production – the country's centralist state authorities –and, on the other hand, the proximity of the U.S. that both have contributed to the unique cultural climate of Tijuana, which makes the latter a metaphor for a at times “raw,” and at times “laboratory” atmosphere (García Canclini 1990: 193). In the same laboratory spirit, Tijuana's pioneering border think tank, COLEF (Colegio de la Frontera del Norte) hosted the seminal exchange between Mexican and Latina filmmakers and scholars in 1990; while the spirit of irreverence informed the work of the Border Arts Workshop / *Taller de Arte Fronterizo* (BAW / TAF), headquartered both in Tijuana and San Diego's Centro Cultural de la Raza.

In the remainder of this subchapter, I will use the example of two film / media festivals to shine a light on the way Tijuana's film and arts scene has responded to the city's geo-political marginalization²⁹⁰ in centralist Mexico. By capitalizing on “TJ”'s at times iconoclastic, at times “can-do” and spirit rooted in a border sensitivity attuned to difference, both organizations have been able each to carve out creative and innovative niches for the exhibition of audio-visual media art. I argue that despite many differences between SDLFF and these festivals, the latter are indicative of the way the southern twin city's creativity and resourcefulness has served as an inspiration for both SDLFF.

In the 1990s, with the onset of the digital revolution, Tijuana became the creative home for a younger generation of artists working in film, video and multimedia formats. Even though often trained at prestigious film schools in the country's metropolises to the south and / or abroad, they wear their resourcefulness and loyalty for Tijuana like a badge of honor. Salvador (Sal) Ricalde, founder of Imaginería Audiovisual de la Frontera (IAF, 1997-2006), one of the city's first and most significant film and multimedia festivals, is one such example (S. Ricalde Interview 2009).²⁹¹ A Tijuana native, Ricalde had taken up social studies in his home town before moving on to Mexico City to continue by way of filmmaking. His videos are associated with border art and have been shown at different museum and festival spaces worldwide. Much in the same way as they attempt to capture the city's

²⁹⁰ For example, García Canclini (1992) cites editors from a local journal, *Esquina Baja*, whose aim it is to create content meeting their own high quality standard by “‘creating a reading public’ and having ‘a local journal of quality design, layout and so on in order to counter the centralizing tendency that prevails in our country. There is a prejudice against what we do in the provinces; if it doesn't make it in Mexico City it is not much worth, so they say.’” (42; personal testimony recorded in García Canclini & Safa 1989, no page provided).

²⁹¹ Renowned border scholar Professor Norma Iglesias-Prieto, formerly COLEF, now SDSU, kindly introduced me to Sal Ricalde (IAF) and Adriana Trujillo (Bordocs) in October 2009. She was also present at both interviews.

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

atmosphere – the significance of cars in Tijuano/as’ daily lives, or the ubiquity, in the highly policed border zone, of surveillance cameras, the festival, IAF, made a point of conveying something of, and celebrating, Tijuana.

IAF was first held at a university space but soon moved into the city; in many respects, it was paradigmatic for the art of Tijuana: celebrating improvisation and the reliance on limited resources; disillusionment with Hollywood glamor as well as established art forms. IAF was a multi-venue, three-day event that for the most part featured *cortos* (short films), few feature-length films, and a number of experimental multimedia genres and always “end[ed] with a big party” (S. Ricalde Interview 2009). Some venues were held at the city’s oldest cinema, both as a reminder of Tijuana’s proud past as a trendy holiday resort and a homage to bygone cinema culture before the arrival of the multiplex; others, at parking structures to generate a “drive in” scenario in tune with the automobile’s significance in a city marked by its role with the car supplier industries, and one where entire buildings have been mounted on car tyres and people “sleep in their cars,” for lack of a proper home (S. Ricalde Interview 2009).

If IAF capitalized on the city’s “rasquache” rawness of spirit, BorDocs (2003-2013; founded by Adriana Trujillo and Itzel Martínez del Cañizo), tapped the increased artistic and scholarly interest in the border as symbolic capital: Set in COLEF’s academic space, BorDocs celebrated Tijuana’s resourcefulness through the medium of documentary film as a festival focusing on “products with social commitment and artistic content” (Trujillo, in A. Trujillo & N. Iglesias Prieto Interview 2009). Like Ricalde, Trujillo is a filmmaker herself. A crucial realization during her studies in Spain was how her training as a filmmaker in Tijuana had provided her with a special ability to improvise and make do with little or nothing to complete her films, contrary to her European classmates and colleagues, used to an entire infrastructure ranging from funding to post-production (A. Trujillo Interview 2009). Back in North America, Trujillo used both this knowledge and her expertise as an instructor and programmer on both sides of the Mexican border, including also programs organized for SDLFF and MACSD, such as putting together six hours of documentaries dealing with and coming from the binational borderlands community, subsequently shown in the state capital of Baja California, Mexicali, in Tijuana, and twice in San Diego, once at MACSD and once at SDSU (A. Trujillo Interview 2009).

All the while, there is a crucial difference between Tijuana’s and SDLFF’s imagined communities point to how marginalization was framed differently (geopolitics vs. ethnicity) to some extent resonates with my earlier statements as to the many differences between New Latin American and Latino/a cinema. Though their festivals, particularly BorDocs, were also committed to social agendas, they had been created primarily as arenas for Tijuana’s artistic community due to their ongoing marginalization and lack of funding in centralist Mexico. In contrast, SDLFF, with its focus both on ethnic minorities (Latinos/as) and on conquering more diverse, more encompassing “underrepresented” and “underserved” communities, had been able to establish relationships with a wide range of sponsors – those (particularly media) attracted by the star-driven attention economy, others because of SDLFF’s education agenda, which would appeal to their multicultural / philanthropy agendas. IAF and BorDocs, however, tended to steer clear of the “glitz” element, since it did not fit in with the vibe of the city and its many poorer communities. Their stance reflects a more general attitude of Baja California’s

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

cultural producers, whose experience of marginalization in Mexican cultural production has taught them to distrust Mexico's courting of Hollywood, as García Canclini has argued:

Given their experience at the margin of U.S. culture they are not as susceptible to its glamor as Mexicans of the more distant capital. The contact between traditional symbolic systems and international information networks, cultural industries, and migrant populations does not diminish the importance of identity, national sovereignty, and the unequal access to knowledge and cultural capital. Conflict does not disappear, as postmodern neoconservatives would have it, but becomes less polarized and intransigent. This more flexible cultural affirmation is less subject to cultural backlash. (García Canclini 1992:42)

Actually, resistance to Hollywood did pose a form of symbolic capital; this was underscored by Ricalde's account of internationally acclaimed directors following their invitation to IAF – even though the festival was never able to pay them a speaker's fee.²⁹² These directors, among them U.S. film director Darren Aronofsky, then known for *Pi* (1998) or *Requiem for a Dream* (2000), and Mexican filmmaker Armando Casas (*Un Mundo Raro* (2001)) were drawn to IAF's unique status and inspirational creativity.

At the same time, however, BorDoc's Adriana Trujillo expressed her heartfelt wish for more sponsors by way of corporations, something which would relieve her of some of the tedious and frequently futile task of grant proposal writing. She pointed to Mexico's fundamentally different funding practices when compared to a U.S. American tradition of sponsoring from corporations and foundations.²⁹³ In contrast, resources available to BorDocs mostly had come from academia and community centers, and, occasionally, IMCINE. While other less geographically marginalized Mexican cities may have a somewhat different sponsorship infrastructure, cultural events such as hers usually remain state subsidized.²⁹⁴ Trujillo's observations mirror those of Claire Fox (1999), who has argued that “from a cultural perspective, the border should be viewed as a semiautonomous social system because the twin cities straddling the border have more in common with one another than with U.S. and Mexican cities of the interior”, yet also points to how factors such as the massive presence of maquiladora industries “ha[v]e also made the cities extremely heterogeneous economically [...]” Fox argues that while “[t]his heterogeneity, in turn, has given rise to artistic and literary production concomitant with the boom industrial parks, [...] in most border cities institutional support for local artists and writers remains very modest” (136).

BorDocs' interdependency with COLEF poses another difference between SDLFF and BorDocs regarding sponsoring and the targeting of audiences. For BorDocs, the liaison with COLEF is quite

²⁹² At this point of our conversation, Norma Iglesias Prieto weighed in that COLEF tended to chip in for the airfare on such occasions.

²⁹³ However, the Ford Foundation has been known to sponsor cultural production outside the U.S. and particularly in Latin America. The lack of interest in supporting the festival may have to do with Tijuana's marginal status.

²⁹⁴ Here, it is also important to remember one point that did not surface in these two conversations, namely, the fact that unlike the U.S., Mexico has a traditional film funding structure, even though the availability of its resources may sometimes be volatile and dependent on certain cultural political agendas. This also means that some more humble independent Latino/a productions continue to encounter difficulties when attempting to measure up to the often more sophisticated films that were made with the help from Latin American national film boards.

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

prestigious due to the institution's key role in border research; and in its own way, the festival reciprocates this mission. Yet, Trujillo has emphasized that even though BorDoc's foremost task has always been to enable exchange between filmmakers and scholars, her long-term vision was to draw in people from outside the institutional realm as well – a familiar challenge for many films exhibitions hosted in an academic environment. In sum, it is also in regard to BorDocs' situation as campus event that we can see another disjuncture regarding the situation of SDLFF that reflects both nations' (Mexico and the U.S.) different cultural politics. SDLFF's eventual decision to move off campus had been made possible only because of funding available in an economically thriving city with a greater availability of sponsors. SDLFF's concessions made both to sponsors and audiences' tastes (including the featuring of *telenovela* stars) were one necessary result, as was the increase of education centred programs through MACSD to fill the gap left by the state in regard to the support of education, culture, and the arts, and thus a broadening of its clientele and supply.

5. Resources: Education, nurture and atmosphere

As I have argued above, MACSD's successful growth and consolidation has been to a large extent owed to an ability to recognize the different needs of sponsors and translate them into incentives for programs and festival showcases. A key strategy used by the organization was to take San Diego's border community as a point of departure for envisioning an "underserved," yet quite heterogeneous imagined community whose attention (via "glitz") and education / nurture would serve as an incentive for a range of sponsors and other supporters on the other hand. Thus, as I have also argued in conjunction with the previous overview (Table: Development of SDLFF's programs and sponsorship relationships, 1998 – 2005 – 2010), both the festival and MACSD have been able to establish and sustain many sponsorship relationships in the San Diego-Tijuana region over the more than twenty years of SDLFF's existence. In addition to incentives such as media attention and an educational and social justice agenda, SDLFF's big and diverse audiences also pose an immense resource, attracting sponsors who attempt to reach out to local communities for business reasons. This latter group also includes organizations catering to local, underprivileged groups (health and welfare organizations, such as the Neighborhood House Association, to be discussed later on).

An additional factor which fuses both SDLFF's educational and celebrity aspects as well as its different target groups is the festival's atmosphere, its "craziness." (E. v. Thillo Interview 2011) From a marketing perspective, the creation of a trademark atmosphere that is uniquely SDLFF's has been enhanced by the fact that the majority of events²⁹⁵ has taken place in one and the same location, the multiple screen cinema at Mission Valley's Hazard Center. This allows for the utmost diversity of groups to come together in one place: newcomers are introduced to the programs of the festival and of MACSD; festival regulars meet one another. Filmmakers are able to exhibit their works to a uniquely receptive, "competent" (bilingual, bicultural) border audience. For sponsors, it is possible to reach out to a widely diverse group of people or to a more specialized clientele, depending on their product or service. It is on site, during the "time out of time" of the festival, where and when the most pragmatic considerations – the attraction of cinema as a way to conquer audiences and markets, to build professional networks and to enhance one's business profile – coincide with the most utopian

²⁹⁵ Exceptions are the events south of the border and the galas in San Diego's Gaslight Quarter.

goals – the experience of film as a means to affirm one’s culture and / or see the world anew and as a means for change.

5.1 Education

Both MACSD’s and the festival’s educational mission present a particularly strong incentive for sponsors. It is not without a reason that the annual festival catalog routinely draws attention to the fact that SDLFF has continued to serve as MACSD’s chief fundraising event. Accordingly, in his 2011 editorial, van Thillo connected the commitment of SDLFF’s sponsors and patrons – “an outpouring of partner and member contributors” – to being able to continue MACSD’s educational work, emphasizing that “[u]nique to the San Diego Latino Film Festival is the fact that after expenses, all proceeds support [our] youth media education programs” (van Thillo 2011:3).

In line with other Latino/a film festivals and their similar agendas, the festival has focused on education and empowerment from the very beginning, if with different possibilities to realize this agenda at the various stages of its development. While Cine Estudiantil provided a showcase for Latino/a-Chicano/a and Latin American film in an academic context, the festival’s move into the public sphere of San Diego downtown and eventually to its long time Mission Valley location signaled a more encompassing agenda as to its outreach and audiences. This section looks at how SDLFF’s educational agenda has served as an important means to attract sponsors: It may amplify the outreach possibilities for MACSD’s community partners; for others, such as corporate sponsors, it is key to the exchange of symbolic capital.

5.1.1 “Youth Visions”

“Youth Visions” is an important slot on the festival agenda because it singularly underlines the organization’s aim to hands-on empower people through film. It draws in a cross-generational, multicultural audience and ideally serves as a place for artistic incubation and familiarization with the festival. Created in 2001 as a festival platform for MACSD’s “Teen Producers” (one of the organization’s longest-established programs), the festival’s youth showcase has emerged as an important cornerstone for SDLFF. It encompasses film productions by MACSD’s Teen Producers and from similar media arts organizations all around the country. A consistent thematic focus are social justice topics, such as “immigration, racism and community violence [...] directly affecting [the young filmmakers’] neighborhoods, homes, schools, and lives” (“Youth Visions”; *SDLFF 2008:37*). In our conversations, van Thillo emphasized that he loved to see how the festival had been endorsed by generations of locals; and that he saw maintaining that as one of the big challenges to be faced by the festival, also due to the fact that younger generations of Latinos might stop speaking Spanish and would not be interested in Spanish language programs (E. v. Thillo Interview 2011) A recurring point made by van Thillo was the organization’s aim to reinstall in a younger generation of immigrants a sense of accomplishment and identity that came both with being able to view themselves and to tell their own stories (also signaled by the showcase’s original designation as “*Tu Voz TV*”). “Youth Visions” is usually screened twice to allow for availability to a greater proportion of audiences: Once as a stand-alone sidebar; admission charged, which further validates the programs by these young filmmakers; second, as part

of “*Tu Cine*,” a more encompassing, free of charge cinematic program for high school students and educators held several weekday mornings.

5.1.2 Educational sponsor: Neighborhood House Association

The fact that SDLFF’s youth and family programs break boundaries in terms of audience building – not only do they attract wide cross-section of the population but also more infrequent cinema users who attend because of family – serves as an incentive for a number of sponsors. One such local sponsor attracted by outreach possibilities generated at the festival space in general and this particular programming slot in particular is the Neighborhood House Association (NHA), a long standing welfare, not for profit organization which offers counselling services on issues such as affordable housing and employment.²⁹⁶ According to Luis González, NHA’s director of community affairs, the organization was serving about 22,000 clients in San Diego County at the time of our interview; about 45 % of these were Latinos/as (L. González Interview 2011). Though not ethnically affiliated, ethnic minorities constitute a high percentage of NHA’s clients. A supporter of SDLFF since 2009, NHA has repeatedly been a showcase sponsor for “Youth Visions” due to the program’s cross-generational appeal to people from diverse ethnic backgrounds. González pointed to some of the challenges involving the outreach to the Latino/a community in a region “about 30 % Latino/a.” Due to the region’s proximity to the border and constant entries of new immigrants from a perpetually transforming Latin America, a major challenge for NHA has remained to keep on “develop[ing] assets to attract certain segments of the Latino community, [which is], unfortunately, so large that it is not fully integrated.” Guatemalan born himself, González has praised the collaboration’s outreach possibilities, calling SDLFF one among

very few events that help to integrate people from all across Latin America. And when the festival showcases films from Peru or Central America, pockets of people from these nationalities come to see the films. So [the festival] is not just about Mexican culture.” (L. González Interview 2011)

SDLFF thus differs from other organizations geared to smaller and often Mexican-only groups, such as the Mexican Chamber of Commerce.

NHA’s support of SDLFF consists of in-house promotion to its clientele, worth of 7-10,000 USD in sponsorship (L. González Interview 2010). This commitment to “Youth Visions” is due to the considerable match between its audiences and NHA’s target groups. A substantial number of the students whose films are on show belong to or have friends whose families are beneficiaries of NHA’s programs, and the showcase is usually well attended by family and friends.

²⁹⁶ More specifically, NHA “provides employment to over 800 team members and touches the lives of over thousands of San Diego families a year through a network of 23 programs in 125 locations.” Its programs “range from early childhood development in Head Start to an innovative nutrition program, to health programs like HIV/AIDS case management, mental health services, Adult Day Health Care services, youth services and Senior Services.” (“Neighborhood House Association History”; www.neighborhoodhouse.org).

5.1.3 Educational sponsor: The Walt Disney Company

SDLFF and MACSD's relationship with another sponsor, Disney, shows how corporations may use the festival to gain symbolic capital / a validation of their mission. Furthermore, this particular relationship also underscores how SDLFF's relative distance to Hollywood (geographically as well as ideologically) may impact its sponsorship relationship.

It was in 2011 when the Walt Disney Company's Department of Multicultural Programs first came on board as "Awards Sponsor" in order to support that year's "*Premio Corazón*" awardee, Frank "Cesco" Pamies, a Los Angeles based artist and educator. Head of the Multicultural Department, Dr. Efraín Fuentes, a psychologist who had grown up in East Los Angeles and Watts, explained the role of Latinos/as according to a consumer citizenship logic, namely, in terms of their patronage of the corporation's holiday resorts such as California based Anaheim's Disneyland Resort, where "one of the major languages is Spanish. So Disney wants to give back, not only the artists, but also the community as such" (E. Fuentes Interview 2011). Disney's involvement with SDLFF is part of its philanthropy mission.²⁹⁷ In return, sponsored organizations such as MACSD/SDLFF validate Disney's image as corporate citizen. Importantly, Disney does not get involved in programming. As Dr. Fuentes put it, "That's [the festivals'] job, that's what [they] do best. We give [them] full latitude. We're not going to push a Disney film or anything. We support something that is already on the way."

In fact, Disney became a sponsor for SDLFF relatively late, considering that the festival had been founded seventeen years earlier. Dr. Fuentes stated that he had first learned about SDLFF during a writer's program organized by the National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP) in 2010 (E. Fuentes Interview May 2011). Given SDLFF's longevity, renown, and its visibility not only inside but also outside of California, this is somewhat surprising, and even more so considering MACSD's long record as a community arts organization with a focus on education and media production, something which, one would suggest, also ties in with Disney's own philanthropic mission. As Dr. Fuentes explained in our interview, Disney's sponsoring activities prioritize on the sustainability and the locality of its involvement. As a result, Disney has established selected, long-standing links to local organizations over the years, often situated in proximity to its own headquarters (E. Fuentes Interview 2010). Other sponsored Latino/a themed film festivals included Los Angeles based LALIFF and RRAFF, each of which had received support ever since their respective inceptions. Disney's total support equaled that of RRAFF, namely, USD 5,000. LALIFF, shorter in duration and showing fewer films yet due both to its Hollywood situation and celebrity focus likely to compare in budgetary terms, received USD 7,000.

In conjunction with these two Los Angeles based festivals, which have a more immediate relationship with Hollywood, the support provided by Disney took on particular significance. One is to infer that SDLFF's geographic distance, Disney's prioritizing of long-standing sponsorship relationships had put the festival, as well as its home organization, MACSD, somewhat under the radar. Not least of

²⁹⁷ Before the overhaul, the company's philanthropy mission statement defined its goals along the lines of "reinforce[ing] and enhanc[ing] Disney's commitment to employment, community relations, philanthropy and corporate responsibility within the Asian, Latino and Native-American communities." (thewaltdisneycompany.com 2015). Disney's funding of Latino/a festivals in conjunction with its role as corporate citizen will be discussed at greater length in the next chapter on RRAFF.

all, there is also SDLFF / MACSD's somewhat different vision – more in terms of establishing bonds southbound, to Latin America, and to the alternative vision of a *latinidad* inspired by the example of Tijuana which is not necessarily fashioned on Hollywood (despite the increased presence of Latin American talent in Hollywood and the globalization of the Hollywood industries). At SDLFF, there are much fewer “industry” sponsors in general; if they are, it is mostly those with a particular interest in the bilingual border community's response to be discussed in the following section. Examples are Spanish language cable media Telemundo and Univisión, or Nickelodeon, whose *Dora, the Explorer* (2000-2015) children's series has been one of the festivals more long-standing venues.

5.2 Professional enhancement and nurture

As I have argued in the festival theoretical chapter, nurture of filmmakers and, whenever possible, professional enhancement have long emerged as crucial issues for film festivals of all stripes. Here, SDLFF is no exception: With between 150 and close to 200 works on show each year, and many more repeat and new screenings year-round at MACSD, the organization has made a tremendous difference for filmmakers from the U.S., Latin America and the Caribbean, Spain, Portugal, and beyond. In addition, SDLFF features free of charge professional workshops with MACSD staff, experienced filmmakers, representatives from the film industry and Latino/a media consortia and advocacy groups.

Like other festivals, SDLFF provides its participating filmmakers with the opportunity to connect to audiences, gain feedback, and spread the word. All the while, SDLFF has a unique advantage owing to its situation on the border. It features communities distinguished not only by way of their frequent bi- or multilingualism but particularly by more general border sensibilities that enable them to better negotiate between different national, cultural and other such narratives. Life on the border in general has fostered among those who live there a propensity for the appreciation of hybridity and diversity, if undoubtedly to different degrees pertaining to their awareness of the many nuances of privilege which in turn attests to an ongoing asymmetry of power relations. These border sensibilities may be particularly prominent among local Latinos/as as a result both of their history in the area and the immigration from south of the border. Also owing to the festival's considerable size, its many intersecting target audiences can be seen to some extent representative of and to be in a *pars pro toto* relationship with this border society. SDLFF's audiences represent yet another important resource and symbolic capital for the festival and its stakeholders. While for all filmmakers involved, the attention economies on both sides of the border are of advantage when pitching their films, international film boards (as I have shown previously with regard to the festival's national showcases) as well as individual film producers have used SDLFF as a testing ground vis-à-vis the U.S. market. As the director and the director of exhibitions both have confirmed, after screenings, the audience's informed feedback during the question and answer sessions is used in order to develop strategies to market their films to U.S. distributors and audiences (E. van Thillo Interview 2009; L. Franek Interview 2010). I will provide examples of how one film screenings are enriched by the cultural performances of its border audiences will be discussed using the example of *El Estudiante* (Mexico 2009, Roberto Girault) and Peter Bratt's *La Mission* (USA 2009).

All the while, Ethan van Thillo has also professed his sincere regret as to how the organization had not always been able to establish strong bonds to all the filmmakers whose work had been on show

(E. v. Thillo Interview 2011). This situation may be a by-product both of the festival's and overall organization's growth and more limited capacities to create nurture programs, particularly of course when compared to festival giants such as Sundance or Cannes. Van Thillo said that it was in regard to nurture and distributor affiliations where "the organization could grow." At the same time, however, he has made it quite clear that despite MACSD and SDLFF's successful collaborations with Latino/a identified media advocacy groups such as NALIP or LPB, it was not the organization's goal to produce more filmmakers, but to "do something for the community" (E. v. Thillo 2011) in terms of the organization's media literacy programs and both the education and entertainment offered to "underserved" constituencies. In contrast to filmmakers' festivals" such as those of CineFestival, Cine Acción's ¡Cine Latino! or RRAFF, van Thillo's pronouncement to disavows a prioritization of opportunities for filmmakers and the logic of "access," despite the considerable services rendered to MACSD's local trans-border filmmaking community. Much rather, as MACSD's *Frontera* Filmmakers will make clear, the organization envisioned an alternative film culture modelled on a dialog with Latin American film workers.

5.2.1 Nurture

SDLFF and MACSD's indeed valuable support provided to local filmmakers along the lines of the organization's alternative vision – and its facilitation of an atmosphere characterized by mutual respect and solidarity – is highlighted by its *Frontera* Filmmakers group. One poignant example is that of Dorian Iribe, a student in his twenties from nearby Chula Vista's Southwestern College. Through his participation in the group, Iribe had been given the opportunity to screen his narrative short, *Letters Lost* (USA 2010) at SDLFF 2010 in the *Frontera* Filmmakers programming slot. Iribe praised the group's bimonthly meetings, exchanges of experiences and networks, and discussions of members' individual works, including also the mutual assistance with lesser glamorous film production assignments (D. Iribe Interview 2010). This team spirit was based on the fact that "you meet people who have the same goal" and share a passion for filmmaking:

And you can pursue your common goal, provided you are able to leave your ego outside the door. [...] I think there is so much potential to do great things. And I know with the *Frontera* Filmmakers, once you get your project organized, you're gonna blow the doors open in San Diego. (D. Iribe Interview 2010)

The positive experiences with *Frontera* Filmmakers were the complete opposite of the competitive atmosphere Iribe had encountered during his previous two years in the Los Angeles area, where he had tried his luck to build a career in the film industry. The group's encouragement leading up to the completion and festival screening of *Letters Lost* also encouraged him to attend to join the larger professional community at that year's upcoming NALIP conference.

While Iribe's experiences with MACSD and at SDLFF gave him confidence to continue pursuing his career, the question remains as to the festival's support of other, already more established filmmakers. Cruz Angeles, born and raised in Los Angeles, who relocated to New York City in order to study filmmaking at New York University (NYU), emphasized the importance of film festival distribution and audience exposure. He had made the point of flying to the West Coast only for one day in order

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

to attend the San Diego premiere of his narrative feature. *Don't Let Me Drown* (2009), a modern-day Romeo and Juliet story set against the grim background provided by the aftermath of New York's 9/11's terrorist attacks, possesses a strong crossover appeal, relatability and a popular cast known on both sides of the border, such as Mexicans Yarelí Arizmendi and Damián Alcazár; Cuban American actress Gina Torres and Chicanos Ricardo Chavira and Raúl Castillo. The film shines a light on how the tragedy has heightened the particular vulnerability of two immigrant families: Young Lalo's Mexican father risking his health as janitor cleaning up the twin towers' poisonous rubble; Stefanie's family, Dominicans, who must cope with the death of their beloved older daughter (and hope for upward mobility). This social drama does not gloss over the occasional mistrust and racism among Latinos/as; all the while, the film's young protagonists, particularly the unfolding love story between the two teenagers, also provide lighter and more hopeful moments and occasional comic relief.

Angeles pointed to the importance both of film festival and theatrical exhibition particularly for low budget independent productions: In his opinion, films were meant to be seen; submission to festivals and showing his films to as many and as diverse audiences as possible had been his habit ever since film school.²⁹⁸ He regarded the communal viewing experience, particularly among strangers, as something that could not be compensated by the kind of ready availability of television or the internet's individualized consumption:

I'm still kind of "old school" in the belief that watching on the big screen is different. And watching with an audience is different. [...] There is something lost when you see a film on TV that was made for a movie screen, and I feel that's watching it with strangers. (C. Angeles Interview 2010)

In fact, Angeles prioritized exhibition and the attending empowering and community-building effects of cinema over the commodification or exclusivity logic, arguing that once one is only focused on film sales, one's work as a filmmaker is "done" (C. Angeles Interview 2010). He spoke from experience: In ways that speak to the ongoing difficulty for Latinos/as and other minority filmmakers to find adequate support for and promotion of their film projects despite the industry's increased attention for specialty markets, Angeles' film was fated to become if not a closeted but a rarely exhibited work. Angeles was only able to make his first long feature with the help from an investor who ultimately meant for the film to become "a product" (Angeles). This led to the investor's interference in the marketing process and, acting on the advice of industry insiders, a decision for a limited festival exhibition as not to destroy the film's novelty potential. As a consequence, Angeles was forced to turn down SDLFF's invitation to screen the film at the 2009 festival after the film's successful screening at that year's Sundance Festival.²⁹⁹ Angeles was finally able to put his foot down after five months when the investor, too, started to realize the film's potential appeal to Latino/a audiences – actually a "no-brainer" (Cruz). The film then was shown at the venerable SFIFF, where it scored an audience award, and then at NYLFF, LALIFF, and finally at SDLFF in March 2010.

²⁹⁸ "I use festivals to spread the word about what I am doing. [...] Back at film school, some people only submitted their films to the big festivals, Sundance, Tribeca, Cannes... and they gave up when their films were not accepted. And I felt that was really stupid. [...] Why making films when they end up in your closet because except your friends, they will be only be for very few people to see? I'm all about getting it out there, even if it's the smallest of the smallest film festivals." (C. Angeles Interview 2010)

²⁹⁹ The fact that Sundance Institute had been a co-sponsor may have influenced the investor's eventual permission.

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

That said, ultimately, SDLFF's possibilities for nurture also depend on how the former efforts are both curtailed and strengthened by its penultimate focus on local border communities. Those filmmakers with a focus on festival audience reception are likely to fare best, again underlines van Thillo's statement that the festival's main attention is ultimately on "the community." At one end of the spectrum, among beginning filmmakers, there is the support and solidarity that made Dorián Iribe pursue his career. Cruz Angeles, in turn, sought audience rapport for his first long narrative feature. Each in his own way, both had experienced the repercussions of Hollywood's commodification logic (as corresponding to a field of film production) and instead taken advantage of SDLFF's prioritization of audiences, empowerment, and solidarity. And yet, there was also Tejana filmmaker-activist Laura Varela, who had been invited both to present her most recent documentary (*As Long I Remember: American Veterans*, USA 2009) and to host a pitching workshop at SDLFF. Varela's interest lay not so much in the validation of SDLFF's encompassing audiences; as a self-ascribed community documentary filmmaker with a focus on local Chicano/a communities, her work had received much recognition and attention in the Latino/a film festival circuit and at university and cultural arts spaces – experiences for which, she said, she was grateful. However, her aim was to take her new documentary on three Chicano Vietnam veterans to the national arena provided by a PBS broadcast that following fall. It was this prospect, she said, which had finally inspired her to see herself as a filmmaker whose scope was not only local-Chicano/a but also national.

5.3 Festival atmosphere: Identity, branding and community-building

Over the years, the festival has established itself as a magnet for big and diverse audiences. All the while, the organization has stayed attuned to the way local border communities have been impacted in different yet often profound ways by their proximity to one of the busiest such political-economic sites in the world. Even though festival communities are but a subsection of San Diego's overall population, a recognition of their circumstances is echoed in van Thillo's earlier quoted statement, "As soon as you lose your roots to the community, you lose your identity as a festival." (E. v. Thillo Interview 2011) Accordingly, SDLFF has always had to reconcile pragmatic necessities that safeguard the organization's survival and its agenda of education and entertainment; a logic both of "underserved" and underrepresented communities, and of branding the festival as a unique, identifiable commodity as well as to underline its possibilities to affirm cultural identities and make visible marginalized realities – all under the festival's general theme, *latinidad*.

Accordingly, when asked about the festival's target community, Ethan van Thillo said that while they were "trying to do a good job of not making it just one," there were certain tendencies. He described SDLFF's core audience as "middle and upper middle class, university educated, bilingual, but with a preference for speaking Spanish over English that evening of the event." Many of them were patrons and or members who were also supporting the film festival and MACSD's film showcases throughout the year. "Then you have your general, primarily Mexican audience who come for special events such as seeing [*telenovela* star] Jaime Camil or someone like that." In addition, there were "smaller niche audiences of country or theme, such as Peru, or music." He says about the non-essentializing programming, "We have done that on purpose. It is not a "rasquache" or Chicano film festival. There are no more Chicanos than Argentinians. But the return users might even be more Argentinians." (E. v. Thillo interview 2011) Van Thillo's assessments reveal the organization's realism about the pos-

sibilities and limitations of drawing in diverse audiences, including poorer constituencies, and his awareness of those constituencies who have the most potential to help sustaining the festival.

5.3.1 Festival atmosphere as resource: Between identity and brand

It is also in the light of the challenge posed by the festival's having to accommodate the very heterogeneity of its audiences and overall stakeholders that lies at the heart of van Thillo's passionate argument in favor of unique and unifying festival atmosphere. I regard SDLFF's festival atmosphere as an important resource. It unites its pragmatic and idealistic sides when realizing its goals to celebrate Latino/a film, build community, and educate. On the one hand, festival atmosphere is key to creating a specific festival identity and brand. On the other hand, it is one of the decisive factors that have led to "how the festival has been endorsed by generations of locals who will bring older family members or their kids." (E. Van Thillo interview 2011). This way, atmosphere may also help enable dialog between different people and groups, the forging of a "festival *communitas*" and "unity in diversity" (Cadaval 1998:38) such as when bridging the generational gap between older and younger generations in regard to younger Latino/a's lack of interest in speaking Spanish or Spanish language programs.

To van Thillo, this festival atmosphere is inextricably tied to one central festival location; during our conversation in 2011, van Thillo recalled visiting San Francisco's spatially dispersed ILFF back in the day, claiming that "[y]ou don't have the festival experience. It was a nice event but it felt different. I really like that craziness of a festival when it's in one space." (E. van Thillo Interview 2010) Likewise, in terms of branding the festival, one significant issue for the organization had been to find a permanent venue. Here, the festival's longtime location in Mission Valley had served an important function due to its aforementioned advantages (accessibility and lowbrow, family friendly atmosphere). Incredulous telephone calls made to the organization whenever festival events were held elsewhere further attest not only to the SDLFF's "naturalization" (Harbord 2009) in the city's calendar of events but also among local communities (van Thillo Interview 2011). Even though word of Hazard Center's days having been counted was already making the rounds at the festival in 2010 (cf. M. Khurana Interview 2010), van Thillo was counting on the unfaltering loyalty of audiences who had kept up with the festival's changing locations for then almost twenty years: "If eventually we have to leave UltraStar because it closes down, we may not have the same amount of money but the audiences will follow us, by and large" (E. van Thillo Interview 2011).

Van Thillo's aforementioned reservations against multilocational ILFF also had to do with SDLFF's own history of multiple locations and as a result, his lack of belief in "chasing the audience" (E. v. Thillo Interview 2011). The way SDLFF's identity and special festival atmosphere are inextricably tied to a commercial logic is underlined by his argument that organizers should instead focus on creating incentives that have audiences walk the extra mile; the festival's successful audience rapport depended on "marketing and providing the product that they want." To further make his point, he also compared SDLFF to a celebrity event ("[p]eople would be perfectly willing to travel to Los Angeles for a Lady Gaga concert"); to the Sundance Film Festival, located in "middle of nowhere" Park City, Utah; and San Diego's own, immensely popular Comic-Con International, the nation's largest such annual convention (E. V. Thillo Interview 2011). Questions of the one- versus multiple venue festival event will also be discussed in the Bay Area chapter; suffice it to say that van Thillo has also been able

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

to take advantage of San Diego's greater "small town" feel (despite its status as second largest city in the state of California) when compared to Los Angeles or San Francisco, each with a higher number of competing cultural events. In this context, Fischer (2013) has pointed at the advantages offered by an environment featuring fewer competitors and less distractions, and one where "[l]ocation can also promote a monopolistic or exclusive control over participation. [...] Thus, resource providers have no other option but to participate with the only organization available that may be able to advance their own agendas" (53). Fischer has cited the example of the Palm Springs International Film Festival (PSIFF, since 1989) and quotes the observation of Gary Meyer (Telluride) as to PSIFF's taking advantage of the fact that "that the local community is 'totally underserved'" and sports a lack of arthouse infrastructure (Meyer 2009: 76; quoted in Fischer 2013:53) which makes PSIFF's situation comparable to that of SDLFF.

In addition to their potential to attract the media, audiences and sponsors, another important means to enhance SDLFF's atmosphere has been star power. SDLFF has strategically used celebrities in order to create its unique allure and to build audiences ever since the memorable visit by Edward James Olmos to the 1997 festival. While van Thillo was quick to ascertain that the festival does not necessarily need stars, he has emphasized that that they "make the films special" (E. v. Thillo Interview 2011). In fact, celebrity guests comprise the biggest item in SDLFF's budget: forty per cent; in 2010, this had meant "[USD] 100,000 alone on airlines and hotels, [...], food and transportation" (E. v. Thillo Interview 2011).

As I have argued in the previous festival theory chapter, celebrities depend for their symbolic power on their relationship with a given festival's overall mission; not every celebrity is a good fit to enhance the atmosphere of just any kind of festival. A glance at SDLFF 2008's celebration of its fifteenth year of by way of a "*Quinceañera* Yearbook" provides a cross-section of SDLFF's stars, attesting to the immense variety of its star power in conjunction with the festival's ambitious goal of serving a wide spectrum of "underserved" audiences.³⁰⁰ The fact that SDLFF keeps investing in star power, including telenovela stars which are not usually associated with the "high art" of cinema, also attests to the pragmatism of its organizers, since celebrities also draw in people who usually do not attend such events at all, thus increasing the likelihood of their taking advantage of MACSD's programs, many of which are tailored to low income groups, some of them free. All the while, van Thillo is aware that some of the fans coming to the festival to meet their idols may not even be able to afford to buy a movie ticket let alone festival pass but will seize the opportunity to have their picture taken with beloved stars Jorge Camil or Itati Cantoral. In fact, in the light of its educational and community building endeavors, the organization intends to show that it caters to these groups as well (E.v. Thillo Interview 2011).

³⁰⁰ Thus, we find veteran Chicano/a film activists such as Moctesuma Ersparza, Edward James Olmos, or Lourdes Portillo alongside members of a younger generation of U.S. Latino/a film and television stars (John Leguizamo, Colombian-American; Adam Rodríguez, Puerto Rican-Cuban American; Freddie Rodríguez, Puerto Rican; Wilmer Valderrama, Venezuelan-Colombian American); there are numerous Latin American film and television actors, some of them known for their crossover performances in U.S. film and television, such as Colombian Angie Cepeda, Colombia and Mexicans Kate del Castillo, Ana de la Reguera, and Mexico Miguel Rodarte; celebrated Mexican filmmaker Arturo Ripstein and his wife and frequent collaborator, Paz Alicia Garciadiego as well as lowbrow telenovela stars, such as Mexico's Itati Cantoral; a former Miss Universe, entertainer and television actress (Daynara Torres, U.S. Latina / Puerto Rican) and Chicano singer-entertainer (El Vez) ("*Quinceañera* Yearbook"; *SDLFF 2008*: 40).

Finally, another point that tells of SDLFF's extraordinary atmosphere and its capacity to build community is the example of veteran volunteer Helen Guzmán, who was in her early sixties when I met her at the festival in 2010. Each year, she devotes precious vacation days to staff the festival's ticketing service during its entire running time; Ms. Guzmán intensely identifies both with the festival ("we need it here") and with her self-imposed obligation to be able to offer advice on the entire film program to customers. Born in Tijuana, she had grown up in San Diego, where she first encountered the festival in the 1990s when searching for Spanish language cinema for her elderly mother (H. Guzmán Interview 2010). To Helen Guzmán, like to many other returning volunteers or regular festival visitors, the festival has emerged as a yearly highlight, a "time out of time" promising a reencounter with a specific circle of friends, many of whom she only sees during the festival because of everybody's busy routines.

5.3.2 Tapping the festival community: *La Mission* (2009) and *El Estudiante* (2009)

The audience's enthusiastic responses to the San Diego premieres of Peter Bratt's *La Mission* (USA 2009), and *El Estudiante* by Roberto Girault (Mexico 2009) both stand for a "performance of culture" (Cadaval) encouraged by the festival. In the safe realm of the festival reflections on and the semi-public debate of cultural values is encouraged, with the ultimate / utopian goal of a common ground which may serve as a shorthand for the building of community.

La Mission had previously been shown at other U.S. festivals, such as LALIFF 2009. In San Diego, it served as an important milestone on a promotional tour for the film, which was to see its theatrical release the following month, April 2010. Named after and set in the eponymous San Francisco district, *La Mission* focuses on Che, a widowed Chicano father and ex-con (played by Benjamin Bratt, the director's brother) and his eighteen-year old son, Jesse (Jeremy Ray Valdez). Their once trusting relationship turns rocky after Che has learned his son is gay. For the filmmaker, who was joined both by his producer and his actor brother, the evening proved to be a gratifying event, given the enthusiastic response by an audience in a sold-out auditorium. There was a large proportion of people who could relate to the film and its main themes (the underlying father-son conflict; homophobia; its mutual celebration and critique both of the Latino/a-Chicano/a family and culture; the homage paid to the Mission district's multiculturalism without glossing over problems such as inter-ethnic/racial tensions and gentrification). On behalf of the filmmaker and his team, the screening at SDLFF was connected to their hopes that viewers would share their enthusiasm through their social networks and thus contribute to the desired buzz – in addition to the interest generated by the media and media sponsors.

For SDLFF, *La Mission* was a success at the box office as well as in terms of its capacity to create cross-audiences, appealing to different constituencies ranging from Peruvians, Chicanos/as, and LGBT constituencies to leading man Benjamin Bratt's considerable fan base. Here, *La Mission*'s focus on homosexuality – a topic which, as Mexican-American writer-scholar Ilan Stavans has argued, has continued to occupy a special place in the Latino/a imagination as "another repressed ghost in our closet [...] in a galaxy of brute macho types and virginal and devoted women" (2001:107) – added a particular urgency to festival's diversity agenda. Moreover, *La Mission* provided SDLFF with the opportunity to support the work of a U.S. Latino/a filmmaker while the media interest generated in

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

the film and its leading actor also reflected also favorably on SDLFF's visibility in the public eye, both in regard to the other Benjamin Bratt showcases and its overall program.

For audiences, in turn, there was the satisfaction of meeting the three guests involved in making the film, particularly Benjamin Bratt, a star with cross-over successes from independent film to mainstream cinema and television. His leading role in the cult urban drama *Blood In Blood Out* (Taylor Hackford; USA 1993; alternatively titled *Bound by Honor*) had endeared him to Latino/a audiences in particular, but he is also known for mainstream films, such as the suspense comedy and Sandra Bullock vehicle *Miss Congeniality* (USA 2003, Michael Petrie) and his numerous television roles (such as in NBC's *Law and Order*). Moreover, the festival honored Bratt with a tribute that also included the celebrated biopic *Piñero* (Leon Ichaso; USA 2001), on the late Nuyorican poet and dramatist.

Finally, the film's very diverse audience was treated to a question and answer session featuring these three celebrity guests and to the opportunity to have their questions answered; topics covered included technical specifics such as the duration of the filming (26 days), the budget (two millions USD), distribution (Peter Bratt: "Distribution was hard to find but we finally signed with a small company"); furthermore, the director also told audiences about the truce he had negotiated between two warring local gangs and how he actually got some of their members to star as extras, about his desire both to tell a story about "the homophobia that continues to cripple the Latino community" and about his beloved Mission neighborhood, where he and his three siblings had been raised by their Peruvian mother, an indigenous rights activist who had taken Bratt and his four siblings along with her to Native American rallies. Bratt called the occupation of Alcatraz "one formative experience" when people of color joined forces; Barack Obama's [2008] election, another. As Peter Bratt pointed at how all these different aspects came together in the image of the community portrayed in the film, he was also able to share how his own personal activism was reflected in the film: "Things like domestic violence, homophobia, substance abuse all have a connection to one another. Often they will be in one family. The heart of *La Mission*, the neighborhood, is the family unit. Not just family by blood – we Latinos adopt one another." This last pronouncement is particularly likely to resonate with SDLFF's own goal of symbolical building. Finally, in the eyes of sponsors, it was particularly Benjamin Bratt who was a sought-after vehicle. Together with his brother, Peter, and *Piñero* director Leon Ichaso,³⁰¹ Benjamin Bratt was a guest celebrity officially scheduled to attend SDLFF's closing party that year.

Another, and particularly felicitous, such instantiation of a non-hierarchical festival *communitas* was the screening of Roberto Girault's *El Estudiante* (Mexico 2009). This intergenerational social drama is set against the backdrop of the picturesque Central Mexican university town of Guanajuato and tells the story of a retiree fulfilling his life-long dream of enrolling at the local university. The old man forms friendships with his young fellow students and emerges as their (grand)fatherly mentor in a range of issues, from courtship to family problems; when the death of his beloved wife of many years puts him in a state of utter despair, his young friends are able to reciprocate his kindness. *El Estudiante* was met with intense and immediate responses by the audience. Notably, the traditional question and answer session did not require instigation from the organizers; instead, comments and questions in Spanish and English – the film had been screened in Spanish with English subtitles – were flowing back and forth, and many of the issues debated in the film, most prominently, the possibilities of such

³⁰¹ The Cuban American director's most recent film, *Paraíso* (2009) also saw its San Diego premiere that year at SDLFF.

IV. The San Diego Latino Film Festival (SDLFF; since 1994)

cross-generational dialog and understanding and different ideas as to social conduct became the subject of a lively debate. For some viewers the film provided an opportunity to discuss different sets of social values both of the “old days” and “the old country,” such as the respect owed to one’s elders or the closer-knit social fabric of the extended family, to which standards in the U.S., in the opinion of some, compared less favourably; meanwhile other, younger, or more (U.S.) Americanized audience members were able to voice their dissent with these views.

There are striking parallels between the film’s reception and the reflections by anthropologist Olivia Cadaval on Washington D.C.’s multi-genre “*Fiesta D.C.*” Cadaval describes the latter as a “performance of community and Latino identity formation” – in fact, as the workings of festival *communitas*: as an arena for debate, affirmation and contestation of identity.

[The Festival] prompted the multiple sectors of the population to voice, contest, and reflect upon their diverse social and political perspectives on hispanidad, immigration, community, and neighborhood within the celebrations’ framework. [...] This manifestation of community expressed in the Festival celebrated difference. The Festival empowered participants to construct a complex representation of the Latino community that coexisted in dialectical tension with the everyday world in which they were the other, outsiders, immigrants – invisible. (Cadaval 1998: 7)

As one would expect, the film emerged as one of the audience favorites that year. As a reaction to the film’s immense popularity, two more screenings were scheduled on short notice, which meant that they were not part of the printed catalog. What was most remarkable was the excellent word of mouth and social media promotion, obviously not only by festival staff but also by enthusiastic viewers, which led to these additional showcases each being screened before a packed auditorium as well.

I would like to conclude by adding one more, if brief, observation on the topic of festival atmosphere. It once more underscores SDLFF’s participatory culture and its community building endeavor and confirms the extent to which San Diego’s very diverse local communities, Latinos/as and other, have indeed embraced the festival; such as in ways that allow them to glean information of vital issues and take part in conversations (literally and symbolically) they would be excluded from otherwise. The incident involved a 10 p.m. show of *El Traspatio*, the Mexican drama-thriller based on Ciudad Juárez’s unresolved femicides. In the audience was a Latino/a couple in their early twenties, whose keen interest, one is to infer, had compelled them to attend screening no matter they were in the company of their two infant children (fortunately, fast asleep, given the film’s gruesome subject matter). In terms of SDLFF’s community building project, the episode disproves easy assumptions according to which this young, working class family would have rented a DVD rather than attend a more high-brow film festival, considering also that such events usually tend not to be very family friendly. What is more, while I would not claim for this piece of narrative fiction to be historically accurate, *El Traspatio*, due to its story and setting on the border, is bound to resonate particularly with San Diego’s border communities. I argue that this episode once more underscores SDLFF’s success in having created an welcoming and safe atmosphere for its heterogeneous constituencies while also shining a light on what it means “to live in the borderlands” (Anzaldúa 1987: 194), providing, during festival time, a place where inhabitants of the contact zone can “meet, clash, and grapple with each other” (Pratt 1991:34), in ways promising to engender dialog, understanding and solidarity.

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

1. Core facts

Name:	The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)
Established at:	California State University Los Angeles (CSULA), 2004
Locations:	Greater Los Angeles Area (CSULA, Los Angeles-University Hills, 1994-2009); Pasadena (Regency Academy 6 Cinemas, 2010-11); Los Angeles-Boyle Heights (Casa 0101 Theatre, 2012-13)
Directors:	John Ramirez and Richard T. Rodriguez (1994); henceforth, John Ramirez as director (1995-2014 ³⁰²); assistant directors: Suzette Brillantes (2008), Lorena Alvarado (2009), Roberto S. Oregel (2010), Bel Hernandez-Castillo (2011), Ángela María Ortiz Sinclair (2012-14)
Frequency, duration, and number of films screened:	Annual; usually a long weekend between early May and mid-June; 2004: two days, twenty-two films (of these, four long features); 2012: three days, twenty-nine films and videos within the regular festival (of these, five long features), plus fifteen films in the Youth Filmmakers' Showcase
Affiliated institutions:	California State University-Los Angeles (henceforth CSULA, main fiscal sponsor and host, 2004-09); CASA 0101 Theatre, Los Angeles (co-fiscal sponsor since 2010, host since 2012)
Supporters:	a mix of state, industry, and smaller media and community sponsors
Target films:	U.S. Latino/a productions. Productions about the U.S. Latino/a experience by Latino/a and non-Latino/a directors
Non-cinematic sidebars:	Arts (which was promoted to an awards category in 2010); other infrequent sidebars such as theater / performance and poetry. Professional enhancement workshops and directors' roundtables for filmmakers and other media professionals.

1.1 Profile

The mission of the Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF) has been determined by its geopolitical, cultural, and economic situation in metropolitan Los Angeles: Not only is the festival located in one of the world's largest Latino/a hubs outside Latin America, on formerly Mexican territory, and in a megapolis boasting a powerful legacy of Latina/a social and arts activism primarily, if by no means exclusively, Mexican and Chicano/a defined. More than by anything else RRAFF has been inspired by its geographical situation on the fringes of Hollywood, the heart of the U.S. film and television industries with its legendary magnetism for creative professionals from all over the U.S. and the world, including an ever-increasing number of Latinos/as. I argue that a subgroup of the latter has emerged as RRAFF's main group of stakeholders by default. In the light of U.S. Latinos/as' continued underrepresentation in the industries, RRAFF has embraced a "strategic essentialism"

³⁰² RRAFF is currently on hold. Its 2015 edition was cancelled for "personal family health circumstances" (according to a letter by festival director John Ramirez, posted at the festival's Facebook site, www.facebook.com/ReelRasquache, February 26, 2015). Considering both the volatile nature of festival organization which sometimes calls for halting a festival for a period of time, and co-director Ángela Ortiz' information, as of February 2018, as to the continuing efforts of a continuation of RRAFF by a number of CSULA students, I have decided to write my chapter on RRAFF in the present tense (Ortiz Sinclair; Facebook Messenger 02/02/2018).

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

(Spivak 1984/85)³⁰³ by means of its exclusive dedication to film and other audio-visual media production made by U.S. Latinos/as and / or on the U.S. Latino/a experience. This is a characteristic by which RRAFF has been able to distinguish itself on a local and nationwide scale.

Thus, it is RRAFF's relationship both with the city's powerful activist legacies – its local Latino/a-Chicano/a social, cultural and arts movements and the (translocal) film activism on the one hand, and its often ambivalent stance towards the film and television industries on the other – which has led to the festival's emergence as an arena for U.S. Latino/a filmmakers, more established as well as aspiring ones and inspired what I will call its unique workshop atmosphere. As I will show, RRAFF's performative "citation" (Butler 1993) of the proto-aesthetic concept of *rasquachismo* fuses the festival's activist and aesthetic discourses as it celebrates the achievements of Latino/a filmmakers as well as other works revolving around the Latino/a experience and serves as a tool to build community. Speaking of community-building: Despite its relatively compact size, RRAFF thus has always boasted a loyal following of distinguished board members and friends of the festival from the world of Latino/a film activism, the industry, and scholars. Accordingly, RRAFF's awards politics project – particularly in regard to its various career awards – reflects its aim both to draw on and extend its factual and imagined community of film professionals in order to build a symbolical and multifaceted "family" of Latino/a film professionals: Pioneering *tías* and *tíos* of Hispanic Hollywood Lupe Ontiveros and Luis Valdez; dignified ancestors from Hollywood's childhood days such as Lupita Tovar; cousins juggling industry (Betty Kaplan, Sylvia Morales), documentary (Lourdes Portillo and again: Sylvia Morales), and indie formats (Miguel Arteta); the heartthrob nephew working in television (Wilmer Valderrama); and the lost son, producer-actor Chris Weitz. These family members bestow their unique prestige to RRAFF's function as a symbolic marketplace, thus adding to the symbolic capital associated with RRAFF's mission of cultural affirmation, education and nurture, which, following the logic of its awards politics, inform its competitive awards. Accordingly, there is also RRAFF's small but loyal group of sponsors who are attracted to these goals, particularly education and professional enhancement, including long-standing sponsors such as fiscal co-sponsor California State University-Los Angeles (CSULA, which is also the workplace of festival director John Ramirez), and the more recent sponsor CASA 0101, a Latino/a theater and cultural arts organization. But the same is true regarding corporate sponsors such as the Disney Company and Fox; ALMA Awards; and RRAFF's independent media and community partners.

³⁰³ The productive but controversial concept of "strategic essentialism," as Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2012) have argued, was first developed by Indian literary scholar and postcolonial theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak "[i]n response to [a] negative interpretation of her earlier work, perhaps, and in an attempt to reassert the political force resident in her theory" (97). The aforementioned criticism was directed against her earlier work, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (Spivak 1985), "which was frequently misinterpreted to mean that there was no way in which subaltern peoples could ever attain a voice [...]. The authors argue that "[i]n fact, Spivak's essay is not an assertion of the inability of the subaltern voice to be accessed or given agency, but only a warning to avoid the idea that the subaltern can ever be isolated in some absolute, essentialist way form the play of discourses and institutional practices that give it its voice" (97). Accordingly, Spivak's concept of strategic essentialism, revolves around "the usefulness of essentialist formulations in many struggles for liberation from the effects of colonial and neo-colonial oppression" (97). In Spivak's own words, "I think we have to choose again strategically, not universal discourse but essentialist discourse. I think that since as a deconstructivist ... I cannot on fact clean my hands and say I', specific. In fact I must say I am an essentialist from time to time (Spivak 1984-85: 183, quoted in Ashcroft et al., 2012:98).

1.2 Premises, goals, and strategic resources

RRAFF's situation is thus primarily determined by five central factors:

- Los Angeles' historical and enduring, substantial presence of Latinos/as;
- The legacy of Los Angeles' distinctive and powerful, social and artistic Latino/a-Chicano/a activism;
- The proximity of Hollywood's film and television industries with their focus on entertainment; and, as a consequence of aspect two and three,
- The (trans)local impact and continuing legacy of Latino/a-Chicano/a film activism and its continuation as film professional community ("Latino/a Hollywood").
- As a fifth factor, there are organizational aspects: RRAFF's situation as a small-scale, low budget event without an independent backing organization and without paid staff and hence, a need for fiscal sponsorship.

As a result, RRAFF's overarching goals are: Empowerment through education and nurture; the affirmation of Latino/a culture; and the building of community. RRAFF draws on a number of strategies, particularly the aforementioned strategic essentialism when limiting both of its programming and awards politics to U.S. Latino/a filmmakers and U.S. Latino/a experiences while, importantly, providing an arena where the multifacetedness and diversity of these productions and experiences can be appreciated. This means

- An embrace of the aforementioned proto-aesthetic of *lo rasquache*, originally a pejorative term derived from vernacular Mexican and Chicano/a Spanish and strategically (re)appropriated by Chicano/a cultural producers and scholars to describe the resourcefulness, creativity and defiance of Chicano/a cultural production. *Lo rasquache / rasquachismo* has been used by RRAFF as a performative resource to affirm and celebrate U.S. Latino/a culture and to honor Latinos/as in film, television and in the arts; to situate itself in a specific Chicano/a arts activism; and to build community.
- The usage of its proximity to Hollywood as a strategic resource. One prominent example are RRAFF's awards politics, particularly its career awards. The honored awardees – film professionals and film artists who have accumulated symbolic capital (prestige) through their many achievements and in turn dignify the overall event of the festival, bestow symbolic capital onto RRAFF's sponsoring parties, and empower RRAFF's audiences. RRAFF uses its career awards to pursue a far-reaching goal of empowerment, education and community building but also as a means to shine a light on Latino/a film professionals' complicated relationship with the industry.
- Furthermore, RRAFF's prioritization on providing education and nurture, enhanced by a sheltered workshop atmosphere, informs RRAFF's competitive awards; these awards confer symbolic capital to the awarded works. Since RRAFF's goals of nurture and education, in turn, have assumed a unique urgency as a result of RRAFF's proximity to Hollywood, these goals are also used as a strategic resource by RRAFF in order to attract such sponsors that require education and cultural affirmation to meet their own philanthropic, educational and multicultural agendas. I will show how RRAFF taps education / nurture as a strategic resource by investigating the relationship between RRAFF, its long-time fiscal sponsor, CSULA, and its corporate sponsor, Disney. One basic assumption is that RRAFF, CSULA, and other sponsoring organizations depend on one another for the transfer of symbolic and economic capital.

1.3 Relationship with the U.S. Latino/a film festival network

In addition to its unique role within the U.S. Latino/a film festival network owing to its strategic essentialism, in the Californian context, RRAFF is also very different from SDLFF (much larger than RRAFF) and SFLFF (featuring more feature-length documentaries and feature films attesting to primary focus on exhibition / audiences, while RRAFF's workshop role for beginning filmmakers was underscored by its wealth of shorter formats³⁰⁴). In RRAFF's home town of Los Angeles, the example of Edward James Olmos's LALIFF may serve as a foil. Contrary to Hollywood based LALIFF's image both as a bridge between and an arena for U.S. and international Latino/a cinema, RRAFF has maintained a focus on U.S. Latino/a film. But while LALIFF depends on star power associated both with its more encompassing, transnational definition of *latinidad* and a commercial angle, thereby signaling an ambition to ascend into the league of international business festivals, RRAFF has strategically limited its usage of celebrities to a community building project honoring the work and filmmaking communities dedicated to the affirmation of U.S. *latinidad*, namely, in its awards politics. At the same time, and in the spirit of *rasquachismo*'s inclination towards both "[r]esilience and resourcefulness" (Ybarra-Frausto 1990:133), RRAFF has always honored its links to other, smaller community film festivals and film organizations, a continuing priority emphasized by the festival's co-founder and director, Dr. John Ramirez, a tenured professor of television, film and media studies at CSULA. Throughout the years, RRAFF frequently collaborated with other festival organizations (Tony "Tygr" Olivas of Fear Fiesta, an all Latino/a horror film festival; Juan Escobedo of the East Los Angeles Youth and International Film Festival (ELAFF); CASA 0101 Theatre; the Latin American Cinemateca of Los Angeles (LACLA) and its LACLA Students' Film Festival). Moreover, RRAFF director John Ramirez has also been able to capitalize on his own previous experiences as festival co-organizer.

2. History of RRAFF: Campus to Latino/a arts organization

In its existence of more than ten years, RRAFF has undergone three different developmental stages in three consecutive locations: a campus environment, a commercial cinema, and, finally, a Latino/a theater arts organization. RRAFF first focused on an imagined audience primarily comprised of students – but already with an emphasis on professional enhancement in the media arts, owing to CSULA's vocational orientation and the way RRAFF has been invested in a specific politics of place impacted by the proximity of Hollywood; it subsequently went on to shift this focus on filmmakers. This move was also defined by the inclusion of more commercial, entertainment related productions and awardees; this presupposed an orientation increasingly geared to creating a crossover appeal, even though the outcome was not always satisfying in terms of box office records. The final destination so far was a compromise between the two, as it was geared towards a Latino/a and / or artistic crowd appreciative of RRAFF's culturally affirmative aspects, creative content, and entertainment value. The development also registered a decreasing dependency on RRAFF's original fiscal sponsor

³⁰⁴ By way of comparison: SFLFF 2012, then in its fourth year, featured 18 long narrative features and 10 medium to full-feature-length documentaries; as well as programs of Latin American, LGBT, and U.S. Latino/a shorts. RRAFF 2012, then nine years old, screened six long narrative features; 16 shorts; four webisodes; four medium to feature-length documentaries (*RRAFF 2012*; www.slatinofilmfestival.org).

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

(CSULA); increased connections and affiliations with local supporters; and a better response by a more mixed audience, also thanks to CASA's 0101 recognition.

The fact that RRAFF has remained a relatively small festival without an institutional backbone and without salaried staff has increased the responsibilities for all involved and the need for a consistency regarding personnel. Here, festival director John Ramirez has safeguarded RRAFF's vision and mission, also in terms of RRAFF's connection both to academia as well as to the local filmmakers and the festival scene. A Southern Californian native, Ramirez abandoned the legal career envisioned by his Mexican American parents and instead obtained a PhD from UCLA's School of Theater, Film and Television. There, he was mentored by Teshome H. Gabriel – in the words of Ramirez, “a perfect match”: In the 1980s, a time when Chicano/a cultural activism diversified and began to address women's and LGBT concerns, Ramirez's formation as film scholar was complemented by his Ethiopian born mentor's pioneering work in the field of Third and African Cinema (J. Ramirez Interview 2009). It was also at UCLA where Ramirez first had become involved in film festival organization, first during two consecutive years when he helped putting up two Third Cinema festivals on campus; subsequently, when he co-founded what was to become Outfest Los Angeles LGBT Film Festival (since 1982).

In the 1990s, then already at CSULA, Ramirez was involved both in putting up student film showcases as well as in a first-ever concerted showcasing of Latino/a films. The latter formed the basis of RRAFF in 2004. RRAFF made it possible for Ramirez to combine his academic interest *in* and love *for* cinema – particularly for film committed to and coming from underrepresented communities – as well as his passion as an educator. The latter is apparent in Ramirez' professed fascination with the long-term process of “see[ing] [festivals] grow – and morph and shape and mature” while describing RRAFF as “something I want to stay with for the rest of my career” (J. Ramirez Interview 2009). Even though Ramirez has been the festival's director from the very beginning and ever since headed a festival organizing committee of changing members, he has always acknowledged other collaborators – a vital asset considering RRAFF's particular reliance on its network of supporters.

The history of RRAFF's assistant directors reflects the way the festival was able to draw on the abundance of local film activists as well as its turn from a campus based to a more commercially oriented festival. After the first year (2004), when John Ramirez shared the position of festival director, he was sole director for the three years. In 2008 and 2009, CSULA alumni Suzette Brillantes and Lorena Alvarado, respectively, were assistant directors, underscoring the festival's ties both to education and to the entertainment industry. Two are pioneers among a devoted, recurring circle of festival associates, media professionals and frequently alumni of the California State University system (many also former students of Dr. Ramirez), such as Valentín Durán, Ashalee Fann (both CSULA) and Miguel Torres (California State University-Northridge, CSUN) (L. Alvarado Interview 2011). Their presence ameliorated a situation which, initially, had required Ramirez to single-handedly train new student volunteers each year. However, the lack of a consistent, salaried staff has continued to complicate RRAFF's work, particularly regarding the time-consuming field of public relations. Publicity, however, was a key factor regarding successful festival attendance, and a prime objective for sponsors. Crucially, RRAFF's challenging staff situation led to a dependency on volunteers, and thus on its relationship with CSULA as the foremost provider of student assistants.

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

In 2010, documentary filmmaker Roberto S. Oregel was co-director. Since Oregel's own filmic subjects frequently revolve around local and international social justice and arts issues,³⁰⁵ he was a particularly good fit in respect to RRAFF's local, arts and academic communities. A UCLA alumnus whose work has been distributed by UCLA's Chicano Studies Research Center (CSRC), Oregel also stands for RRAFF's symbolic and factual alliances to pioneers of Chicano-Latino/a film activism who first worked in the documentary mode, most notably directors-producers Sylvia Morales and Jesús S. Treviño (both of whom also were recognized by RRAFF's award politics and screened some of their work there), as well as to Latino/a film scholarship, as represented by CSRC's director Chon A. Noriega, another friend of the festival.

From 2011 on, when RRAFF was hosted at a commercial, cinematic venue for the first time, the festival's commitment to Latinos/as working in the entertainment media was reflected by its two successive co-directors. 2011 saw Latino/a-Hispanic Hollywood activist Bel Hernandez, RRAFF associate since 2005 and editor of the Latino/a entertainment publication, *Latin Heat* (latinheat.com) in this position; Ángela María Ortiz Sinclair, photographer and publisher of another celebrity publication, *Se Fija* (sefijaonline.com), was RRAFF deputy director in 2012 and '13, having been on board since 2009. A noteworthy aspect in regard to RRAFF's pan-Latino/a community building goals was the fact that Panamanian born Ortiz was the first Afro-Latina in this position. RRAFF's tenth anniversary edition featured Juan Escobedo of The East Los Angeles Society of Film and Arts (TELA SOFA) as arts curator.

Also because its lack of a fiscally independent backing organization of its own, RRAFF has a long-standing history of relying on institutional partnerships (first CSULA, then CASA 0101). The festival gradually loosened yet never completely severed its ties to the university. In addition to volunteer matters and to John Ramirez's professorship at CSULA, this relationship remained highly valuable because the mutual transfer of symbolic capital between CSULA and RRAFF was a cornerstone of RRAFF's securing of the support of sponsors with an interest in education.

2.1 Campus festival (2004-2009): California State University-Los Angeles

Like many other festivals discussed in my study, RRAFF's story, too, begins at an educational institution, California State University-Los Angeles (CSULA). The festival was initiated in 2004 by students (a point which has served as considerable symbolic capital, given Los Angeles' historical student activism, such as 1968's high school walkouts) and two professors, Richard T. Rodriguez, then assistant professor at CSULA's Chicano Studies Department, and John Ramirez. All through

³⁰⁵ His films include *Freedom House / Casa Libre* (USA 2008), on a Los Angeles shelter for undocumented immigrants; and *Eloy Take Two* (USA 2010), on muralist Eloy Torres, who was also RRAFF's first arts awardee.

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

its first five years, RRAFF, a festival event with a maximum duration of three consecutive days,³⁰⁶ was primarily reliant on its relationship with CSULA and the support coming from a small number of corporate and community sponsors. In 2007, RRAFF introduced its youth showcase, then in cooperation with four local high schools. While still at the university, its transformation from a campus (or students') to a filmmakers' evolved. In an early interview (2009), Ramirez lamented the wanting attendance of students, even those enrolled at his own faculty, the Film and Television Studies department, despite free of charge workshops tailored to their needs. Over the years, there was a growing proportion of aspiring and / or independent filmmakers taking advantage of these events, as were others from outside the campus community. In addition, the festival's non-cinematic sidebars – from poetry contests to performative arts³⁰⁷ were gradually abandoned as the festival was streamlined in favor of a stronger focus on film, maintaining only the visual arts sidebar.

2.2 Transformation as filmmakers' festival (2010/11): Regency Academy 6 Cinemas

In 2010, the festival organizers decided to move the festival to the city of Pasadena, northeast of Los Angeles and in relative proximity to East Los Angeles' Latino/a hub and CSULA. In addition to RRAFF's pressing goal of building bigger and more varied audiences, this move was motivated both by occasional conflicts with CSULA over fiscal control (to be discussed in a later section) and the insistence on part of RRAFF's Latino/a Hollywood connection, Bel Hernandez, who demanded RRAFF be hosted at a cinematic arena.³⁰⁸ RRAFF's new venue, the Regency Academy 6 Cinemas, is a two-auditorium film theater with a schedule of classic and art house films at reduced rates, conveniently located in the center of downtown Pasadena.

RRAFF's move made the festival more independent since it enabled the partnership with a new, and less restrictive, fiscal co-sponsor, theater-cultural arts organization CASA 0101. Moreover, I argue – and here, in contradiction to John Ramirez's retrospect evaluation of Pasadena as a time “off track” (J. Ramirez, RRAFF Awards Ceremony 2012) – that Pasadena was key to RRAFF's stakeholder development and new identity as a filmmakers' arena and, though less successfully in terms of box office figures, a festival geared to more encompassing general (including non-Latino/a) audiences. On the one hand, it became evident that RRAFF's possibilities, as an understaffed and underpromoted festival, were limited as a player in the commercial sphere. On the other hand, however, the festival earned substantial symbolic capital for leading U.S. Latino/a cinema out of its sheltered academic niche and into film's natural habitat,³⁰⁹ a move particularly resonating with minority filmmakers' long-standing struggle for equal opportunities. Pasadena's cinematic arena further validated the exhibited films not only in regard to their artistic and cultural merit but also regarding their entertainment and commercial potential, thus staking a claim for them to be on an equal footing with (non-Latino/a) mainstream productions.

³⁰⁶ In the founding year, 2004, the festival ran for two days. Ever since, it has comprised a Friday night opening event followed by a weekend of film screenings.

³⁰⁷ Thus, in its second year (2005), RRAFF featured a wealth of additional such events, including the “Reel Rasquache First Poetry Contest,” a spoken word performances with Chicana writer-poet Michele Serros and the local Xicana group, “In Lak Ech,” as well as a multimedia performance by the “Driverz Licenz Project” (graffiti and video).

³⁰⁸ As John Ramirez and Bel Hernandez both have underlined, Hernandez had based her future support for RRAFF on this move (J. Ramirez Interview 2011; Bel Hernandez Interview 2011).

³⁰⁹ Even in 2012, when the festival was hosted at CASA 0101, some contestants interviewed in an informal survey stated that they would rather see “RRAFF in a real cinema.”

That said, the time in Pasadena also reflects RRAFF's situation in a particular time in U.S. Latino/a film (festival) activism (the post-crunch, late 2000s) and politics of place. By way of comparison, SDLFF had left the university campus for a new, commercial location in the late 1990s, a time of greater economic stability. Even though much smaller in size, RRAFF's relocation had involved an increased financial risk, with the added challenge of Greater Los Angeles' wealth of competing events.

2.3 “Home for the Future” and *gentefication* (2012-14): CASA 0101

In 2012, the festival moved to CASA 0101 Theatre, the Latino/a cultural arts organization which had been founded by playwright, writer, and arts activist Josefina López in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Boyle Heights in 2000. This move to the premises of RRAFF's fiscal co-sponsor marked a long-desired step towards permanence.³¹⁰ In this vein, at the 2012 RRAFF awards ceremony, John Ramirez expressed his hope for having found in CASA 0101 a “home for the future,” a desire also expressed by the festival's eponymous motto that year. He described the move as a “major breakthrough,”

[...] because it's always been our vision and mission to have a really solid connection with the community. To a degree we had that at CSULA, but you know, it's CSULA, it's the ivory tower on the hill. Pasadena took us off track, but now I feel very firmly that we are back on track. So I just hope for the best if it comes to making this relationship work with CASA.

And in fact, the third phase at CASA 0101³¹¹ has promised to be RRAFF's most felicitous match to date: It inserted RRAFF into the institutional framework of a non profit Latino/a cultural organization where the festival was bound to resonate not only with CASA's multi-faceted cultural program of events but also with that of Boyle Heights, a community in transformation with its burgeoning arts district and an influx of a younger crowd of middle class Latinos/as. The festival had already been more successful in attracting audiences both higher in numbers and more diverse than RRAFF's usual largely filmmaking clientele. CASA 0101 was to provide a different level of visibility to RRAFF due to the organization's own year round program of cultural events and workshops designed for those with amateur or professional interests in theater, film, and dance – a clientele heterogeneous in terms of age, class, and income, also since CASA's philosophy entails for its classes to be for the most part free of charge and / or donation based (“Mission Statement;” www.casa0101.org). Moreover, if RRAFF's high school student filmmakers' sidebar, introduced back in 2006, had already boosted the diversity of the age demographic, RRAFF's art showcase, which could now be integrated into the festival, proved to become another incentive to draw in a wider spectrum of visitors.³¹²

Even though the festival's move to CASA 0101 also signaled the return to an ethnic niche, this step provided RRAFF with more agency. For one, it diminished RRAFF's fiscal pressure; at the same

³¹⁰ As early as in our first interview, John Ramirez had envisioned for RRAFF as to find a permanent venue (J. Ramirez Interview 2009).

³¹¹ The organization's name is a combination of “casa” (home), in order to signal its commitment to Latino/a cultural productions, and “0101,” in reference to the binary used by computers and the digital age, having democratized the filmmaking process. Initially the organization had a stronger focus on the production and exhibition of digital genres, which is still retained in its digital film festival; the general focus, however, has shifted towards theater (cf. “Mission Statement”; www.casa0101.org).

³¹² My informal survey conducted at RRAFF's first edition at CASA 0101 (2012) revealed that of 99 people polled, 78 were at the festival for the first time.

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

time, it was still possible for the festival to maintain ties to CSULA (which, in turn, also served as a prerequisite for some of its most important sponsor relationships), while allowing the establishment of new alliances with community sponsors and the possibility of sharing resources. Not least of all, RRAFF has also been able to benefit from CASA director Josefina López's standing as a community patron and the popularity and renown³¹³ associated with *Real Women Have Curves* (USA 2002), Patricia Cardoso's aforementioned, very successful coming of age drama, parts of which had also been filmed in Boyle Heights. The film's script had been co-authored by López and was an adaptation of her play of the same name.³¹⁴

All the while, RRAFF's move to Boyle Heights also put a different spin on RRAFF's mission. It meant that RRAFF has also become part of the district's renaissance with a distinctly Latino/a flavor, a trend locally sometimes referred to as “*gentefication*”³¹⁵ – namely, the (re)claiming of a predominantly Latino/a, immigrant, low income and working class community by members of a middle class, professional, white collar Latino/a crowd. Ever since the early 2000s, Boyle Heights, located between downtown Los Angeles and the unincorporated municipality of East Los Angeles, has experienced the establishment and / or transformation of a number of culturally relevant organizations, institutions, and businesses.³¹⁶ An auxiliary development was the city's extension of its “Gold Line” metro all the way to East Los Angeles in 2009, thus connecting Boyle Heights with Los Angeles downtown, and transforming the district's long-standing cultural landmark, Mariachi Plaza, into a metro stop in the style of a Mexican town square (*zócalo*)³¹⁷. At the same time, Boyle Heights was reassigned as an arts district.³¹⁸ CASA 0101's founding director López is an example for this new-old community herself (in fact, her Boyle Heights childhood as undocumented immigrant is one themes in the original stage version of *Real Women Have Curves*³¹⁹). Even though López has expressed her own ambivalence about the area's transformation, whose negative consequences include the disappearance of local businesses³²⁰ and affordable housing for the area's traditionally working class and poor communities, she has also pointed at how Boyle Heights' artistic community has also made a difference for these

³¹³ López and the script's co-author George La Voo were recognized with the Humanitas Prize for Screenwriting and the Gabriel García Márquez Prize by the Mayor of Los Angeles (López 2009: 277).

³¹⁴ *Real Women Have Curves* (1990; published in López 2011). In a talk with a group of festival volunteers at the 2012 festival, my interviewees stated that they had been motivated to participate because they knew that López was linked to the film (Student Volunteers Group Interview 2012).

³¹⁵ In Jennifer Medina's coverage of the phenomenon for the *New York Times*, the term *gentefication* epitomizes the current trend of “more well-to-do and younger Mexican-Americans return to the neighborhood their parents fled,” with the objective of restoring a sense of Mexican-American history. (Medina 2013, no pag.)

³¹⁶ Along with CASA 0101's foundation, in 2011, there was also a relocation of the veteran community arts organization, Self Help Graphics & Art (SGHA), from East Los Angeles to Boyle Heights. Founded in 1970, SHGA served as a cornerstone both of the local and national Chicano/a arts scene. The neighborhood saw the introduction of arts galleries, community print papers (such as poet-activist Abel Salas's *Brooklyn & Boyle* or *Boyle Beat*) and community centers like Corazón del Pueblo (a RRAFF collaborator since 2012) (cf. Flores 2012).

³¹⁷ Mariachi Plaza had derived its name from its traditional function as a place where to hire local Mexican folk *bandas* for private and business celebrations.

³¹⁸ According to KCET's Abe Flores (2012), “Boyle Heights received \$1.6 billion in recent years for public improvement projects along the emerging Arts District corridor (no pag.).”

³¹⁹ In Patricia Cardoso's cinematic adaptation (USA 2002), the “undocumented” aspect was abandoned.

³²⁰ “The only people who were not too happy about our being here are those who feel that we gentrify the community. Artists and these people with visions and missions come in, and then the poor and the underrepresented people will feel it (J. López Interview 2012).”

disadvantaged constituencies: “I am here to give. For all the money I spent in this community I could have bought myself a mansion in Beverley Hills” (J. López Interview 2012).

RRAFF, too, has benefited from and has in fact become part of the district’s revitalization, its celebration of Latino/a-Chicano/a culture and the increased cultural entrepreneurship. At the same time, the middle class Latino/a recuperation of Boyle Heights, and its at times conflictive discourses of solidarity and upward mobility, also resonate with RRAFF’s own mission of balancing its middle class, professional-artistic and its working class constituencies. What is more, on its website, the festival draws attention to Boyle Heights’ important historical function as a “special community with a rich history, a microcosm of the American immigrant experience” and “a place full of Jewish, Japanese, and Mexican history, art, community, and tolerance” (“Team”; reelrasquache.org). In fact, in the early twentieth century, the neighborhood had seen the influx of European groups, who, due to their non-Anglo-Protestant national/cultural and religious background, were *de facto* segregated from other parts of the city – among them its once large Jewish community, living side by side with Mexican, Japanese, and African Americans (Reft 2013, no pag.). By acknowledging Boyle Heights’ long-standing function as a gateway for many different immigrant groups world over, RRAFF’s celebration of *latinidad* is compatible with more encompassing concepts of multiculturalism while refuting some of the more primordial claims that would see the neighborhood as an exclusively Latino/a enclave. This recognition of the district’s historical multicultural composition also resonates with the local activism emphasizing points of collaboration among Jewish and Latino/a groups; these have inspired the renovation of the neighborhood’s landmark synagogue, Breed Street Shul and the foundation of lending library, and community center, Libros Schmibros (cf. Reft 2013).

3. Focus on U.S. *latinidad*: RRAFF’s strategic essentialism

Like all Latino/a film festivals, RRAFF celebrated *latinidad* – the experiences of a shared imagined community – and provided an arena for Latino/a film. However, as its mission statement makes clear, RRAFF radicalized Latino/a film festivals’ agenda by strategically “prioritiz[ing] work by and about Latinos and Latinas in the U.S., a population quickly evacuating minority status although curiously marginal if not absent in media representation.” (*RRAFF 2010*: 4) As a result, RRAFF narrowed down the term Latino/a (at least in terms of its programming and awards practices) to an “ethnic,” “national” category, U.S. based rather than international. In the context of RRAFF, I find this strategic essentialism a useful enough concept to understand how its self-imposed limitations became a defiant stance against the commercialization and marginalization experienced by U.S. Latino/a cultural production against Hollywood’s Eurocentric tendencies and overall globalizing film and arts markets.

As I have pointed out earlier, the 1980s and their mainstreaming and commercializing tendencies also saw the emergence of more encompassing group labels such as Hispanic and Latino/a as terms to build alliances and to professionalize. At the same time, these labels also shed the arguably more “aggressive” connotations of the culturally specific Chicano/a and its association with the movement and ethno-cultural nationalism. Ever since the 1990s, thus with some delay, arenas for the exhibition of Latino/a culture – arts organizations and museums, but also film festivals – too were impacted by a paradigm shift towards meritocracy and professionalization – as I have pointed out with reference

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

to Miller & Yúdice 2002. Not only were these organizations – often in reaction to changing funding politics on part of the state – undergoing comparable professionalization trends³²¹; they also began to situate the designation Latino/a as an international category with commercial repercussions. In order to point at some of the consequences, allow me a short detour into Arlene Dávila’s poignant critique of what she calls a “facile deployment of *Latinidad*” (2008: 133, my italics) in conjunction with New York City’s El Museo (El Museo del Barrio) and its curatorial politics. In the light of my study’s focus on the promotion of *latinidad* as a vehicle for a specific politics of identity, place, and commodification, Dávila’s observations merit further scrutiny since they provide insights into how this trend impacted other Latino/a cultural arenas as well. While Dávila’s discussion takes as its point of departure the museum’s origins in a specifically Nuyorican cultural activism as well as its location in the art capital of New York City, there are significant analogies to the current situation of U.S. Latino/a film festivals. I argue that this is particularly true in regard to Los Angeles based such events, which resonate with the legacy of a powerful Latino/a film and arts activism on the one hand as well as the symbolic and economic impact of the film industry on the other hand.

In her study, Dávila describes how ever since the mid-1990s, the activist-founded El Museo, located in East Harlem (“El Barrio”), had undergone a profound transformation, a “refiguration of El Museo’s past and its identity” (130) when its curatorial main focus shifted from Puerto Rican-U.S. Latino/a to Latin American art. Dávila argues that this change happened at the expense of the same local arts and community activists who had struggled to create El Museo in the first place (119ff.). On the one hand, Dávila notes the concern on part of the involved artists since it diminished their visibility and resulting bestowal of cultural and symbolic capital (130). On the other hand, in more general terms regarding the future of such localized ethnic activism,

[t]his transformation was seen as resulting in the loss of a space for asserting and taking pride in an identity still largely subordinated in the world of culture and the arts. It was also seen as part of a strategy of gentrification intended to ‘deny Puerto Ricans their roots,’ and an erasure of the progressive goals of past struggles they had waged and witnessed in El Barrio. (130)

In fact, according to the museum board, the previous Puerto Rican focus had posed a hindrance in that it “constitute[d] a liability and obstacle to El Museo’s greater scope and visibility” (130). Indeed, according to the logic of a globalizing art market, the new Latin Americanized image and curatorial politics had been advantageous both for El Museo as well as of the Latin American art on exhibition. While it put the former on the map of an international art market, thus increasing its cultural and symbolic capital, it also enhanced the economic value of the works in question, due to a tradition that would have Latin American art dealers and collectors buy back artworks from their home countries – thus responding to the demand of national markets but also to what seems to be, in Latin America, on part of the state and national art world, a patriotic obligation felt towards national art and part of one’s national patrimony no less (cf. Dávila 127). Here, Dávila argues that El Museo’s prioritization on international *latinidad* “[e]ft] mainstream standards unchallenged, while placing the burden on culturally specific museums to legitimize themselves and what they stand for within a field that continually marginalizes the people they propose to represent” (131).

³²¹ In the previous chapter on SDLFF, I have described these tendencies briefly in conjunction with San Diego’s Centro Cultural de la Raza.

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

I see Dávila's observations as a key point of convergence with RRAFF's strategic essentialism, which is a reaction to the blatant discrepancies of how neither U.S. Latino/a art nor cinema are being validated as U.S. American patrimony. Jesús S. Treviño's similar observation, too, once again comes to mind, having been quoted in the historical overview chapter (J. S. Treviño Interview 2010). This situation puts U.S. Latino/a artists and cultural workers at a disadvantage when compared to their international counterparts. Accordingly, in its mission statement, RRAFF has criticized how, all too often, work by and on U.S. Latinos/as has been "eclipsed both by 'all-encompassing' festivals and festivals focusing on particular geographical regions" (RRAFF 2010:4). While I interpret this critique as primarily directed against the programming practices of bigger, non-ethnically designated festivals which do not distinguish between Latin American or U.S. Latino/a film in their programming (many bigger festivals, such as Sundance or SBIFF) or festivals concentrating solely on Latin America (Cinema Tropical); it also takes issue with the overwhelming majority of Latino/a film festivals regarding Latino/a as an international category. However, ever aware of the pitfalls of such strategic essentialism, RRAFF has abstained from positioning *latinidad* as monolithic and unchanging, as expressed by its envisioned dedication to the "dynamic fabric of U.S. Latino/a identities" (RRAFF 2010:4, my emphasis), which positions these subjectivities as intersecting and flexible. I will further discuss RRAFF's resulting broad programming range in conjunction with this chapter's awards politics section; at this point, suffice it to mention the different audio-visual genres covered (film, video, and internet based genres) as well as an arts showcase; works of independent and industry oriented filmmakers; established filmmakers (such as Luis Valdez or Jesús D. Treviño) and newcomers, including a high school students' showcase; filmmakers from Southern California and from all over the country as well as from a wide range of cultural and ethnic-racial backgrounds; in terms of filmic production and content genres, a variety considered more high- or lowbrow, including historical, art and music documentaries, immigration, urban and sci fi dramas, romantic comedies, music videos, horror films, and animation. This emphasis on U.S. *latinidad*'s inherent heterogeneity distinguishes RRAFF from the ethno-nationalism which defined and to some extent marred first wave Chicano/a social and cultural activism.

I want to close this section on RRAFF's strategic essentialism with brief glance at how RRAFF addressed this issue in regard to its arts awards politics (since 2010, and named "Vision Award" in 2011). In general, considering its chosen name as "Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival" paid tribute to the city's substantial legacy in the visual arts; in practice, however, its limited means made it necessary to limit its exhibition to one artist a year, and, until its 2012 edition, at facilities removed from the festival itself. For the same reasons, it had featured local artists, thus further limiting its project of promoting national *latinidad* to local artists. Without being able to comment on individual artistic nuances for reasons of my own focus, I want to point out that RRAFF's first two honored artists were, if to different degrees, deeply involved with the social struggles revolving around their identities as Chicanos/as born in the 1950s: They were Eloy Torrez (awardee in 2010), who also designed that year's festival catalog, and Margaret Garcia (2011).³²² While Torrez had relocated with his family from New Mexico to California as a teenager, Garcia hailed from East Los Angeles and had attended Theo-

³²² In fact, in early 2011, Garcia had graciously risen to the occasion when the artist originally to be honored, Gilbert Luján – known as Magú – had to cancel his involvement for reasons of critical health. A painter, muralist, and sculptor, Magú had been a pioneer of Los Angeles based art activism, and as a member of the Chicano arts collective, "Los Four," he was granted the first exhibition of Chicano art at the Los Angeles County Art Museum (LACMA) in 1974. (He passed away in July 2011.)

dore Roosevelt High School, one of the schools associated with the 1968 walkouts. As artists and educators, Torrez and Garcia had left their mark within and beyond Los Angeles' Latino/a communities: Garcia's installation (a collaboration with architect Kate Diamond), "Tree of Califas" (2000), at the "Universal / Studio City" metro stop, is a contribution to a public art series exhibited shown at various stations within the city's public transportation system. Focusing on the state's multiethnic/racial Indigenous, European, and African roots, the installation is a "re-invent[ion] and re-defini[tion] [of] a lost piece of California history" ("Tree of Califas, 2000"; www.metro.net). Torrez's work, in turn, had been part of the travelling exhibition *Chicano Art: Between Resistance and Affirmation* (CARA, 1990-1992), the first national art show on Chicano/a art, curated by a number of renowned artists and scholars at UCLA's Wight Gallery. In her study of CARA, Alicia Gaspar del Alba (1998) has drawn on Audre Lorde's metaphor of cultural hegemony as "the master's house" (Lorde 1983: 99) when describing the art show as an effort to "to open the doors to the master's house – the hitherto exclusionary space of the mainstream museum – to remodel the interior *al estilo Chicano* and create an environment where Chicano/a art could be the vehicle for dialogue and reflection" (xv). His murals are among the city's most well-known, many of which dealing with (Latinos/as' presence in) Hollywood, such as "The Pope of Broadway" (1985), featuring a multi-storey portrait of celebrated actor Anthony Quinn outside the Victor Clothing Company in downtown Los Angeles, which also has commissioned it. RRAFF 2012, however, signaled a change by means of Vision Award recipient Patricia Krebs. This "Renaissance artist" (in the words of festival co-director Ángela Ortiz) works in multiple genres, including music, film, illustration, film voiceovers, and the creation of puppets and masks for theater. Formally, culturally, and in terms of her biography, Krebs differed from her predecessors, whose respective artistic and political experiences had been shaped growing up as *mestizo/a* Chicanos/as and part of an ethnic minority in 1960s and '70s U.S., and which deeply resonated with the objective of CARA's focus on "the life-practices of an 'Other' American culture which is both indigenous and alien to the United States, colonization and struggle" (Gaspar de Alba 1998: 15). Conversely, Krebs had grown up in Argentina as the granddaughter of Jewish Germans and Holocaust survivors; she had relocated to the U.S. eleven years prior to her nomination, in 2001.

4. *Lo rasquache* as performative resource

If the term *rasquache* had been used earlier on in conjunction with Tijuana's strategies of promoting border culture as sometimes gaudy and vulgar, but also inventive, improvisational and thriving on limitations (both La Mona and IAF serving as examples), RRAFF's usage of the term involves a complex trope serving to characterize, brand, and fuse the festival's many interrelated goals – positioning itself as an arena for innovation and creativity; providing empowerment through cultural affirmation and community-building, opportunities and education. RRAFF's mission statement acknowledges the term's complicated legacy, including original connotations such as "cheap, thrown-together and 'low class'" (RRAFF 2010:4), meanings, as my informal survey will show later, which still register negatively among some of the festival's more traditionally-minded visitors ("Yearly and routinely, the question is asked, 'Why is it called "*rasquache*"?"). However, RRAFF aligns itself with Chicano/a first wave cultural activists of the 1960s and '70s, who transformed the term into a means for cultural "resistance and affirmation" (here I am borrowing the motto of aforementioned CARA, whose pioneering spirit also acquainted wider audiences with *rasquache* sensibilities).

This strategic reclaiming of *lo rasquache* was part of the bigger project of cultural affirmation by appreciating and validating art forms that were the product of a specifically Chicano/a sensibility. RRAFF, too, draws on the “empowering” (RRAFF 2010: 4) revision of the term in its aim to disseminate new representations of U.S. *latinidad* in film, television, and art, to pave the way for up-and-coming and more established Latino/a filmmakers, and build community among Latinos/as:

Reel Rasquache upholds and honors the cultural landscape and politics of *Latinidad* in the U.S. – down-to-earth, resourceful, creative, yet historically marginalized by mainstream society as cheap, rag tag, and lower class. As much as film and television have been powerful tools for perpetuating the negative stereotypes of what we are not, so too do film and television provide effective tools and weapons for breaking those stereotypes and representing the many real and rich dimensions of the U.S. Latina/o experience. (RRAFF 2009: 4; emphasis in the original)

Furthermore, my discussion also entails an investigation of the performative repercussions of RRAFF’s appropriation of *lo rasquache*. In this context, observations made by Judith Butler in *Bodies that Matter* (1993) have proven helpful. As Butler points out, the traditionally pejorative designation “queer,” like “*rasquache*,” originally used for exclusionary purposes, was re-appropriated and re-signified by activists and scholars as a term for coalition-building and empowerment on the very basis of these negative connotations: “‘Queer’ derives its force precisely through the repeated invocation by which it has been linked to accusation, pathologization, insult.” (226) While “queer” has come to be far better known and established, both terms, “*rasquache*” as well as “queer,” ultimately “rais[e] the question of force and opposition, of stability and variability, *within* performativity” (226; italics in the original). My analysis of “*rasquache*” as central trope for RRAFF’s mission will also show how the term’s performative usage, re-appropriation and re-signification all have contributed to the way it has allowed political contestation by both enabling and limiting its performative force and semantic scope and, as a result, both facilitating and curtailing the festival’s project of community-building and cultural and professional empowerment.

4.1 *Rasquachismo*: Validation of marginality; link to first wave Chicano/a cultural activism

The academic and scholarly revisionist project involving *lo rasquache* in the 1970s and after situated this cultural sensibility among other cultural articulations obliterated by the mainstream, and thus outside publicly recognized arenas such as the museum, academia, or classroom. For RRAFF’s constituencies, in turn, *rasquachismo*’s most frequent associations – cultural production created with limited means, by improvisation, and coming from a marginalized ethnic perspective – were meant to appeal particularly to its up and coming filmmakers (including CSULA’s students) and to independent filmmakers.³²³ The term thus addresses RRAFF’s most important stakeholders. The project of such re-signifying of *lo rasquache* to the end of cultural affirmation is possible exactly because terms such as queer or *rasquache* are citations – “repetition[s] which fai[l] to repeat loyally” (Butler 1993:

³²³ Even though the political and economic conditions surrounding 1960s and ’70s New Latin American Cinema are further removed from the Chicano/a arts activism embraced by RRAFF in its re-conceptualization of *lo rasquache*, its interpretation of the former also resonates with Latin America’s Third Cinema and its “idea [... of] turn[ing] a strategic weakness – the lack of infrastructure, funds, equipment – into a tactical strength, turning poverty into a badge of honor, and scarcity, as Ismail Xavier put it, ‘into a signifier.’” (Stam 2000: 100)

220). Judith Butler argues that “the act by which a name authorizes or deauthorizes a set of social or sexual relations is, of necessity, a repetition” (226). Furthermore, the (performative) force of terms like *rasquache* is only provisional. This is suggested by these above many different adaptations. As Butler points out,

If a performative provisionally succeeds (and I will suggest that “success” is always and only provisional), then it is not because an intention successfully governs the action of speech, but only because that action echoes prior actions, and *accumulates the force of authority through the repetition or citation of a prior, authoritative set of practices*. What this means, then, is that a performative “works” to the extent that it *draws on and covers over* the constitutive conventions by which it is mobilized. In this sense, no term or statement can function performatively without the accumulating and dissimulating historicity of force. (226; the author’s italics)

We see the accumulating and dissimulating historicity of performativity at work in the first major reclaiming of *lo rasquache* by Chicano/a cultural activists. Among the negative connotations traditionally associated with the term are those referenced in RRAFF’s mission statement – “cheap, thrown-together and ‘low class’” (RRAFF 2010: 4). The first wave Chicano cultural activists who reclaimed *lo rasquache* “covered over,” to use Butler’s above phrase, the negative qualities and turned them into positive ones. All the while *rasquache* retained its distinctive bond to Mexican (American) working class culture and thus remained safely anchored in these specific cultural practices. Importantly, too, there was already a telling difference between the term’s traditional connotations in Mexico and the U.S., respectively: South of the border, *lo rasquache* was marked by “class,” while it was associated both with the (working) class and (Mexican American) ethnicity in the U.S., which made the term a fit attribute for Chicano/a arts activism.

Thus, Chicano/a identified artists hailed and tapped *lo rasquache* as a way to embellish and transform everyday lives – by limited means, improvisation, and often with a good deal of irreverence for “good taste”; as for example apparent in the excessive décor of customized lowrider cars. Characteristic of vernacular, outsider culture, the boundaries between *rasquache* cultural practices and art were flexible, in constant flow and frequently empowering, as suggested by Amalia Mesa-Bains’ description of *lo rasquache* as “[t]he capacity to hold life together with bits of string, old coffee cans, and broken mirrors in a dazzling gesture of aesthetic bravado” (Mesa-Bains 2003:300). RRAFF’s mission statement, too, continues the project of a then specifically Chicano/a activist history, including its strategic reclaiming of a culture hitherto denigrated and belittled; accordingly, *lo rasquache* is hailed as “down-to-earth, resourceful, [and] creative” (RRAFF 2010: 4). Moreover, the project is extended since for RRAFF, *lo rasquache* is used to represent not only for Chicano/a but U.S. Latino/a culture and politics (I will return to this point later but it needs to be made here in order to draw attention to the permanent negotiations between stability and variability characteristic of performatives such as *lo rasquache*, making them useful yet ever provisional tools for activism).

Some assessments made by Chicano arts scholar Tomas Ybarra-Frausto (1990) when he attests to *lo rasquache*’s inherent dynamic and resulting ability to capture the versatility of Chicano/a cultural production also resonate with the variable, provisional character of the performative. Ybarra-Frausto, arguably the first to theorize the U.S. variant of *rasquachismo*, describes it as “neither an idea nor a

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

style, but more of a pervasive attitude or taste, [...] an underdog perspective” and “a stance rooted in resourcefulness and adaptability, yet ever mindful of aesthetics.” (133) He maintains that *rasquachismo* can thus take many forms:

It can be sincere and play homage to the sensibility by restating its premises, i.e., the underdog worldview actualized through language and behaviour, as in the dramatic presentation *La Carpa de los Rasquaches*, by Luis Valdez. Another strategy is for the artwork to evoke a *rasquache* sensibility through self-conscious manipulation of found materials and the use of satiric wit in the sculptures of Ruben Trejo, or the manipulation of *rasquache* artifacts, codes, and sensibilities from both sides of the border in the performance pieces of Guillermo Gómez-Peña. (134)

Accordingly, too, artist and scholar Amalia Mesa-Bains has created her own, Chicana feminist version of *rasquachismo* – “*domesticana*” – situated in “the everyday, the domestic sites of the home and community” (ibid.). This spirit is exemplified in Mesa-Bains’ own installations, which draw on the lovingly improvised home altars ubiquitous in traditional Mexican American homes. Mesa-Bains’ art is an example of a second wave of Chicano/a cultural activism, attesting to a growing appreciation of its diversity.

Ybarra-Frausto has also pointed to *rasquache*’s reliance on strategies and bare necessities, in a statement I have already invoked in the preceding discussion of Tijuana’s filmmaking community and its reliance on “*la cultura de la necesidad*” (Carlos Monsiváis). This predisposition allows for flexibility and also points at an inherently dialogic nature that makes the term fit to ever transcend boundaries, both for the sake to yet again point at the inherent diversity of cultural production as well as for an extension of its scope.

Rather than flowing from a monolithic aesthetic, Chicano art forms arise from tactical, strategic, and positional necessities. What Carlos Monsiváis has called *la cultura de la necesidad* (the culture of necessity) leads to fluid multivocal exchanges among shifting cultural traditions. A consistent objective of Chicano art is to undermine imposed models of representation and to interrogate systems of aesthetic discourse, disclosing them as neither natural nor secure but conventional and historically determined. (148 ff.; Monsiváis: no source provided)

Accordingly, RRAFF’s mission statement draws on the encompassing, “multivocal” (Ybarra-Frausto) nature of *lo rasquache* as it sets out to affirm and celebrate U.S. Latino/a culture in film and art. Here, RRAFF promotes a revision of the term – in analogy to a revision of film and other cultural production as vehicles not only for the traditional rejection and denigration of Latinos/as in the mainstream media but also for the affirmation of culture and for artistic articulation. This tactic responds to the strategic embrace of “queer” described by Butler since RRAFF, too, draws on the very means used for the insult of U.S. Latino/a communities – audio-visual media – while combining this embrace with an insistence on its allegiance to older stages of Chicano/a activism. Thus, while the attribute, *rasquache*, invokes the spirit of localized and culturally specific grassroots Chicano/a activism of the 1960s and ’70s, the festival also invites a younger, less politically radicalized generation of artists to share their own visions. In this vein, on the one hand, RRAFF’s mission statement references New Latin Ame-

rican Cinema's famous, aforementioned analogy of the camera as gun³²⁴ when talking about Latino/a film and television productions as "tools and weapons in order to break [...] stereotypes" as to point at its roots in the burgeoning activist Chicano/a-Latino/a cinema of the late 1960s and '70s with its previously discussed affinities to engaged, anti-imperialist and, to a degree, anti-Hollywood cinema.

All the while, there is a double irony consisting both in the exclusion of Latin American cinema from the festival due to its strategic essentialism, and in the proximity of many of RRAFF's filmmakers to Hollywood which, after all, was seen as the very embodiment of cultural imperialism by New Latin American filmmakers. On the other hand, RRAFF acknowledges contemporary U.S. Latino/a cinema's diversified ideological and artistic positions; this is signaled by the aforementioned emphasis on "the dynamic fabric of U.S. Latina/o identities" and its encompassing community building project "making up endless combinations, mixings, matchings, and upliftings of national heritage, ethnicity, race, language, gender, class, age, sexuality, and ideology" (*RRAFF 2009* : 4).

4.2 *Lo rasquache* and RRAFF's community-building project

One basic assumption returns us to the *a priori* provisional nature of performatives. As Butler makes us aware of the possibilities and limitations for performatives to succeed – in our case, *lo rasquache*'s community building project – she argues that despite performatives' function as

site[s] of collective contestation, the point of departure for a set of historical reflections and future imaginings, [they] will have to remain that which is, in the present, never fully owned, but always and only redeployed, twisted, queered [sic] from a prior usage and in the direction of urgent and expanding political purposes. (228)

This also means that their success in establishing rapport with their imagined communities may be curtailed by factors such as lack of acceptance. The history of social movements is rife with such stories, as Butler explains with regard to "queer":

As expansive as the term queer is meant to be, it is used in ways that enforce a sense of overlapping divisions: in some contexts, the term appeals to a younger generation who want to resist the more institutionalized and reformist politics sometimes signified by 'lesbian' and 'gay'; in some contexts, sometimes the same, it has marked a predominantly white movement that has not fully addressed the way in which 'queer' plays – or fails to play – within non-white communities; and whereas it has in some instances mobilized a lesbian activism, in others the term represents a false unity of women and men. (228)

Telling of the many shifts in "queer" politics is the fact that the term has in fact been replaced in many communities by the more encompassing acronym LGBTQ (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender, Queer). In our Latino/a context, for some more conservative Mexican Americans, the culturally

³²⁴ In her investigation of the camera as a central trope for political resistance in New Latin American Cinema, Julianne Burton has claimed that "[t]he equation of the movie as gun is as old as the apparatus itself" (1978: 1). That said, the most well-known example is the previously discussed manifesto, *Towards a Third Cinema* ("The camera is the inexhaustible **expropriator of image-weapons**; the projector, **a gun that can shoot 24 frames per second**"). (Solanas & Getino 1969:127, emphasis in the original).

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

affirmative “Chicano/a” – a term which, as Amalia Mesa Bains has pointed out, itself is *rasquache* “with all its vernacular connotations” (2003: 300) – has experienced trends of acceptance and rejection, despite its wide dissemination in conjunction with the radical politics of the 1960s and ’70s and its institutionalization in the course of the foundation of ethnic studies departments. It is also in comparison with the term Chicano/a that RRAFF’s usage of *lo rasquache* as an alliance-forging term, and one which uses to this end tactics both of in- and exclusion, reveals itself to be a task both most daunting and promising.

Thus, in order to enable community-building among U.S. Latinos/as, RRAFF’s mission semantically extends *lo rasquache*’s traditional Mexican-Chicano/a connotations. This audacious strategy corresponds to the term’s resistance to normalization and homogenization. Instead, as Ybarra-Frausto (1990) has pointed out, the term stands for “[i]mpertinent representations counter[ing] the homogenizing desires, investments, and projections of the dominant culture [as to] express what is manifestly different.” (148) In fact, Ybarra-Frausto acknowledges *rasquache*’s potential to inspire solidarity with and forge alliances among different Latino/a groups by way of a “recognition of new interconnections and filiations, especially with other Latino groups in the United States.” (148) And yet, RRAFF’s expansion of its community-building project by means of extending the semantic scope of *lo rasquache* transnationally is held in check by virtue of the festival’s strategic essentialism.

In fact, another challenge is the term’s envisioned rapport with its imagined communities. In this context, knowledge of the designation’s meaning should be tantamount. Knowing of course that the informal survey I conducted in 2012 was by no means representative of all the visitors of that year’s RRAFF, a striking insight was that the number of those familiar with the term in attendance seemed to be much lower than I had expected. In fact, 69 of the 99 contestants left the question “[W]hat does the term *rasquache* mean to you?” unchecked. This result is even more surprising since most festivalgoers were locals, according to those who answered the poll and also in all probability, given the limited regional scope of the festival; and about half of those polled chose to identify as Latino/a or Hispanic, namely, 48. Without any pre-defined ethnic categories provided by me, 12 identified as Mexican, Mexican American or Chicano/a; which of course presupposed the greatest familiarity with the term; and one as Central American; 33 as Hispanic / Latino/a, one as Afro-Latino; and one as Nyorican.³²⁵ That said, many made up for their lack of knowledge (or lack of willingness to more directly engage with this question) with creativity and wit. While some professed their unfamiliarity with *lo rasquache*, such as “IDK” [I don’t know] (survey #52); “?” (#42); others were willing to guess, as in “I yet have to find out” (#25); “no opinion yet” (#55) “I don’t know what it means... but will find out today” (#59); “Don’t know? A Latino festival” (#64). These last three answers reveal a willingness to embrace a meaning in tune with RRAFF’s affirmative spirit, and even more so in in “The first step to my future” (#75); “It means show the world what you can do” (#74), and, if perhaps somewhat ironically, “The Best of the Best” (#18). Some, however, were familiar with some of its connotations: “Making the most out of nothing” (#4); “Guerilla filmmaking” (#5); “Casually put together” (#23); “Independent” (#33); “DIY” [Do It Yourself] / Raw” (#47). The majority of those contestants actually responding, however, were ambivalent in that they engaged with a range of negative connotations;

³²⁵ As to the remaining other half of surveys, 10 identified either as Caucasian or White; 4 as Asian; 2 as African American / Black; 1 as Ethiopian + White; 1 as Asian-White; 1 as Middle Eastern; 1 as Filipino; 1 as Native. One, probably in defiance of the question, simply answered “yes”. The remaining 29 left the question blank.

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

some, presumably in order to underscore their rejection of the term. Others associated it with a revisionist project, such as in “Local, from the hood, common” (#53); “Risky (63);” “Ghetto“; (72)” *Raro*” [weird] (45); “Ill mannered” (#87); “Not good habits [sic]” (#86) “Low class” (#97); “Shitty” (#98); yet also “Cheesy but cool” (#12). Here, and particularly in ironic quips such as “my favorite song in the drive-in” (50) as well as hilarious “a rash you get from eating too much quiche (80)” *rasquache* signals, to different measures, ethnic hipness and the irreverence of alternative and underground culture. The latter, ironizing yet appreciative readings, situate *rasquache*, and with it, RRAFF, particularly well in fashionably *gentefied* Boyle Heights. All the while, one contestant’s criticism is particularly telling (who described himself as “male,” “in [his] thirties,” “from L.A.”): “I’ll be honest, I don’t like the name. I’m U.S. Latino and I have no clue what it means” (#3).

This informal survey helps charting the term’s many different and often ambivalent repercussions and its restricted scope in terms of being able to build community. Among others questioning *lo rasquache*’s suitability in terms of reflecting Chicano/a-Latino/a culture in an affirmative way is filmmaker, activist and longstanding RRAFF supporter Jesús S. Treviño (J. Treviño Interview 2010). Treviño’s main point of criticism revolves around past experiences unrelated to RRAFF when the term *rasquache* was brought up as a pretext for work done with attitude and flashiness, but without sufficient skill or dedication. His criticism may be well justified considering RRAFF’s small scale and vulnerability, particularly regarding the festival’s reliance on a small number of sponsors desiring to reach out to larger local communities – beyond Angeleno/a filmmaking and artistic circles who appreciate the term in a different way – traditionally minded people who may feel insulted by the term. Thus, Treviño’s reservations point us to possible limitations of the term’s strategic reinvention, and, as a result, to a rupture running through RRAFF’s imagined communities (a division not least of all also suggested by the lack of familiarity of some of RRAFF’s audience members, as demonstrated above). In fact, this observation makes us further aware of the limitations of such performative group building, considering that some designations used to this end are lesser appropriate than others, depending also on the extent of negativity associated with their traditional use. In addition, this disconnect is the more likely to happen among rapidly diversifying constituencies, where vanguard circles such as creative communities and intellectuals, despite their ties to social circles, are pitted against the broader communal basis they seek to address. This risk may be not so great in the case of terms coined, or re-appropriated, in order to address a smaller élite of people in the know. In the Chicano/a context, consider Asco (literally, “nausea”), the name of an impactful 1970s/’80s Los Angeles based Chicano/a artists’ collective, or CACA (“excrement”), the acronym for Chicano Arts Collectors Anonymous³²⁶. With regard to the latter, Teresa McKenna suggests that the intention was actually an ironic reference to aforementioned art exhibition CARA (Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation). I suggest that CACA’s choice of name too tells of its aim both to undermine and praise this seminal show, and with it, CACA’s affirmative aim, literally, to give Chicano/a art a face (Spanish: *cara*). As McKenna argues,

Through its name alone, then, CACA successfully situated itself within a larger political and aesthetic context. Furthermore, by this ironic citation, CACA can also be said to participate in the process of resistance and affirmation, that is, in the conscious and unconscious need to remember, to stave off the dread of loss. Such remembering is essential to for all ‘people globally who fight for liberation,’ bell hooks notes. Writing about the dread she feels at the prospect of being ‘unable

³²⁶ A review in the *Los Angeles Times* describes CACA as “a loose affiliation of some 100 men and women who have been actively buying art since the 1980s” (Knight 2000, no pag.).

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

to resist, afraid to resist domination,’ hooks says: ‘This dread returns me to memory, to places and situations I often want to forget ... Remembering makes us subjects in history. It is dangerous to forget.’ (hooks 1991: 54, N. 5; in McKenna 252)

This designation continued, in its own, unique way, the legacy of CACA. Moreover, the name was bound to create a distinction for the group, something which, due to its provocative potential, both playfully connected the group to and critically interrogated traditions – CACA’s own “serious” activist lineage in a gesture of comic relief as to “stave off [such] dread of loss” (McKenna), and, at a more general level, the mainstream’s notions of “high art.” All the while, names such as CACA and Asco reflected a willingness, and perhaps also a desire, to provoke. However, RRAFF’s relevant participation in such a process of “resistance and affirmation” may not take into account that a film festival is a more popular kind of platform depending on a broader kind of consent on behalf of audiences, sponsors, and other stakeholders.

Another aspect also shedding a critical light on *lo rasquache*’s potential as a group building term corresponds to Judith Butler’s observation according to which “the expectation of self-determination that self-naming arouses is paradoxically contested by the historicity of the term itself” (1993: 228). This statement in fact returns us to *lo rasquache*’s ambivalent legacy of re-appropriation by first wave Chicano/a cultural activists. In this context, the term came to be firmly rooted in Manichean terms: us against them, white-mainstream-established against ethnic-vernacular-outsider art. When applied to a film festival created in 2004, however, the term risks situating the cultural productions featured at RRAFF – films, art, and more – in accordance with older paradigms, positioning them too as working class, outsider’s art. But this impression fails to accurately depict the situation of many U.S. Latino/a cultural producers today, who, despite the many continuing shortcomings for ethnic film professionals, increasingly have become part of the middle class while working both within and without the mainstream industries. Similarly, RRAFF, for its long-term sustainability, must reconcile its embrace of *lo rasquache*’s improvisational and outsider aspects with its equally strong need to professionalize, consolidate and create alliances with the cultural establishment and the state. One could of course point at the term’s versatility and flexibility as I myself have done previously. However, here *lo rasquache* is symptomatic of an arguably more encompassing fallacy, the legacy of which RRAFF, when drawing on *rasquachismo*, vicariously shares in despite its own openness to the diversity of the Chicano/a-U.S. Latino/a experience, namely, the first wave Chicano arts movement’s historical adherence to a “monolithic ‘imagined working class community’ where differences around gender, sexual preferences, race, and class were largely subjugated” (Dávila 2008: 31). Arlene Dávila has pointed at Tomás Ybarra-Frausto’s (Ybarra-Frausto & Dear 1999) critical review of Chicano arts activism, including his own position in it, according to which back in the day, “[activists] had to create this imagined community that was whole and holistic, and total and energized” (30). Here, Ybarra-Frausto acknowledges the failure to recognize middle-class contributions to the movement as part of a certain blindness towards the overall complexity and diversity of the Chicano/a experience, despite the potential both qualities had to offer for the struggle, not least of all in terms of building community. However, back then, as Ybarra-Frausto underlines,

[w]e were very proud that we were workers, whether in the fields, factories, or sweatshops. We also had people from the middle class and elites, but I think that we romanticized the working class.

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

Now, slowly, we are recognizing that many of our friends who came from the middle class are very much part of the Chicano movement. But back then, they had to play a game – that they came from the working class – to belong to this massive mobilization. A recognition being made by the new cohort [of the 1990s, A.R.] is that the middle class and the elites can contribute if you mobilize them. If you can find those things that all classes can fight for, this makes for a stronger struggle. Many of the cohort of the sixties are now quite well esconded in the middle class. What matters is how you use your privileges for the good of the most fragile and most needy. (ibid.)

Ybarra-Frausto's candid self-critique also helps us understand how *lo rasquache*, in its usage by the festival, both fits and obstructs the utopian project of building community with other U.S. Latinos/as. Part of RRAFF's own subversion has been to employ the term in a way that not only counters the ongoing marginalization of Latino/a films and experiences in the mainstream media but also the homogenizing tendencies of Chicano/a activism of old. RRAFF has done so by opening up the *rasquache* paradigm to encompass the diversity of artistic articulations in conjunction with the U.S. Latino/a experience. And yet, contrary to Ybarra Frausto's revision of older positions by making a case for transnational *latinidad*, RRAFF's essentializing strategy, mirrored by its limitation to U.S. *latinidad*, inevitably echoes that of the early movement days – despite all its nuanced programming.

RRAFF's stance is no doubt owed to pragmatic considerations as to its own limited resources and to its loyalty to local Latino/a filmmakers. One cannot help but wonder whether the resourcefulness of Latin American filmmaking such as Tijuana's artistic communities discussed in the previous chapter were not a valuable resource to tap, particularly in regard to inspiring visions that do not prioritize Hollywood access. After all, *lo rasquache*, with its roots both in Mexican and Mexican American vernacular cultures and working class sensibilities could be seen as a term to create unity – and, importantly, also in regard to Los Angeles' based filmmakers' frequent fixation on Hollywood access. This thought also takes into account that RRAFF's sole focus on a nationally defined *latinidad* does not always do justice to the realities of U.S. Latino/a filmmakers' growing transnational mobility. A case which illustrates this point is RRAFF regular and 2013 trailblazer honoree Kenneth Castillo, a Chicano from Wilmington, California, who has made some of his films in Mexico. Other aforementioned examples are Jesús S. Treviño's *Raíces de Sangre* (1978) and Alex Rivera's *Sleep Dealer* (2008).

One last example for *rasquache*'s difficulties with establishing RRAFF's "bridging" project is the term's lacking rapport beyond Mexican and Chicano/a communities. Here it seems that RRAFF's creators risked alienating possible contributors from circles where the designation *rasquache* is either lesser known or may wrongly signal exclusion, even though the organizers were indeed aware of this dilemma, and, until 2010, somewhat kept the risk in check by always referring to U.S. Latinos/as in the festival title. While the festival's founding edition in 2004 placed its leanings to the university first, calling it the "Luckman U.S. Latino Film Video Festival" (in reference to the venue at CSULA's Luckman Theatre), after the 2010 move to Pasadena, the subtitle "Festival of the U.S. Latino Experience in Film and Art" was dropped and the festival proper renamed "Reel Rasquache Art & Film Festival." That year, the motto ("Latino Next") still made explicit reference to Latinos/as, if not specifically from the U.S. since, that year, RRAFF embraced a more inclusive focus as to further underline its solidarity with immigrants, which was also inspired by the controversial racial profiling practices in Arizona and a number of other states. In 2011, the festival's second year off-campus, "Latino/a"

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

was entirely dropped, and also in 2012 when the festival was first hosted at CASA 0101. It may be possible to attribute this change to the festival's having come into its own, having grown in reputation and self-confidence, and to the fact that the new venue made such references largely redundant. However, these nuances were harder to decipher for filmmakers outside the realm of Los Angeles' cultural scene. In 2012, there was a telling incident involving Boston based, Dominican American filmmaker Ramón Hamilton. Upon receiving RRAFF's Best Feature Award for his immigration drama *Smuggled*, Hamilton impishly admitted to his previous ignorance as to the semantics of *lo rasquache* but promised to fully embrace the attribute in the future, and the more so after discovering the many parallels between his improvisational, dramatic feature and the term's association with working with limited means. On a more serious note, during our conversation following another screening of *Smuggled* at SFLFF later in 2012, Hamilton pointed out that prior to the film's submission to RRAFF, locating the festival online had actually posed a challenge due to its unusual name. This episode reflects RRAFF's need to balance its ambition to create a meaningful identity and brand that resonates with its a distinctively Southwestern Chicano/a cultural and artistic legacy while remaining attuned to Latino/a communities outside the Chicano/a-Mexican and local Latino/a spectrum for the sake of its pan-Latino/a community building project.

In conclusion, by drawing on and re-signifying the cultural trope and sensibility of *lo rasquache*, RRAFF has audaciously and innovatively (and one could say: in ways doing justice to the *rasquache* spirit) made use of a term that provides a meaningful linkage to different local and trans-local Latino/a-Chicano/a activist traditions while articulating its own pan-U.S. Latino/a activism, one that is not afraid to confront old shortcomings while embracing an utopian vision. Lastly, this task also echoes Judith Butler's pronouncement, according to which

[w]e no more create from nothing the political terms that come to represent our 'freedom' than we are responsible for the terms that carry the pain of social injury. And yet, neither of those terms are as a result any less necessary to work and rework within political discourse. (229)

5. Resource: Hollywood. RRAFF's awards politics

Film awards have always been an integral part of RRAFF, which further underscores their important role in connection with the festival's distinctive brand of activism. RRAFF's film awards capitalize on the festival's geographic proximity to Hollywood with both its economic and symbolic repercussions. This means that RRAFF engages in a critical conversation with the hegemonic power of the industry, namely, the function/s of Hollywood, first of all, as a "dream factory" (hence, its symbolic level of cinematic representations) (re)producing narratives that have traditionally excluded Latinos/as and other minorities, or portrayed them negatively and stereotypically; and, second, as "the industry" (hence, its economic level of opportunities), in other words, both as a traditional hub for film professionals and a desired destination for Latino/a defined film professionals.

These deliberations also take into account how, accordingly, across generations of Latino/a cinema, and with different possibilities at their disposal to achieve these ends, filmmakers and other film professionals have positioned themselves according to whether they see Hollywood as a destination

or as foil. Rather than regarding these two positions as either-or alternatives, I regard them as two extreme points on a scale delineating a substantial in-between grey zone. Obviously, the Digital Age has lowered the bar both on production and distribution, opening up new possibilities for filmmakers to experiment and to disseminate their work through various different channels, as I have mentioned the earlier film festival historical and historical overview chapters. But as I have also shown previously, particularly for those working in narrative feature formats and envisioning more encompassing audiences, both cross-audience appeal and studio involvement remain key factors.³²⁷ Foil or destination? In regard to a given work, respective tendencies may depend on the level of “independence” from the industry, namely, the extent to which productions were made in relative autonomy from industry resources (such as studio involvement at the production or distribution level).³²⁸

Another important criterion, however, is one’s relationship towards Hollywood’s traditional politics of representation (which, for younger generations of film professionals, frequently entails a critical overt or covert examination of the industry’s frequently ambivalent portrayal of non-white characters on the one hand, and the likewise at times ambivalent legacy of early Chicano/a-Latino/a feature film on the other hand) and its commercial logic prioritizing entertainment and box office success. In regard to the latter, I argue that even in the case of works having been made without studio support, they may still resonate with their creators’ desire for access to the industry, as is the case with a number of webisodes which were created to enhance the producers’ portfolios for pitching reasons. I do not advance this argument to imply that these filmmakers were not at the same time expressing their own artistic agendas while making important contributions to a critical and empowering appreciation of *latinidad*. However, as my examples will show, my discussion must take into account how RRAFF’s awards politics seek to balance the continuing all-pervasiveness of Hollywood’s logic of mainstreaming and commerce and an agenda that also seeks to celebrate Latino/a film art and affirm Latino/a culture, educate and build community. In ways that reflect RRAFF’s situation in a specific politics of place (marked by Latinos/as’ Hollywood proximity and striving for access), one leading discourse here is a celebration of the crossover potential of many an awardee. To once again provide a definition, there is Scott M. Baugh’s characterization of “crossover” as a “film or other item of cultural production that finds commercial success across a number of audiences, frequently appealing to a niche audience while at the same time remaining accessible to a mass or popular audience” (Baugh 2012: 53). This potential is also recognized in phrases such as “to break into the industry” or the

³²⁷ Unless, of course, one has been able to find their niche market, such as Robert Rodriguez or Miguel Arteta, as I have shown earlier on. All the while, this is not to say that the working conditions for documentary filmmaking are much easier. Even renowned documentary filmmaker Lourdes Portillo, who has been able to work at George Lucas’s Skywalker Ranch to edit a number of her films, has talked about the toll filmmaking took on her financial situation (Fregoso 1998:37).

³²⁸ My observations resonate with Bordwell & Thompson (1997)’s observation according to which all types of “[f]ilm production require[e] some division of labor, but how that division is carried out, and how power is allocated to various roles, differs from project to project. The process of film production thus reflects different conceptions of what a film is, and the finished film inevitably bears traces of the mode of production within which it was created.” (28, my emphases) In this context, they have argued that “independence” functions as a mere “catchall label” (26) which may encompass a number of different production modes. They include not only specific cases of “individual production and collective production” (26) as in the case of Robert Rodriguez’s *El Mariachi* (cf. 25) but also “small-budget filmmaking modeled on the studio mode” (26) such as African American filmmaker Spike Lee (cf. 24). In order to realize his agenda to affirm and critically discuss marginalized African American subjectivities, one is to infer that working in the independent mode enabled Lee and other minority filmmakers in ways Rosen (1992) has argued making it possible “to maintain essentially complete control over their projects. This is critical to ensure that the filmmaker’s unique aesthetic vision or point of view is not lost to the cutting-room floor.” (242)

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

search for a “Latino/a formula” (a term conversationally used by filmmaker Patrick Pérez and other attending filmmakers on various occasions at RRAFF 2012) combining cultural specificity and such crossover appeal.

In this vein, RRAFF features, on the one hand, a number of career awards, including tribute films; here, one or a number of key works may stand in a synecdochic relationship to its director if the director him- or herself is not the recipient of an award.³²⁹ One key argument here is that career awardees provide symbolic capital – bestowed to them through their previously accumulated visibility, renown and success in the industry or in the world of art and independent film – to RRAFF’s overarching educational and culturally affirmative, and particularly, to its community building projects. In regard to the latter, awardees serve as paragons and role models; the festival, but also sponsors and other collaborators and audiences all benefit from the presence of an already “recognized” star owing to his or her lifetime achievements and the added visibility thus lent to the festival’s mission, the collaborators’ support, and the Latino/a experience.

RRAFF’s competitive awards, on the other hand, are intrinsically connected to RRAFF’s nurture project. This means that these awards provide symbolic capital (recognition) to awardees by the festival’s geographical and symbolical proximity to Hollywood; moreover, competitive awards also bestow symbolic capital to RRAFF, since sponsors seek to support U.S. Latino/a filmmaking and the dissemination of U.S. Latino/a vistas as part of their own educational and multicultural agendas. Due to the fact that competitive awards occupy an intersection between RRAFF’s tapping of Hollywood and education / nurture as symbolic resources, they will be discussed more at length in a subsequent, separate section immediately before the chapter dealing with education as a resource.

Accordingly, RRAFF’s awards ceremonies serve an important function as highlights and conclusions of each festival edition. This is when both career and competitive awards are presented, usually with honorees present. They draw attention to sponsors; here, the director’s expressions of acknowledgment and gratitude form an important part of the awards ceremony ritual. For audiences, too, they may prove to be highly gratifying events; in addition to the culturally affirming, educational, and community enhancing aspects, there is a certain aura connected to the celebrities honored. And yet, RRAFF’s overarching project is both curtailed by its strategic essentialism on the one hand, and enhanced, on the other hand, by a focus on the multifacetedness of U.S. Latino/a lived experiences, identities, and creative expressions in audio-visual media and art.

All the while, and as has already been discussed in the festival theoretical chapter, awards as a festival feature should not be taken for granted and in fact have been a controversial feature among some organizers.³³⁰ Awards may not only generate prestige and recognition, as well as enhance a festival’s more long-term goals but they could, potentially, also contest or even undermine the efforts concerning the latter, since the proximity of Hollywood enhances the urgency for recognition that not only increases the awards’ symbolic capital but also the level of competition, particularly among

³²⁹ In particular, this is the case with *Raíces de Sangre* (Mexico 1976/78, Jesús S. Treviño). Here, the printed tribute in the catalog honored the entire work of its director.

³³⁰ In this context, Fischer has referred to another festival programmer’s warnings against the high cost and other challenges (the jury and its fairness, and branding both in terms of ““uniqueness”” and awards’ relationship with a festival’s mission; Highsted 2009:48, quoted in Fischer 74).

contestants for competitive awards and thus challenges RRAFF's promotion of a sheltered workshop atmosphere, as I will show in conjunction with the 2012 Best Webisode award. While the symbolic power of awards may resonate particularly within the relatively small and intimate community of U.S. Latino/a film professionals, for the jury, the designation of awardees may prove a frequently daunting task demanding fairness, excellent negotiating skills, persistence, tact, and discretion.

5.1 Career film awards

In the more than ten years of its existence, RRAFF has created four different kinds of career-related awards for film professionals. The three continued categories are "Trailblazer," "Pioneer," and "Career Achiever" (henceforth TA, PA, and CAA, respectively). Another category, "Innovator," was continued as TA after 2004; its only awardee was filmmaker Miguel Arteta (2004). Furthermore, there are the festival's tribute films, which I take to represent their directors, particularly in 2004 and 2006, when they stand alone. I will first shortly characterize RRAFF's career film awards, categories I regard as at to some extent pragmatic and contextual since they also reflect RRAFF's various adaptations to its organizational and stakeholder development, which meant that in later editions, it increasingly honored industry insiders (Rüling 2009:60).

Dedicated to the artist "whose career embodies the tremendous scope and rich diversity of the Latino experience and historical contributions in the U.S" (*RRAFF 2010*: 4), the Career Achiever Award (CAA) is frequently associated with seniority and a long-standing experience as well as substantial visibility in the world of filmmaking. Attributes like "tremendous scope" and "rich diversity" point to RRAFF's vision of *latinidad* as far-reaching and multi-faceted; "historical contributions" add a diachronic dimension that also underscored RRAFF's ambition to draft an alternative genealogy of Latino/a film professionals as to draw attention to Latinos/as' in fact long standing presence in U.S. cinema (this includes actors and actresses whose careers predated or at least took off before the emergence of U.S. Latino/a cinema in the 1970s, such as Lupita Tovar and Carmen Zapata; seminal figures in the emerging Chicano/a-Latino/a film such as Luis Valdez, Moctesuma Esparza and Lupe Ontiveros; Venezuelan American producer Betty Kaplan).

While the Pioneer and Trailblazer Awards (PA and TA) resemble each other semantically, they have different functions. "Honor[ing] an individual whose contributions embrace multiple expressive forms to enrich the field of professional, educational and entertainment media opportunities for U.S. Latino communities" (*RRAFF 2010*: 5), the PA was frequently used in order to recognize renowned and long established film professionals either lesser known than CAA awardees and / or occupying a more specialized or less commodified domain within the field of Latino/a cultural production. Examples are Lourdes Portillo (mostly working in documentaries), Sylvia Morales (documentaries; television); Evelina Fernández (actress; scriptwriter) and Tony Plana and Enrique Castillo (actors).

Finally, the TA, a category introduced in RRAFF's fourth year, 2007, acknowledges the achievements of "an individual whose achievements in film/video advance new and challenging understandings of U.S. Latino perspectives and representations." (*RRAFF 2010*: 5). Here, the attribute "new and challenging" recognizes the awardee's association with innovation; some TA awardees were younger than those honored in the other categories (Kenneth Castillo and particularly Wilmer Valderrama); or wor-

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

king in professional domains not immediately associated with stardom's symbolic capital as would be acting or directing (Ligiah Villalobos). However, their diachronic line-up reveals this category to be the most heterogeneous in regard to professions (Franc. Reyes: filmmaker, choreographer; Villalobos: scriptwriter; Teresa Yenque: actress in television, film and theater actress); as well as cultural-national origins; most of all this suggests that the TA was also introduced as a third award to be able to better accommodate the sheer diversity of Latino/a film production.

5.1.1 Ethnic-cultural and regional diversity

The following table gives an overview of RRAFF's career awards during the first ten years of its existence, its twenty awardees in the film career categories, as well as a number of tribute films. The festival editions I attended in the course of my fieldwork were 2011 and 2012.

Table: RRAFF's career awards and tribute films, 2004-14³³¹ (including ethnic-national origins)

YEAR AND THEME (IF APPLICABLE)	TRAIL BLAZER (TA); BEFORE 2007: INNOVATOR (IA)	CAREER ACHIE- VER (CA)	PIONEER (PA)	TRIBUTE FILM(S)	VISION AWARD (VISUAL ARTS)
2004	Miguel Arteta (Puerto Rican born)	Lupe Ontiveros (Chicana)	Evelina Fernán- dez (Chicana)	<i>¡Alam brista!</i> (USA 1977 / Director's Cut 2004) Robert M. Young ("Anglo" American)	--
2005	--	M o c t e s u m a Esparza (Chica- no)	--	<i>Only Once in a Lifetime</i> (USA 1979) Director: Alejan- dro Grattán (M exican); Produ- cer: Esparza (Chicano)	--
2006: Raíces	--	Lupita Tovar (Mexican / U.S.)	Lourdes Portillo (Chicana)	<i>Raíces de sangre</i> (J. S. Trevi- ño; Mexico 1976/78)	--
2007	Vilmer Valderra- ma (U.S. born/ Ve- nezuelan)	--	Tony Plana (Cuban Ameri- can)	--	--
2008: Historias	Franc. Reyes (Puerto Rican)	--	Sylvia Morales (Chicana)	--	--

³³¹ Sources: RRAFF Catalogs 2004-12 (print); for RRAFF 2013: "RRAFF 2013 Program and Awardees;" FB posting 05/13/2013; www.facebook.com/ReelRasquache/photos/; for RRAFF 2014: "RRAFF 2014 Awardees" FB posting 04/26/2014; www.facebook.com/ReelRasquache).

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

YEAR AND THEME (IF APPLICABLE)	TRAIL BLAZER (TA); BEFORE 2007: INNOVATOR (IA)	CAREER ACHIE- VER (CA)	PIONEER (PA)	TRIBUTE FILM(S)	VISION AWARD (VISUAL ARTS)
2009: Reel Visions	--	Luis Valdez (Chicano)	--	<i>I am Joaquín</i> (USA 1969); <i>Zoot Suit</i> (USA 1982); both: Luis Val- dez, (Chicano)	--
2010: Latino Next	Ligiah Villalo- bos (Mexican)	Betty Kaplan (Venezuelan and U.S.)	Enrique Castillo (Chicano)	--	Eloy Torres (Chicano)
2011: Harnessing the Vision	Gabriela Taglia- vini (Argentinian born)	--	--	--	Margaret Garcia (Chicana)
2012: Home for the Future	Teresa Yenque (Peruvian born)	--	Chris Weitz (Mexican des- cent)	--	Patricia Krebs (Argentinian)
10th Anniver- sary	Kenneth Castillo (Chicano)	Carmen Zapata (Mexican-Arg entinian parent- age)	Pepe Serna (Chicano)	--	Juan Solís (Chicano)
2014	Douglas Spain (Guatemalan American)	Carlos Carrasco (Panamanian American)	Marlene Forte (Cuban Ameri- can)	--	Yolanda Gonzá- lez (Chicana)

As the table indicates, in terms of ethnic-national backgrounds, RRAFF’s ambitious awards politics project covered a wide cross-section of the Latino/a filmmaking community in the U.S.

Between 2004 and 2013, Chicanos/as and Mexicans / Mexican Americans constituted more than half of RRAFF’s altogether twenty-three career awardees at the time: Thirteen. There were nine Chicanos/as; two Mexican nationals (Tovar and Villalobos), one Mexican-Argentinian (Zapata), and there was Chris Weitz, of Mexican origin by way of his grandmother, Lupita Tovar. With the exception of Robert M. Young’s *¡Alambrista!*, all tribute films were associated with Chicano/a directors, with the exception of *Only Once in a Lifetime*, produced by a Chicano and directed by a Mexican.

These numbers are a reflection of how a RRAFF’s career awards politics were slightly biased towards the Mexican-Chicano/a experience. Its Mexican-Chicano/a leanings tie in with RRAFF’s lineage to local historical Latino/a film and other cultural activism and with the historical predominance of Mexican (descended) people particularly in the U.S. Southwest. Here, enduring local networks were another decisive criterion (not included in my table) – most frequently in terms of historical film and cultural activism, a locally based Latino/a film community; and on biographical grounds. Along with locally raised Chicano/a nominees such as Sylvia Morales or Evelina Fernández, both Cuban American Tony Plana and Venezuelan American Wilmer Valderrama both had spent a considerable part of their youth in Los Angeles; Plana, who has been a regular in Hispanic Hollywood and frequently played Chicano or Mexican characters in film or on television ever since³³², is also a doyen of the

³³² Examples include *Zoot Suit* (USA 1981, Luis Valdez); *Born in East L.A.* (USA 1987, Cheech Marin); *Lone Star* (USA 1996, John Sayles); *Ugly Betty* (ABC, 2006-2010).

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

local Latino/a theater scene, as were and are Carmen Zapata, Evelina Fernández, and Enrique Castillo. RRAFF's focus on locality also meant that there were fewer nominees who were associated with other parts of the country, such as Miguel Arteta, born in Puerto Rico but raised in different parts of the U.S.; his controversial but acclaimed *Star Maps*, set in Hollywood, had been a seminal contribution to Latino/a cinema; Teresa Yenque (Peruvian born) has starred in countless smaller television roles and is committed to Spanish language theater in her adopted home, New York City; so is Franc. Reyes (Puerto Rican); both are both based in New York City. All the while, the fact that Franc. Reyes, Wilmer Valderrama, and Carlos Carrasco (Panamanian American) were the only Afro-Latino nominees between 2004 and 2013 somewhat challenges RRAFF's claim as to diversity. Lastly, *¡Alambrista!*; RRAFF's first ever tribute film, emphasized the relevance of cinema featuring multi-faceted and respectful representations of Latino/a themes and characters Latino/a themed film regardless of the director's own ethnic-national affiliations.

RRAFF's awards were defined by its community building project across national and cultural divides and across the occasional competition among Latino/a film professionals. Also considering Hollywood's casting politics traditional disadvantaging of Mexican American actors, particularly those with more mestizo/a features and the frequent casting of "European" looking actors as Mexicans (cf. Beltrán 2009: 129, as discussed in the historical overview chapter), as well as the Chicana filmmaking community's grievances articulated back in the day of the "Frida *Fracaso*,"³³³ RRAFF's championing of Mexican and Chicano/a talent in its awards politics proved to be gratifying for its local, Chicano/a film professional and audience stakeholders.³³⁴ All the while, as I have previously argued, RRAFF's drawing on Mexican / Chicano/a popular culture, including the usage of "rasquache" as part of its designation, also ran the risk of inadvertently excluding other non-Chicano/a Latinos/as.

5.1.2 Industry vs. independence

In its mission statement, RRAFF's awards politics are called a "forum to acknowledge the contributions of Latinos in the entertainment industry and the Arts" (*RRAFF 2010*: 4), something that I have previously described as Latino/a film professionals' many negotiations within a range between seeing Hollywood as a desired destination or a foil. It is through its awards politics that RRAFF acknowl-

³³³ Discussed in the historical overview chapter, Fn. 164.

³³⁴ That the Chicano/a community felt shortchanged vis-à-vis other U.S. Latino/a film professionals has also been articulated by some of RRAFF's stakeholders. Bel Hernandez, RRAFF 2011 co-director and long-time sponsor via *Latin Heat*, called the mass media out for their continued dissemination of stereotypical depictions of Mexicans and Chicanos/as; but she also criticized the lack of solidarity coming from other U.S. Latinos/as: "It's like, 'Oh, but I am not Mexican, I am Cuban, or Puerto Rican.' You know, it's 'better than'" (B. Hernandez Interview 2011). She cited the example of comedian-actor George Lopez as one few in the public eye giving the word "Mexican" an affirmative spin by "ma[king] people comfortable with the word. He's a Mexican, and he banters that word around – like, that's what he is, and he is not making any apologies for it." Another sponsor, Disney's Dr. Efraín Fuentes, himself a Chicano who grew up in East Los Angeles and Watts, criticized the lack of presence of Mexican Americans in the industry, with the current wave of visible U.S. Latino/a actors often not being Chicanos/as but people like Zoe Saldana (Dominican-Puerto Rican), noting that "[t]here is something about the East Coast Afro Latino that gets more coverage." Fuentes argued that while actor Danny Trejo was one of the few visible Chicano/a actors, Trejo confirmed the mainstream's widely held prejudices against Mexican Americans "because he has the sort of persona that says homeboy, [...] deviant, [...] criminal" (E. Fuentes Interview 2011). CASA 0101's Josefina López, too, articulated a related observation as to the limited opportunities for Mexicans and Chicanos/as even when a role specifically asked for them: "My criticism is: Why do Spanish and Puerto Ricans get to play Mexicans? Can't we play ourselves?" (J. López Interview 2012).

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

ges the way its honorees – in manifold professions at times more visible, at times behind the scenes, such as filmmaking, producing, cultural consulting, scriptwriting and so forth – have made important contributions to Latino/a representations and stories on the silver screen and paving the way for a new generation of film professionals.

In this vein, RRAFF's awards politics also shone a light on how these exemplary careers had often been marked by attempts to break into the mainstream industry, frequently in supporting positions, while also embarking on other projects that little by little carved out a niche for unfolding U.S. Latino/a cinema.

Thus, on its tenth anniversary, RRAFF honored pioneering Latina actress **Carmen Zapata** (*1927-2014; CAA 2013). Zapata had started out at a time when opportunities available for ethnic minorities in the film and television industries were extremely limited. In its tribute, RRAFF holds Zapata up as a role model without sugar-coating her sometimes ambivalent role between innovation and mainstream accommodation, working in the U.S. entertainment industry in the 1950s and '60s when "the search for ethnic support roles proved both difficult and unfulfilling" ("Carmen Zapata"; sefija.com).³³⁵ Accordingly, Zapata's (temporary) strategy to Anglicize her name in order to increase her hiring appeal is mentioned in RRAFF's tribute as one sad low. However, in the next decade, she received more career opportunities such as supporting roles on television and occasionally, film, "roles in literally hundreds of dramas and comedies throughout the Seventies and Eighties."³³⁶ They also included the sitcom *Viva Valdez* (1976) and the role of mayor "Doña Luz" of *Villa Alegre*, PBS's pioneering bilingual children's program (1973-1980). The latter made Zapata a household name among a younger generation of viewers; the tribute also recognized the way she used this considerable crossover appeal to the end of promoting many more education projects.³³⁷ Finally, the tribute also acknowledged Zapata's involvement in a milestone of Latina film activism when the daughter of an Argentine mother lent her voice as a narrator to *Las Madres: The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo* (1985), Lourdes Portillo and Susana Blaustein Muñoz's Academy Award nominated documentary about the fight of the mothers of Argentina's "disappeared" for justice.

Zapata's struggles were still all too familiar for the cohort of Latino/a actors and actresses coming to be associated with the rise of Chicano/a-Latino/a cinema. One example is **Lupe Ontiveros**. The fact that Ontiveros was RRAFF's first awardee in the particularly prestigious, "senior" CAA category underlines that in the face of the industry's continuing underrepresentation of female talent, RRAFF's awards politics also promote gender equity.³³⁸ In the mainstream, Ontiveros moved on from miniscu-

³³⁵ Quotations from the Zapata obituary at sefija.com. RRAFF co-director Ángela María Ortíz's sefija.com had reprinted all career award tribute texts; these texts are no longer available online. The obituary is based on the RRAFF 2013 tribute.

³³⁶ The tribute lists "*Bonanza* and *Marcus Welby, M.D.* to *Wonder Woman*, *L.A. Law*, *Dr Quinn, Medicine Woman*, and many, many others," as well as a role in the "box-office bonanza *Sister Act* (1992) and its sequel" ("Carmen Zapata"; sefija.com).

³³⁷ One example among the many listed is Zapata's co-creation of the Bilingual Association in 1973, which brought Spanish language theater to Southern California and the Unified Los Angeles community school system ("Carmen Zapata"; sefija.com.).

³³⁸ Not only has RRAFF promoted the gender equity by featuring ten female and ten male career awardees (plus two more males by means of its tribute films) between 2004 and 2013, its very first edition, too, made a point of using two of its three career awards in order to honor women, Lupe Ontiveros and Evelina Fernández.

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

le and extra appearances in 1970s television to supporting roles in film and television in the 1980s and 1990s, such as in *The Goonies* (USA 1984, Richard Donner), and *As Good As It Gets* (USA 1997, James L. Brooks). Famously, she liked to make light of the frequent typecasting she was subjected to in mainstream productions by pointing out that she had been asked to reprise the role of maid or housekeeper at “last 150” times (Baugh 2012: 199).

In the world of the budding Latino/a feature film of the 1980s and after, however, Ontiveros was to become a fixture. Initially, few roles provided her with the opportunity to play more full-fledged characters in 1980s “Hispanic Hollywood,” whose focus was predominantly on male protagonists³³⁹; one notable exception is Nacha, in Gregory Nava’s *El Norte* (1983), a working class Chicana sympathetic to the situation of the two Indigenous Guatemalan refugee protagonists. In 1990s Latino/a cinema, Ontiveros increasingly shone in signature, if still supporting roles, such as that of sinister Doña Rosa in Severo Pérez and Paul Espinosa’s adaptation of the seminal Chicano/a classic, *And the Earth Did Not Swallow Him* (USA 1994) and that of Yolanda Saldivar, fan manager turned murderess in Gregory Nava’s biopic *Selena* (USA 1997). In the 2000s, Ontiveros finally “arrived with a bang” (RRAFF 2004: 4) and increasingly secured more complex roles in independent as well as in mainstream cinema and television productions. They included indie *Chuck & Buck* (USA 2000), by her 2004 co-awardee Miguel Arteta; two Latino/a films, *Luminarias* (USA 2000, directed by José Valenzuela and written by Ontiveros’ 2004 co-awardee, Evelina Fernández, who also starred in the film) and, of course, Patricia Cardoso’s Sundance and art house success, *Real Women Have Curves* (2002), providing Ontiveros with one her most memorable roles as Carmen García, the feisty matriarch opposite the film’s protagonist, her younger daughter, Ana (Honduran American actress America Ferrara in her breakthrough role). Their spirited love-hate relationship forms one of the central plots of the film and won both actresses Special Jury Prizes upon its Sundance premiere (Baugh 2012: 224).

The way RRAFF kept track of the symbolic capital that its awardees bestowed upon the festival becomes evident by the way later festival catalogs also mentioned her involvement in the popular HBO drama *Desperate Housewives*, a role that made Lupe Ontiveros even more widely known after her nomination in 2004 (RRAFF 2010: 5). Ontiveros was held up as a role model for a generation of Latino/a actors and actresses conquering the mainstream industries in the 1970s and ’80s despite limited and limiting mainstream roles available to ethnic minorities. This experience, and her participation in the new, emerging Latino/a cinema of the 1980s and after, particularly connects her to fellow awardees **Tony Plana** (PA 2007), **Enrique Castillo** (PA 2010) and **Pepe Serna** (PA 2013). As to her long-time dependency on small mainstream television and film roles, there were also parallels to Peruvian born **Teresa Yenque** (TA 2012), even though the latter was geographically and culturally removed from the emerging Chicano Cinema.

Furthermore, RRAFF’s career awards also celebrated successful players in the industry. Director, producer and film entrepreneur **Moctesuma Esparza** (CAA 2005) was honored as a film professional who bridged pioneering 1970s Chicano/a-Latino/a film activism and Latino/a filmmaking’s entrance into the studio system. In this vein, the tribute continued to highlight Esparza’s simultaneous championing of the Latino/a experience and successful crossing into the mainstream, such as when he was

³³⁹ Here, it is a telling detail that Ontiveros was cast as the protagonist’s mother in at least two instances, in Cheech Marin’s *Born in East L.A.* (1987) and Luis Valdez’s *Zoot Suit* when she was only a couple of years older than her respective screen sons, played by Cheech Marin and Daniel Valdez.

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

lauded for his “stellar contributions to U.S. media” by creating “a body of work that is not only extensive, but a national treasure.” RRAFF thus renewed Latino/a film’s demands for participation in national mainstream film institutions and its ongoing goals to “creat[e] a place of dignity and respect in U.S. media for the voices of Latino communities” (*RRAFF 2005*: 6). On the one hand, RRAFF’s tribute acknowledged Esparza’s key role as a producer-director-entrepreneur³⁴⁰ in conjunction with Latino/a film from the Chicano Movement’s documentary formats to Hispanic Hollywood. On the other hand, the festival also recognized Esparza’s crossing from the more marginal label of Latino/a or “ethnic” to “independent” filmmaker-producer, as mention of his involvement in founding Sundance Institute and his role as producer of Robert Redford’s *The Milagro Beanfield War* (USA 1988) underscore.

Esparza’s many occupations are meticulously listed – “award-winning filmmaker, producer, entertainment executive and entrepreneur” (*RRAFF 2005*: 6), and a number of productions including *Only Once in a Lifetime* (Alejandro Grattan, 1979), *Selena* (Gregory Nava, 1997), *Cinco Vidas* (a collaboration with José Luis Ruiz 1973), and *Agueda Martínez – Our People, Our Country* (Esperanza Vásquez, 1977). However, unfortunately, Esparza’s exact function regarding these films is not made clear, leading anyone less familiar with his work to perceive him to be the director. Similarly, Esparza is described to have contributed footage to the seminal documentary *Requiem 29* without even mentioning the filmmaker.³⁴¹ While these omissions could be due to a shortage of space or just deemed secondary, they cast the awardee in a somewhat dubious light, and even more so since there is also a reference to a future project, *The Cesar Chavez Story*. This time, both the name of the writer and director are indicated (Luis Valdez). This obfuscation of credentials somewhat undermines RRAFF’s praise of Esparza’s manifold achievements and his dedication to promoting the work of Latino/a film professionals.

After RRAFF’s move into Pasadena’s cinematic, more commercial realm in 2010, RRAFF’s community building project increasingly included Hollywood insiders less immediately associated with the Latino/a film activism of the late 1960s and the 1970s: filmmaker-producer **Betty Kaplan** (CAA 2010); script writer-producer **Ligia Villalobos** (TA 2010); and, one year later, filmmaker **Gabriella Tagliavini** (TA 2011); to be followed by producer-filmmaker **Chris Weitz** (TA 2012).

In a year when RRAFF also emphasized the transnational dimension of its activism as to underscore RRAFF’s solidarity with the immigrant struggle (to be discussed later), Kaplan and Villalobos served as representatives of international Hollywood insiders. RRAFF’s tribute to Kaplan drew attention her binational career, which included stations as a television producer in Venezuela in the 1980s (such as her *Bolívar* miniseries) and more recent work for U.S. mainstream television (*Law & Order; Criminal Intent; Legacy*). Her expert navigation of the industry was also suggested by a body of work channelled through major and independent outlets, among them indie wood’s Miramax/Disney (*Of Love and Shadows*, USA 1994; featuring Antonio Banderas); major distributor Universal (*Doña Bárbara*, Argentina / Spain / USA 1998), public television’s PBS’s Exxon Mobile Masterpiece Theatre (*Almost a Woman*, TV, USA 2001) and Moctesuma Esparza’s Maya Productions (*One Hot Summer*,

³⁴⁰ Companies include Esparza / Katz Productions; Buenavision Telecommunications, Inc., and the Maya Cinemas chain of theaters.

³⁴¹ *Requiem 29* (USA 1971, David García) deals with the Chicano Moratorium against the Vietnam War (1970), which led to the death of Chicano journalist Ruben Salazar.

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

TV, USA 2010). Finally, as to ground her international career in U.S. Latino/a film advocacy, the tribute also mentioned Kaplan's position as Co-Chair of the Director's Guild of America's Latino Committee. The role-model status of Kaplan's co-nominee, **Ligiah Villalobos** (TA), was suggested by way of citing industry outlets *The Hollywood Reporter* and *Billboard Magazine*, which both had named Villalobos "'[o]ne of the 25 Most Powerful and Talented Hispanic Women in the Entertainment Industry'" three years prior (*RRAFF 2010*: 10). The choice of Villalobos also made a point of honoring professionals a little less inside the limelight for their contributions to an advancement of Latino/a cinema and representations. Villalobos had served as Spanish language consultant in successful Hollywood productions such as *Spanglish* (USA 2004, James L. Brooks) and co-producer of Edward James Olmos' historical drama *Walkout* (2006; HBO). In 2010, she was best known for having written and co-produced the immigration-themed social drama *La Misma Luna / Under the Same Moon* (Mexico / U.S.A. 2007; Patricia Riggen), then the highest grossing Spanish language film ever to open in the U.S. (2.6 million USD during its opening weekend) and taking third place of all Mexican imports in regard to its total box office records of about 12.3 million USD (Mejias-Rentas 2008, no pag.). The film's success subsequently encouraged hopes for U.S. distributors' increased interest in U.S. Latino/a themed and Spanish language films.³⁴²

In what was perhaps its most daring awards political move, RRAFF, in 2012, nominated filmmaker, producer and actor **Chris Weitz** (*American Pie*, 1999) in ways that brought him back into the fold as a "prodigal son" of a symbolical Latino/a film community *familia*.³⁴³ His eligibility was for the most part based both on Weitz' then most recent work, *A Better Life* (2011), "a personal film about Latino culture and the heartbreak of illegal immigration" (and a family drama at that), and on his on his kin relations to Lupita Tovar (CAA 2006), his maternal grandmother. There is a significant difference as to how "the personal" is used here when compared to the case of **Sylvia Morales**, the acclaimed first wave Chicana filmmaker honored by RRAFF in 2008 by means of a PA. While Morales was described as someone who had deliberately cast aside her "personal" feminism in order to dedicate herself to the community, or "the political," the personal is used to align Weitz to "the community he almost lost" (*RRAFF 2012*: 19). Here, RRAFF's rhetoric strategy claims not only Weitz but also his multifaceted portfolio, taken to reflect the inherent diversity of *latinidad*:

Chris Weitz' story is big and small, just like the movies he makes. It spans generations in Hollywood and just as many generations of Latino life, here in the U.S. and to the south, and like many Latino men and women today, he finds himself returning to his roots, to rediscover the culture he had almost lost. (19)

RRAFF's tribute thus lays claim on his oeuvre as well, most importantly *American Pie* (1999), the hugely successful³⁴⁴ teenage comedy he co-directed and produced. The tribute takes the film's light-handed "All-Americanness" as a point of departure to boldly normalize *latinidad* by pointing to the

³⁴² As Antonio Mejias-Rentas argues in *Variety.com*, "*La Misma Luna* is the only Spanish-language film among this year's [2008, A.R.] Alma nominees for top films, but that may change as major Hollywood studios show cautious though increased interest in the growing U.S. Latino market." (Mejias-Rentas 2008, no pag.)

³⁴³ A somewhat similar technique was used to claim his grandmother, Lupita Tovar, for the Latino/a filmmaking community "family" in ways considered at more length in my later synchronic discussion of four festival editions.

³⁴⁴ At the box office, *American Pie* made more than USD 230 million nationwide (*RRAFF 2012*: 18).

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

film's emergence, "strangely and happily [, as] the voice of a generation," and its enduring significance, with "characters, situations, and quotes [having] remain[ed] part of young people's culture" (18).

As much as RRAFF's ambitious community building project aims to become as comprehensive as possible, thus reflecting the "dynamic fabric of U.S. Latino/a identities" (*RRAFF 2010*: 4), RRAFF's claim on Weitz also poses questions of privilege since Weitz's own embrace of his ethnic roots is merely optional, despite the fact that it was inspired both by solidarity for immigrants and the love for his grandmother's culture.³⁴⁵ There are similarities to what Marilyn Halter (2000) has described as "ethnic renewal" or "ethnicity by acquisition, [...] the deliberate or conscious choice involved in participation, affiliation, and consumption that remains so full of meaning-making for contemporary ethnics." (196) There is a world of difference between this ethnicity by choice and the self-imposed obligation that united Morales and many of her fellow pioneering Chicano/a film activists. Even though Latinos/as are not considered to be a race, Halter's observations still apply according to which

[v]oluntary ethnicity is discussed only in terms of those of European descent. Historically, non-whites, including African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and Native Americans have been much more bound to their particular ethnoracial group, while the social and political liabilities of such identities have been much greater. Racial difference, even when ambiguous, is still more readily identifiable and less easily a matter of choice in contemporary America." (196)

I want to close this section with a brief glance at the smaller group honored whose achievements lay mostly at the margins of mainstream television and film industries, even though this statement also needs to be qualified somewhat. In addition to Sundance veteran and "indie" director, **Miguel Arteta** (Innovator Award 2004), and to documentary and experimental filmmaker, **Lourdes Portillo** (PA 2006), one of the best known U.S. Latina filmmakers today, who also had a MoMA retrospective dedicated to her work,³⁴⁶ there is also urban filmmaker **Kenneth Castillo**, whose career gives a radically different spin to paradigms such as "destination or foil" or "industry vs. independence" and makes him a role model in conjunction with RRAFF's nurture project. Thriving on improvisation and an economic working style as well as culturally affirming, his work captures the *rasquache* spirit; tellingly, he was nominated in 2013, the festival's tenth anniversary. Castillo, who is mostly self-taught, works independently and whose films frequently are made on a micro budget, has at times opted for self-distribution or video on demand deals ("Kenneth Castillo: Absolutely Independent"; sefijaonline.com). Castillo's resourcefulness has frequently inspired him to shoot his films in Mexico, where production costs are lower and films are eligible for state support.

Castillo's ideological independence from the Hollywood industries is also underlined by the fact that some of his films have conquered the Mexican market and seen theatrical release. Tellingly, he looks up to Robert Rodriguez as a role model, with whom he shares a drive for independence and for ab-

³⁴⁵ In the tribute, Weitz is quoted saying that "'A Better Life was an excuse to learn more about my culture and my city. I did have a sense of something being out there, East of where all the white people live. I wanted to explore the other side of the [inter?]-state – and by the way, the people on that side of the city think they are living in L.A., too.'" (*RRAFF 2012*: 19; tribute "loosely" quotes Willman 2011, no pag.)

³⁴⁶ "Lourdes Portillo: La Cineasta Inquisitiva," Museum of Modern Art, New York City, June 22-30, 2012 ("Lourdes Portillo"; www.moma.org).

solite control over his work,³⁴⁷ as well as a predilection for popular genres. Both his self-confident embrace of lowbrow distribution techniques and refusal to chase the industry are also mirrored in his frequent working in immensely popular, gritty urban drama narrative formats and in web series. In addition, a series of short films released as *The Misadventures of Cholo Chaplin* (2010) is an at times poetic, and times disturbing take on urban Chicano/a life. One short film from the series, *A Day at the Theatre*, was also screened at Cannes. Set in the silent mode, black and white, and featuring actors wearing days of the dead face paint, the film celebrates the glory of urban youth culture but also draws attention to the violence directed against Chicanos/as, such as its take on the Zoot Suit Riots of 1943.

In our conversation at the sidelines of RRAFF 2011, Castillo told me that RRAFF had been the only festival to screen other films of his beside the more “artsy” *Cholo Chaplin* series. All the while, the boxing drama *Counterpunch* (2013) signalled a career milestone, taken on by Canadian-U.S. Lionsgate Studios and later made available through Netflix.

5.1.3 Awards politics according to their synchronic constellations

This section looks at how RRAFF’s three different career awards (and tribute films, if applicable) resonate with one another and with a given festival edition’s motto, and how they reflect the way the festival changed as an organization in line with its environment.

5.1.3.1 First edition (2004): Reinforcing and challenging the boundaries of latinidad: Feminism; familia, essentialisms

RRAFF’s inaugural edition both affirmed and challenged its specific situation in Los Angeles, a city with a high amount of diversity among its Latino/a population yet traditionally primarily associated with a Chicano/a defined film and arts activism. The choice of Chicana actresses **Lupe Ontiveros** (CAA) and **Evelina Fernández** (PA), Puerto Rican born film director and television producer **Miguel Arteta** (IA), as well as its tribute to **Robert M. Young**’s *!Alambrista!*, a film by a non-Latino made on the immigrant experience each made a strong case for the departure from the essentialisms associated with ethno-nationalist, male-centered, and heteronormative traditions of Chicanismo and *latinidad*. First of all, RRAFF’s recognition of two female artists provided a contrast to ongoing underrepresentation of women, and particularly minority women, in the world of mainstream film and television industries but subtly also set the record straight in regard to the male dominance particularly in early Chicano/a and Latino/a cinema. Ontiveros (1942-2012) and Fernández (*1954), separated by half a generation, stand for the different opportunities available to Latinas in the industry. Texas born Ontiveros’s acclaim and her great popularity was to no small degree due to the fact that she was one of the first visible Chicana actresses – indeed, “the patron saint of Chicano (and Latino) cinema” (Noriega

³⁴⁷ In the interview with *Sefija*, whose Angela María Ortiz has called him an “anti-hustler,” Castillo has explained how he deals with investors and their expectations: “Because these are his own personal projects, Castillo is involved from beginning to end—beginning with the financing of the film. And on *Counterpunch [USA / Mexico 2013]* he’s working with just one investor.” I’m honest with all my investors,” he said. “I tell them, ‘This is the worst possible investment you can do, but it’ll be the most fun, it’ll be the sexiest. And I promise at the end of it you’ll have something you can be proud of. Can I guarantee you it will make money or get into the film festivals? No. But I can guarantee what I have control over, and that you’ll be proud of your investment? Absolutely. Will I make it look like more than your investment? Absolutely. I can do that.” (“Kenneth Castillo”; sefjaonline.com)

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

2013, no pag.), someone who brought “depth and breadth” to film and television roles big and small (*RRAFF 2004*: 4). Fernández, in turn, had grown up in the politicized climate of late 1960s and 1970s Los Angeles and embarked on a career spanning both performance and writing in cinematic and theatrical contexts, which provided her with a broader palette of artistic agency: In addition to her celebrated appearances in Latino/a cinema such as *American Me* (1992); *A Million to Juan* (1994; Paul Rodriguez), Fernández, *Zoot Suit*'s original “Della” in its theatrical production, has divided her time between film and the stage. Thus, she starred in and wrote the acclaimed drama *Luminarias* (USA 2000, José Luis Valenzuela); the film script, in turn, was based on her own theatrical play.

RRAFF's nomination of Ontiveros and Fernández, whose female characters often challenged traditional notions of femininity and *la familia*, also makes for a point of connection with their 2004 co-awardee Miguel Arteta. One such example is the complexity Ontiveros conveys in her depiction of *Real Women Have Curves*' matriarch Carmen García; while marriage has conferred to her a superior status, her daughters' curves decrease their respective chances to attain any such nuptial capital. A staunch keeper of the tradition according to which a woman is destined to devote her life fully to her own family and / or family business, Carmen is bound to clash with the budding feminism of her college-bound daughter. As Scott M. Baugh (2012) has pointed out, the film's unresolved ending, too, might set viewers on edge, since “[Ana's] decision to leave for college symbolizes several forms of moving away and rejecting her past and not necessarily reconciling the tension she had previously experienced between independence and cultural-familial ties.” (224) If part of *Real Women*'s controversial potential revolved around the way how it pitted a young woman's yearning for self-determination against the plans of her family, Fernández's *Luminarias*, in turn, centers on a circle of girlfriends – thirty-something urban Latinas who have already made the move towards professional independence. As Rosa Linda Fregoso (2003) has noted, the film privileges female friendship in ways “unrivaled for its reworking of *la familia* into a kinship of women” by strategies such as “[e]mphasizing Chicana solidarity, interiority, and female-to-female relationships.” (89) The film also makes the case for women's sexual self-determination, including the crossing of ethnic lines (Fernández's character, Andrea, has an “Anglo”-Jewish love interest), another topic likely to be frowned upon by more culturally conservative audiences resonating with traditions such as casting such women as *malinches*, sell-outs to *la raza*.³⁴⁸ Finally, Arteta, too, had taken the deconstruction of Hispanic Hollywood's coveted topic of the family to a new level (“the idyllic familia romance,” Fregoso 2003: 88) in his long feature debut, the social drama *Star Maps* (1997). Set in Los Angeles, *Star Maps* exposes the family as a place of potential exploitation, violence, and mental illness. The film focuses on young Carlos (Douglas Spain³⁴⁹), yearning for Hollywood stardom but instead forced to join a prostitute ring managed by his own father. Meanwhile, his mentally ill mother imagines she is courted by the iconic Mexican actor-comedian Catinfla. Rosa Linda Fregoso has commented on how Arteta

self-consciously analyzes the intersection of structural and cultural dynamics that contribute to a crisis in the ‘Latino family structure,’ dynamics that, as Arturo Aldama so aptly indicates, involve both ‘external forces (racism, the state, and colonialist consumerist patterns) and internal factors

³⁴⁸ La Malinche was the indigenous lover of Hernán Cortés and, as a translator, said to be instrumental to the European conquest of Mexico. While she was pejoratively viewed in Mexican tradition (Paz 1961), La Malinche has been reappropriated as a positive figure in more recent feminist literature, including writings by Chicanas (such as in Tejana poet Carmen Tafolla's poem, “La Malinche,” which describes her as a conqueror in her own right and as mother of *la raza* (Tafolla 2001.18-20); see also Pratt (1993).

³⁴⁹ Incidentally, Spain was presented with the TA at RRAFF's last festival to date, 2014.

(machismo, Americanization, active complicity) which take the longstanding sexist structures and processes of gender socialization to a grotesque extreme.” (Aldama 2001:136, quoted in Fregoso 2003: 88)

The film’s explicit sex scenes, too, particular those of the homosexual variety, were bound to be considered offensive by more conservative viewers.³⁵⁰ All the while, RRAFF’s tribute also “claws back”³⁵¹ the film and its director the film by pointing out that he had made *Star Maps* because he had been “angered by the treatment of minorities in Hollywood,” inspiring his goal “to make more inclusive work” (RRAFF 2004: 5).³⁵² By way of honoring Arteta, RRAFF also recognized a member of a younger generation of Latino/a filmmakers more attuned to indie and cable television formats and someone with a long-standing record of hiring Latino/a talent, such as his 2004 co-awardee Lupe Ontiveros (in *Chuck and Buck*, 2002).

Finally, the 2004 tribute film was a newly restored version of **Robert M. Young’s** *¡Alambrista!* (USA 1977), a social drama that due to awards such as Cannes’ Camera D’Or drew international attention to the plight of undocumented Latino/a immigrants; yet, as the tribute points out, the film had never before seen a theatrical release in the U.S. “where its story is the most relevant.” Honoring a film made by a non-Latino³⁵³ further underscores the festival’s diversity agenda; at the same time, this nomination subtly challenged the boundaries of its own focus on U.S. confined *latinidad* due to the story’s main theme, immigration. The nomination of this Sundance veteran also provided a link to Miguel Arteta.

5.1.3.2 “*Raíces* (roots)” (2006): RRAFF’s dialectic building of community and genealogy project

The first-ever themed edition, “*Raíces*” (roots), featured a particularly impressive instantiation of RRAFF’s community building project while also highlighting the diversity and flexibility of RRAFF’s vision of *latinidad*. The line-up of awardees consisted of Mexican born actress and Hollywood veteran **Lupita Tovar** (1910-2016; CAA) and **Lourdes Portillo** (*1944), Chicana independent filmmaker (PA). There was also a tribute to **Jesús S. Treviño’s** *Raíces de Sangre* (1976/1978) on the occasion of the film’s thirtieth anniversary. In the catalog’s welcome editorial, John Ramirez discussed and deconstructed the festival motto and what he saw as the “at once a unifying and contested quality of Latinidad (capitalization in the original)” – the term’s potential to elicit notions of universalism, diversity, origin, tradition, but also fluidity:

Raíces speaks to the humanity of Latino communities worldwide, the roots and foundations of hu-

³⁵⁰ Homosexual desire became a recurring theme in Arteta’s early work; this is also acknowledged by the tribute’s referring to his subsequent feature, *Chuck and Buck* (2002), as a dark comedy “unnerv[ing] some viewers, even as it received critical acclaim.” (RRAFF 2004:5) Incidentally, the film featured Chris Weitz (PA 2012) as one of the leads.

³⁵¹ For a definition of claw-back, cf. Fiske 2005:65ff. I use the term to indicate that the RRAFF tribute emphasizes commonalities between traditional Latino/a film activism’s fight for access and representations and Arteta’s similar goals.

³⁵² As discussed in his portrait in the subchapter on Latinos/as in Sundance, historical overview chapter.

³⁵³ Scott M. Baugh has argued for an appreciation of Young’s many “contributions to American cinema and Latino American culture” (291). In 1977, Young had made *Short Eyes*, based on the play by Nuyorican playwright-poète *maudit* Miguel Piñero.

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

man experience – identity, memory, imagination, love, family, home, courage, etc. ‘Raíces’ is also a concept of debate, disagreement, diversity of thought. It may evoke notions of origin – of ethnic, racial, national, natural essences. It may also suggest the anchorings of traditions, heritages, and cultures. Or ‘raíces’ can represent the uncertainties and contingencies of history – the ebb and flow of power and empowerment negotiated in always shifting political and economic contexts. (*RRAFF 2006: 5*)

The festival’s tribute film, *Raíces de Sangre* (Mexico 1978, Jesús S. Treviño), succinctly reflects both the filiations and contradictions associated with the term “roots.” At the narrative level, this is a film about Chicano/a and Mexican garment laborers in a Texan border city and their efforts to organize a binational labor union, united by their shared ethno-cultural heritage, their “blood roots” (*raíces de sangre*) and by their determination to their destitute situation “between the cracks of the guidelines which apply to either nation concerning work safety” (*RRAFF 2006: 6*). Treviño had worked with a mixed cast of Mexican and Chicano/a actors in this contracted work by the Mexican government, due to President Luis Echeverría Álvarez’ great interest Chicanos/as and *La Raza Unida*, the aforementioned ethno-nationalist Chicano/a political party.

Ironically, the film’s complicated distribution history underlines how, indeed, “raíces’ can represent the uncertainties and contingencies of history – the ebb and flow of power and empowerment negotiated in always shifting political and economic contexts” (*RRAFF 2006: 5*). The end of Echeverría Álvarez’s time in government meant a complete replacement of all government officials that had served as Treviño’s contacts; this led to the film’s temporary situation “between the cracks” as it was shelved until its theatrical release two years later, in 1978 (J.S. Treviño Interview 2010).

Moreover, the prominent role given to *Raíces de Sangre*, also as inspiration for the 2006 festival theme also reflects back on its director. RRAFF honored Treviño as one of the most important protagonists in Chicano/a-Latino/a film activism; as an eyewitness³⁵⁴ of Chicano social movements ever since their first manifestations in the 1960s; for his award-winning³⁵⁵ and critically acclaimed work within and outside the industry³⁵⁶; and his many achievements in a localized-translocal Latino/a film activist fight for access. His multi-faceted work underlines both the connotations of affirmation and diversity attributed to the word *raíces*, dealing with the many “anchorings of traditions, heritages, and cultures” (*RRAFF 2006: 5*).

Lourdes Portillo’s reception of RRAFF’s PA is equally significant in conjunction with the festival’s community building project. In its particular constellation with *Raíces de Sangre* and thus, Jesús S. Treviño, her nomination invites an analogy to John Ramirez’s interpretation of *raíces* / roots as “a

³⁵⁴ # Such is the title of his autobiography, *Eyewitness. A Filmmaker's Memoir of the Chicano Movement* (2001).

³⁵⁵ RRAFF’s list of awards and acknowledgements emphasizes Treviño’s navigation of many different national, international, mainstream and Latino/a identified spheres; such as “Best Daytime Drama” from the Directors’ Guild of America (DGA); three American Latino Arts Awards (ALMA); the canonization of *Raíces de Sangre* among the top twenty-five Latin American (!) films by the Annual International Film Festival of Valladolid, Spain (1991); and a homage by Uruguay’s Montevideo International Film Festival (1993). (*RRAFF 2006: 7*)

³⁵⁶ The tribute acknowledged Treviño’s many roles as documentary filmmaker chronicling Latino/a activism in the U.S. and beyond; Latino/a arts and literature; as well as his role in 1970s television; feature films and contributions to episodic mainstream and cable television (*RRAFF 2006: 6*).

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

concept of debate, disagreement, diversity of thought” (RRAFF 2006: 5) as it points at the different routes taken by both filmmakers, members of the same generation whose work complements one another – even though Portillo’s career took off one decade after Trevino’s, in 1979, with her experimental short, *After the Earthquake / Después del Terremoto*. In its written tribute, RRAFF focuses on Portillo’s “internationally acclaimed and awarded documentary work” with its special regard of Latinas, as it acknowledges how her films “demonstrate a commitment to both advancing the rich diversity of Latina world experiences and contributions as well as enriching the documentary viewing experience of Latina/o historical and cultural representations (RRAFF 2006: 9).

I read this reference to the documentary genre as a recognition of how Portillo’s work has largely been made outside a more commercial “entertainment” logic that determines the work of many other RRAFF awardees. In this context, Portillo’s dedication to “Latina world experiences” is in line with the Bay’s intersectional activism, which impacted her vision of herself as a woman filmmaker of color as well as the transnational scope of her activism (we will return to this matter in my discussion of Cine Acción’s beginnings and its mounting of 1988’s groundbreaking festival, “Women of the Americas in Film and Video”). This vision of herself creates a contrast to early Los Angeles based activists (such as Treviño) aiming to reconcile their goals of access with their aim to build “their own institutions” (Treviño quoted in Noriega 2000:131) and their refusal of co-optation³⁵⁷ and, furthermore, Angeleno/a filmmakers’ focus to a lesser degree on a female perspective, despite the achievements of Treviño’s colleague and fellow Chicano Cinema Coalition (CCC) member, **Sylvia Morales** (a fellow PA awardee in 2008), after all, the creator of the first documentary on a Chicana’s perspective of the *conditio chicana*³⁵⁸. Yet RRAFF chose not to foreground these differences for the sake of emphasizing commonalities. In this vein, the tribute focused on how Portillo’s groundbreaking work – including her decision to work with other women – has challenged the conventions of documentary filmmaking and thus male dominated cultural production at large.³⁵⁹ RRAFF thus drew a subtle parallel to the struggles of activists striving for public television and later, industry access, on the one hand, and Portillo’s endeavors within the documentary film sector – struggles which are, after all, all taking place within what we could call the more encompassing field of film production.

Furthermore, the tribute explored the thematic and artistic versatility of Portillo’s oeuvre and its many local, trans- and international dimensions. Here, her acclaimed documentary *Señorita Extraviada / Missing Young Woman* (2001) reinforced that year’s thematic focus. Praised as one of “the most important and compelling documentaries of our time” (RRAFF 2006: 9), *Señorita Extraviada* has put a spotlight on the continuing femicides in and around Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico; the tribute

³⁵⁷ This also means that the activism of groups like the CCC remained first and foremost ethnic, appealing to the nation state; and even their transnational solidarity with struggles of Latin American and “Third” nations (as evidenced in Treviño’s *Raíces de Sangre* and his involvement in the Fundación del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano or Chicanos/as involvement in Nicaragua) took as their point of departure an ethnic template.

³⁵⁸ *Chicana* (1979). In the case of Portillo, too, there is an interesting contrast to how RRAFF’s tribute for Sylvia Morales engages with Morales’ aforementioned profession according to which she had “set aside her artistic ‘desire to make personal films in order to make ones which reflected our communities’” (RRAFF 2008: 6; the inserted quote is taken from Noriega 2000: 101). In the light of RRAFF’s community building project, Morales is framed within the logic of RRAFF 2008’s theme, “*Historias*” (histories) as a chronicler and recognized for how this “commitment to our communities has sustained in passion and insight” (RRAFF 2008: 6).

³⁵⁹ “Working with other women has helped Portillo break down the proscriptions of traditional documentary-making because ‘women and women of color in particular, often come into filmmaking with a different set of objectives than their male counterparts’” (RRAFF 2006: 9; qtd. from lourdesportillo.com).

acknowledges how Portillo's film "has mobilized a renewed interest in investigating this atrocity" (RRAFF 2006: 9). Portillo's film also tells a poignant story of a globalized economy kept afloat by its *maquiladora* industries featuring a majority of women laborers, many of them uprooted from all over Mexico and cut off family and community ties and therefore particularly at risk. Here, RRAFF's community building endeavor comes full circle since both Treviño's *Raíces de Sangre* and her own *Señorita Extraviada*, each with their focus on marginalized border communities, deepen our understanding of how it is primarily the poor and politically disenfranchised who suffer the consequences of an ever-growing demand of cheap goods in the consumerist so-called first world countries.

Finally, through the nomination of the nonagenarian actress **Lupita Tovar** (1910-2016; CAA) as one of RRAFF's "*Raíces*" honorees, the festival added an important dimension to its community building project by audaciously *rooting* U.S. Latino/a film production in a *pre-movimiento* past.

Here, Lupita Tovar was lauded for her "pioneering talent" (RRAFF 2006: 8). In the light of RRAFF's nurture project, the tribute emphasized her function as a role model by way of "bridg[ing] the silent and sound movie eras, U.S. and Mexican audiences, the Hollywood and Mexican cinemas" – an adaptability and transcultural savvy also required of later generations. RRAFF also drew attention to a lesser known chapter in Hollywood history – Spanish language productions such as *Drácula* (USA 1931, George Melford and Enrique Tovar Ávalos), featuring leading lady Tovar in her most famous role; the film was also given a tribute screening. Intended for the Latin American market, *Drácula* had been shot using the same set as the better-known English language version starring Bela Lugosi. Today, *Drácula* is regarded as being *on par* with the English language production; with "Ms. Tovar's performance as Eva ha[ving] consistently been applauded" (RRAFF 2006: 8).

Furthermore, Tovar's legacy – of her films but also as the Oaxacan born matriarch of Hollywood's impactful Kohner dynasty – was used to stake the claim for Latinos/as' rightful presence in contemporary Hollywood by way of incorporating Tovar as a progenitrix into an imagined Latino/a film *familia*. The latter role is reinforced by the way the tribute text familiarized festival audiences with details from the respective successful careers of Tovar's husband, Paul Kohner, producer turned "top Hollywood agent," and their children, Susan and Pancho, actress and producer, respectively. Mention of Kohner's Academy Award nominated involvement in Douglas Sirk's *Imitation of Life* (USA 1959) particularly resonates with RRAFF's *raíces* theme, as this social drama about a young light-complexioned African American woman's "passing" for White contains a warning against the psychological damages that are the result of disowning one's roots as a means for upward mobility.

5.1.3.3 "Latino Next" (2010): Focus on immigration and challenging strategic essentialism

In 2010, the year that first saw Arizona's controversial racial profiling and an increased rhetoric against immigrants nationwide, RRAFF took a stand. In his impassioned welcome address, the festival director chided the negative representations of immigration in U.S. media, "paint[ed ...] with the broad brush of simple stereotypes and resulting scapegoat solutions" and bemoaned "Arizona[']s declin[e ...] into a racist abyss." Ramirez invited festival visitors to instead

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

let the 7th Reel Rasquache Art & Film Festival and your attendance stand as a testament to the value of willingly engaging diverse perspectives and embracing multiple voices in order to build lasting and constructive partnerships of understanding, respect, and community. (*RRAFF 2010*: 3)

Accordingly, for the first (and to date, only) time ever, RRAFF moved beyond its own strategic limitation to U.S. Latinos/as in its programming. Ramirez pointed out that almost half of the program's altogether twenty-five films dealt with immigrant stories, and "[o]f the twenty five directors celebrated in the 2010 festival, one-third embrace international points of origin that include Jamaica, Cuba, Ecuador, Venezuela, Mexico, and Canada" (*RRAFF 2010*:3). This focus on a trans- and international perspective was also reflected by its 2010 awardees, such as the nomination of bi-national U.S.-Venezuelan director and producer **Betty Kaplan**. The decision underscored that year's more international scope of RRAFF's coalition building project, particularly since Kaplan's work frequently returns to historical and literary texts with epic repercussions: The tribute mentioned Kaplan's television miniseries, *Bolívar* (Venezuela 1983), a biopic on the political leader, emancipator and symbolical father of several Latin American democracies; a multi volume series of docudramas on various Latin American writers (no IMDB entry; *RRAFF 2006*: 20); and three literary adaptations: Chilean American writer Isabel Allende's *Of Love and Shadows* (Argentina / USA 1994), set against the backdrop of the military coup against Salvador Allende, the writer's uncle; Rómulo Gallegos' Venezuelan epic, *Doña Bárbara* (Spain / Argentina / U.S.A. 1998); and Nuyorican writer Esmeralda Santiago's *Almost a Woman* (USA 2004; PBS).

Furthermore, the nomination of producer and writer **Ligiah Villalobos** – at the time most immediately associated with the overwhelming commercial success of *La Misma Luna* – made the powerful statement that immigrant stories mattered, both politically and in terms of box office revenues.

The third awardee, in turn, Chicano actor **Enrique Castillo**³⁶⁰ redirected some of the attention back onto national Latino/a territory, owing to his long-standing acclaim and success with audiences in early roles such as in Jesús S. Treviño's *Seguín*, Taylor Hackford's epic urban drama *Blood In, Blood Out* (USA 1993) and to his presence in television comedies including the dark narco-comedy, *Weeds* (USA 2005-12; Showtime).

5.1.4 Education as goal and symbolic capital

If in the aforementioned cases Hollywood had served as the main resource for the transfer of symbolic capital, a number of awardees was particularly affiliated with education, thus drawing attention to the relevance of RRAFF's own roots in education and in the historical educational activism of Los Angeles. As will be discussed later in this chapter, RRAFF's connection to education also translated into symbolic capital.

One such prominent awardee is **Moctesuma Esparza** (CAA 2005) due to his involvement in the 1968 East Los Angeles high school walkouts. Playwright and actress **Evelina Fernández** (PA 2004),

³⁶⁰ The fact that Enrique Castillo is the husband of RRAFF associate Bel Hernandez sheds a somewhat critical light on RRAFF's precious proximity to Hollywood's Latino/a film community. On the one hand, it is indicative of the close-knit community of Latino/a identified film professionals. On the other hand, it potentially hampers RRAFF's community building project since the nomination may appear as favoritism.

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

in turn, was not only a Garfield alumna (one of the East Los Angeles high schools associated with the walkouts), she also had a degree from RRAFF's long-time sponsor CSULA. In 2007, when RRAFF introduced its youth component featuring films from four local high schools and one community arts center, it honored **Wilmer Valderrama** (TA 2007) and **Tony Plana** (PA 2007), both known for their roles in popular television shows targeting a younger audience; Valderrama, for *That '70s Show* (Fox 1998-2006); co-nominee Tony Plana, for *Ugly Betty* (ABC, 2006-2010). The tribute text drew attention to how for Valderrama, high school drama classes had served as a means to learn English and to integrate himself after having spent most of his youth in Colombia.

The most significant case, however, was that of renowned playwright, theater company director, and film director, **Luis Valdez** (CAA 2009). Valdez had been educated at California State University-San José, another institution associated with the CSU system; this association was pointed out twice in RRAFF's tribute text, where his numerous academic merits and degrees from within and outside academia were also mentioned.³⁶¹ Valdez's nomination involved an opportunity for the university to capitalize on its bonds to the festival in terms of outreach to prospective students and a validation of CSULA's range of programs; in an ad in the festival catalog, CSULA extended congratulations both to Valdez and festival director-CSULA professor John Ramirez while drawing attention to CSULA's own pioneering role as an institution "[w]here the nation's first Department of Chicano Studies was established 40 years ago" (*RRAFF 2009*: 24). In its own tribute to Valdez, RRAFF also acknowledged the fact that he was a product of the CSU system (*RRAFF 2010*: 6); at the same time, the text subtly qualified CSULA's claim to symbolic capital by pointing out that above all the existence of ethnic studies programs was the result of the pioneering activism by artists such as Valdez (*RRAFF 2009*: 7). RRAFF thus emphasized its particular loyalty to its filmmaking and overall activist constituencies; this stance also foreshadowed its leave-taking from the CSULA campus in the year to follow.

5.2 Competitive awards: Tapping Hollywood proximity, championing education

Its competitive awards are yet again characteristic of RRAFF's specific priorities as a result of its engagement with its politics of place, identity and commerce. It is particularly in regard to its competitive regards that RRAFF's aim to support its filmmaking stakeholders is underscored since this feature is key to RRAFF's atmosphere of a "sheltered workshop" where filmmakers can exchange ideas and network. This atmosphere also presents a powerful antithesis to Hollywood's far more competitive edge and its limited recognition of professionals with a minority background. The festival's competitive dimension generates symbolic capital for RRAFF itself, which thus fulfils its goal of nurturing a younger generation, a focus both ingrained in RRAFF's tapping of Hollywood as a resource as well as its educational legacy as a campus and student-initiated festival originally designed to serve film production students. It is this feature, nurture, which generates symbolic capital for the supporters of the festival as well, since they are given special attention and acknowledgement on the occasion of the awards ceremony. These supporters encompass sponsors from community organizations to Latino/a targeting media and entertainment companies, whose commitment to multicultural and, particularly, educational issues are thus validated.

³⁶¹ Valdez's academic honors include being a founding faculty tenured professor at CSU Monterey's Center for Teledramatic Arts and Technology and a number of honorary doctorate degrees from three Californian universities as well as from Columbia College, Chicago, Illinois, and the University of Rhode Island (*RRAFF 2009*: 7).

Regarding filmmakers, exhibition (alternative distribution) is a value in and by itself, an argument also resonating with a similar observation by Fischer (2013:73). My observations at Latino/a film festivals contradict those of bigger business festivals, where we find a more immediate connection between festivals as purveyors of symbolic capital and economic success as a result of the institutionally consecrated and authoritative nature involved in the ways these recognized festivals assume the roles of “sites of passage that function as gateways for cultural legitimization” (de Valck 2007: 38). Furthermore, while business festivals’ awards politics frequently involve a mix of symbolic and monetary value – recognition often coupled with prize money or grants (de Valck & Loist 2009: 182 ff.), smaller, special interest and activist festivals usually feature awards as a means to bestow and receive symbolic capital.

At RRAFF, too, there is no financial incentive whatsoever involved. Regardless of this, RRAFF’s competitive dimension serves as an important incentive particularly for up and coming filmmakers and its “sheltered workshop” identity. Its competitive awards entail a greater likelihood of visibility, promising distribution and future professional opportunities. Such successes also go down in the festival’s annals as symbolic capital, such as the case of 2008’s Audience Award Winner, the narrative feature “*Alondra Smiles* (Conchita Nora Villa) [...] garner[ing] a 2008 IMAGEN Award nomination for Best Film” (RRAFF 2010: 5).

The central role of RRAFF’s awards politics also creates a contrast to other festivals such as SDLFF, which, as I have argued previously, is more distant from Hollywood both in geographical but also ideological terms owing to its transborder, alternative vision of *latinidad*; it is thus much more under the radar regarding an obligation owed to U.S. Latino/a filmmakers striving for access. Accordingly, I argue that neither do SDLFF’s awards – its *Premios Corazón* – play the same, prominent role as is the case at RRAFF: In addition to this qualitative difference, there is also a quantitative difference due to the fact that SDLFF’s awards are one highlight among the many in its tightly packed, multiple-screen and eleven day program.

5.2.1 Competitive award winners 2011 and 2012

RRAFF features five competitive awards issued at each edition of its festival. Created according to genre, they encompass Best Feature, Best Documentary, Best Short, Best Web Based Work, and Audience Award. As is the case with career awards, the decision-making processes involved reflect the festival’s mission and values, despite the fact that competitive awards are within a less immediate control of the festival organizers, depending as they do on submissions to the festival and additional, solicited films. Here, the audience award differs from the other four; given to a work originally selected by RRAFF’s programming committee, it is nevertheless a reflection of the festival’s agenda even though visitors have the last say and thus validates RRAFF’s audience stakeholders.³⁶² And since competitive awards are a more immediate reflection of RRAFF’s programming politics, I have decided to add brief discussions of the latter in several instances as to enrich my analysis, particularly regarding RRAFF’s documentary and web based genre competitive awards.

³⁶² A point which puts local filmmakers at a definite advantage is that it is easier for them to invite their own entourages of fans, friends, and family to the screenings and thus vote for their films. This point may prove frustrating for non-local (and sometimes non-Chicano/a) filmmakers and somewhat jeopardizes RRAFF’s community building project.

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

“Harnessing the Vision,” RRAFF’s 2011 festival edition and the last one held at Pasadena’s cinematic venue, featured twenty competing films and videos in total: Four long narrative features (two comedies, one urban drama, and one experimental); two documentaries; seven shorts (narrative: five; experimental doc: two; animation: one); web based formats (seven videos). RRAFF 2012, “Home for the Future,” showed twenty-four films and videos in competition. This festival edition ran four long features (two comedies; one social drama, one urban drama); twelve shorts (one animation; nine narrative shorts of varying length and a variety of genres including comedy and social drama; one documentary, and one music video); three mid-length documentaries; and the work of four contestants in the web series slot. In addition, each edition featured works exempt from the competition – works by established filmmakers and sidebar cooperations with other festivals.³⁶³ Furthermore, RRAFF’s Youth Filmmakers’ Showcases (2011 and 2012) also featured competitions of their own which, unfortunately, for the sake of brevity, cannot be considered at more length.³⁶⁴

In the remainder of this section, I will look at how the competitive award winners of 2011 and 2012, particularly those in the Best Feature, Best Documentary, and Best Web Based Work categories, reflect RRAFF’s primacy of nurture and education. These films once more underscore RRAFF’s aim to affirm Latino/a culture in all its thematic and experiential diversity. As will be shown in regard to the narrative formats, the work of these filmmakers reflects a determination to create crossover potential, thus balancing culturally affirming, community building, and commercial tendencies. In this context, the idea of a “Latino formula” has repeatedly come up in group and individual conversations, for instance, during RRAFF 2012’s Directors’ Roundtable. The term was repeatedly used by filmmaker Patrick Pérez, whose comedy *Lola’s Love Shack* won the 2012 Audience Award, but also taken up by others. In our interview, Pérez use this term to describe a film that crossed the boundaries between ethnic and mainstream film, having “the Latino idiom and the specificity in terms of location, time and place, yet is understandable to everybody” (P. Pérez Interview 2012). Through providing a platform for these films, and by honoring them through its awards, the festival also recognizes the validity of these efforts in conjunction with its ties to a politics of place that resonates with RRAFF’s proximity to the Hollywood industries.

Table: Competitive Awards 2011, 2012

	BEST FEATURE	BEST DOCUMENTARY	BEST SHORT	BEST WEB BASED WORK	A U D I E N C E CHOICE
2011 “Harnessing the Vision”	<i>Revenge of the Bimbot Zombie Killers</i> (USA 2011, Joe Camareno)	<i>The Calling</i> (Peru / USA 2009, David Ranghelli)	<i>En Tiempo de Guerra / In Times of War</i> (USA 2011, Brian Parada)	<i>Police Chicks</i> (Episode 1) (USA 2011, Carlos Zelaya)	<i>Food Stamps</i> (USA 2010, Alfredo Ramos)

³⁶³ These include the launch of *Latinopia.com*, a web platform created by Jesús S. Treviño (2011); the sidebar, “Passion for the Pain: Horror by Latino Filmmakers,” in cooperation with the festival’s fiscal co-sponsor, CASA 0101, curated by filmmaker-horror film festival organizer Tony “Tygr” Olivas (2011); and a sidebar of seven shorts from CASA’s Boyle Heights Latina International Film Extravaganza (BHLIFE), CASA’s own all-Latina festival (2012).

³⁶⁴ One remarkable aspect in the Youth category was the diversity of genres. 2011’s edition included twelve films in the categories Documentary, Experimental, Music Video, Narrative, and Commercial; in 2012, there were fifteen videos in the categories Animation, Narrative, Public Service Announcement, Documentary, and Experimental.

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

	BEST FEATURE	BEST DOCUMENTARY	BEST SHORT	BEST WEB BASED WORK	A U D I E N C E CHOICE
2012 “Home for the Future”	<i>Smuggled</i> (USA 2012, Ramon Hamilton)	<i>TRUST: Second Acts in Young Lives</i> (USA 2011, Nancy Kelly)	<i>Botes al Amanecer/Cans at Dawn</i> (USA 2102, Nikki Roberts)	<i>Fixing Paco</i> (Episode 9) (USA 2011, Joe Camareno)	<i>Lola’s Love Shack</i> (USA 2012, Patrick C. Pérez)

5.2.1.1 Best Features: *Revenge of the Bimbot Zombie Killers*; *Smuggled*

The two awarded films shed light on RRAFF’s goal of nurture of younger Latino/a filmmakers. I want to show how the two films each resonate with their respective director’s individual agendas, but also the extent to which they give insights into the diversity of artistic approaches, themes and genres used. A related point is their crossover appeal, thus underlining RRAFF’s agenda of community building and their directors’ ambition to conquer more encompassing audiences.

Improvisation. Both films were made on small budgets and correspond to *rasquachismo*’s spirit

of improvisation and making do with limited means. On the one hand, there is Joe Camareno’s fast paced, campy and irreverent comedy, *Revenge of the Bimbot Zombie Killers*. In the spirit of *rasquachismo*’s tendencies towards “a utilization of available resources mak[ing] for syncretism, juxtaposition, and integration” (Ybarra-Frausto 1990:133), this self-ascribed “B-Movie” (Camareno) boldly blends ingredients from science fiction, horror, and spy genres with musical and dance performances. *Bimbot Zombie Killers*’s most obvious intertextual references are the spy comedy *Get Smart* (the 1960s CBS television comedy as well as the 2008 remake), and Mel Brooks’ 1974 comedy, *Young Frankenstein*. As in *Get Smart*, the plot revolves around a clumsy secret agent, Dr. Warren Oedi (sic); as in *Young Frankenstein*, the protagonist’s calling is that of a scientist. The over-the-top, at times cringeworthy plot involves a bizarre cast of characters such as three Spandex-clad “bimbots,” creatures of Oedi’s own making. Together, they embark on a mission to save the world from evil Agatha von Krahenpantz (sic), a German scientist with takeover delusions, and her motley crew of zombies. During their quest, Oedi’s team is able to summon all kinds of unlikely help, from a talking hand puppet (Cuddly Bear “The Snitch”) to the Military Arm of the Jehova’s Witnesses, and finally, Dr. Oedi’s own, domineering mother, who turns out to be an undercover agent.

On the other hand, there is *Smuggled*, Ramón Hamilton’s quiet and poignant immigration drama. The extremely economically produced chamber play, alternating for most of its running time between a sparsely lit, sealed tour bus compartment and a police interrogation room inside a remote outpost, corresponds to a major feature of *rasquache* art, where “[r]esilience and resourcefulness spring from making do with what is at hand (*hacer render las cosas*). (Ybarra-Frausto 1990:133)

Social justice agenda versus irreverent entertainment. A social drama whose serious content is further enhanced by way of its claustrophobic atmosphere, *Smuggled* is vastly different from the playful eccentricities of *Bimbot Zombie Killers*. In his short laudatory speech at the 2012 awards ceremony, RRAFF director John Ramirez praised the film’s capacity for engendering compassion for the plight of immigrants and placed *Smuggled* in the tradition of works of John Cassavetes, Luis Valdez, and John Sayles, presumably on the grounds of their shared social justice themes, working in specialty / indie formats and, particularly regarding the former two, a frequent reliance on improvisa-

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

tion and experimentation. The plot of action revolves around the fate of nine year old Miguel and is conveyed in various instalments, chronologically cutting back and forth between interrogation scenes and others aboard the bus. Here Miguel and his mother have been hiding during their journey from a Latin American country south of the border in order to be finally reunited with the boy's father, who had left four years earlier for work in the U.S.

Smuggled engages its viewers as they are gradually drawn into the intimacy shared between mother and son. Both the outwardly calm mother's urgency to familiarize Miguel with his estranged father through sharing some memories as well as a number of disturbances outside the compartment build tension. This atmosphere prepares the viewer for the inevitable when Miguel accidentally breaks the mother's last remaining vial of insulin. The viewer is left to assume that the mother dies, while the boy is rescued and handed over to the police. In the end, the officer whose duty it was to hand the boy over to the immigration authorities has a change of heart and sets him free. The final scene shows Miguel approaching a man outside a house in a residential area, presumably his father.

Different usages of cultural specificity in order to create crossover potential. Both films differ as to the ways they authenticate their plots and characters – in ways that also resonate with the different imagined communities targeted by the two films. While it is more subtly educational than the classic films of “Hispanic Hollywood,” the film's social justice agenda becomes apparent as the film ponders “the cost of immigration” as well parental sacrifices making it possible “to keep the dream alive,” according to Hamilton, who grew up in the Boston area as son of a Dominican immigrant mother (R. Hamilton Q & A RRAFF 2012). *Smuggled* is the story of a mother and son who cross the mainland border between Mexico and the U.S. as undocumented immigrants. *Smuggled* is culturally specific in that both speak Spanish to one another; on the other hand, audiences obtain no information as to where exactly they come from. Instead, the film focuses on the relationship between mother and son and thus makes it particularly accessible to more general audiences. The film does without the star power appeal of better known Latino/a Hollywood actors, even though, incidentally, young Ramsess Letrado also had a supporting role in *En Tiempo de Guerra / In Times of War* (Brian Parada 2011), RRAFF Best Short in 2011. *Smuggled*'s balanced cultural specificity enhanced its appeal to a broader public, which is underscored by how the film was exhibited more widely in the national and international film festival circuit and won several more awards.³⁶⁵

Contrary to *Smuggled*, *Bimbot Zombie Killers* does not have a social justice agenda. It does, however, resonate with the specifically Los Angeles' Latino/a film activist tradition, adding a new spin to the traditional “access” and “opportunities” discourses while subverting “Hispanic Hollywood”'s focus on empowering and educational Latino/a stories. The film's cast features a local crowd of mostly younger Latino/a Hollywood actors frequently collaborating with one another, including Ruth Livier and Marabina Jaimes,³⁶⁶ and as a more senior partner comedy troupe Culture Clash's Herbert Siguen-

³⁶⁵ Best Dramatic Feature (Mexico International Film Festival 2012, Mexico City, Mexico), the Founders' Award (Riverside International Film Festival 2012, Riverside, California), Best Narrative Feature (both at the Third World Independent Film Festival 2012, San Francisco / Mill Valley, California, and the Great Lakes Film Festival 2012, Erie, Pennsylvania). (“Smuggled”; imdb.com)

³⁶⁶ Livier and Jaimes' involvement further underscores how RRAFF was used as a testing ground for the works of a recurring circle of local Latino/a film professionals: MexiRican Marabina Jaimes was also part of one of the 2011 web series contestants, the all Latina talk show *Let's Talk* (hosted by RRAFF associate Bel Hernandez); Chicana Ruth Livier's web series, *Ylse*, was nominated Best Web Based Work at RRAFF 2010.

za,³⁶⁷ alongside a number of non-Latinos/as (including the film's co-writer, Stephanie Wiand). Unlike classics such as *Born in East L.A.*, where the comedy format is used as a vehicle for social critique, in *Bimbot Zombie Killers*, *Latinidad* is subjected to the film's fast-paced, campy and irreverent comedic format as spy comedy/horror pastiche. *Latinidad* thus figures as deliberately politically incorrect cliché (unfortunate Héctor, a Latin Lover type with a Castilian lisp who serves as a sex slave to Agent Oedi's mother) or it is normalized (the aptly named Eleanor and Marianne, members of a so-called "Latina Jane Austen Society," who retain their passion for the English 18th century writer even after their accidental death and subsequent "reboot" as bimbots, which continues to serve as a running gag throughout the film). Otherwise, cultural specificity is not really important; Latino/a actors play Latinos/as, or non-Latinos/as. The film says more about Camareno's take on representational and casting politics in today's entertainment industries. The son of Mexican immigrant parents (and son of Mexican pop singer and composer José Salazar) who had grown up in Los Angeles and trained as an actor and singer in New York City, Camareno adamantly distanced himself from being limited to ethnic designations such as Mexican-American or Latino/a (J. Camareno Interview 2011; "Joe Camareno"; imdb.com). Instead, in a move I would call "strategic color blindness," Camareno claimed the label "American" for himself and criticized the lack of crossover opportunities for "brown people" in bigger television and film productions while non-U.S. Americans, Anglophones from Australia or the U.K., were cast as U.S. Americans (J. Camareno Interview 2011). It is also in this context that *Bimbot Zombie Killers* needs to be understood as a film boosting the professional portfolios of all involved, and most of all of co-writers Camareno and Wiand, as it underscores their versatility in juggling genres and intertextual references, turning them into light-handed entertainment for an imagined audience which Camareno has described as "thirtysomethings who enjoy comedy and videogames" (J. Camareno Interview 2011).

5.2.1.2 Audience Awards: Searching for the "Latino/a formula." *Food Stamps; Lola's Love Shack*

The two audience award winning comedies, only to be considered in brief, once again point to the way RRAFF's nurture project enabled a younger generation of film professionals to exhibit their visions of Latino/a cultural production between affirming Latino/a identities and searching for more commercial narrative formats and content all the while departing from overly didactic "old school" Chicano/a feature films. The comedy *Food Stamps*, written and directed by Los Angeles based filmmaker-playwright Alfredo Ramos, is about a twenty-something "slacker" who resorts to forging food stamps in order to provide an income after his father (played by iconic actor Danny Trejo) had lost his job as a construction worker. Set in East Los Angeles, the film's local color, star power and comedy format no doubt had an impact on its playing to a packed auditorium at RRAFF's opening night in 2011; some may have also remembered Ramos' award-winning play *The Last Angry Brown Hat* (1999).³⁶⁸

The play's stance – a critical appreciation of the Chicano/a movement's legacy – also informs Ramos's self-perception as a filmmaker and his argument for a new space for his generation. While films by an admired older generation of Chicano filmmakers, such as those of Hispanic Hollywood, were

³⁶⁷ Culture Clash also collaborated with Lourdes Portillo on the experimental short, *Columbus on Trial* (1992).

³⁶⁸ The title refers to the Brown Berets, a 1960s and '70s militant Chicano/a activist group.

“in tune with drama, realistic, stories of people’s plights,” Ramos, a Disney Screenwriting Lab alumnus, felt that he needed to respond to the fact that “people want to laugh.” Contrary to the “heavy” themes associated with traditional Chicano/a-Latino/a cinema, he wanted to create “something that is real but funny” (A. Ramos Telephone Interview 2011). His words resonate with how filmmakers striving for “crossover” potential “balance [...] the old and the new, the conventional and innovative, the familiar and progressive, especially with respect to narrative structure and marketing approaches” (Baugh 2012: 54). A similar spirit – cultural affirmation and the embrace of lighter, more commercial narrative formats – informs the way *Lola’s Love Shack*, the coming of age comedy and 2012 audience winner, had been promoted as “Latino/a *Porkys*” by director Patrick Pérez and co-writer Esteban Zul. Pérez’s plan for the film, then still in its post-production phase, was “marketing across all markets, races, being very inclusive.” Similarly, Pérez envisioned the future of Latino/a film, namely, “to be multiethnic, many cores of voices, not isolating, not ghettoizing” (P. Pérez Interview 2012). For Pérez, who had also contributed two more short films to RRAFF 2012, this was the first festival appearance in a couple of years after disappointing experiences at other festivals, such as at LALIFF, which he criticized for the way it was arguably more attuned to its international Latino/a filmmaking constituencies; the film’s RRAFF premiere, in turn, was envisioned by its makers as an opportunity for audience-building (P. Pérez Interview 2012).

5.2.1.3 Best Short: *In Times of War / En Tiempo de Guerra; Botes al Amanecer / Cans at Dawn*

These two short social dramas correspond to RRAFF’s nurture and educational agenda. In the case of Brian Parada’s *In Times of War*,³⁶⁹ the nomination recognizes emerging talent from the CSU graduate community – a 2010 senior film project from California State University Northridge (CSUN). The film revolves around the atrocities directed against civilians during El Salvador’s civil war, a topic resonating with RRAFF’s politics of place due to the fact that Los Angeles is home to the most populous Salvadoran community not only in the entire U.S. but also outside the Salvadoran homeland; the festival thus acknowledges the diversification both of local Angeleno/a communities as well as local Latino/a filmmaking with its traditional focus on the Chicano/a experience.

Cans Before Dawn / Botes Al Amanecer by Philadelphia based filmmaker Nikki Roberts, in turn, is set in the contemporary U.S. and paints a vivid picture of the harsh realities faced by Latino/a immigrants, with children having to help support their families through menial jobs. In this vein, the protagonist, a young boy, helps his single mother collect recyclables from garbage containers each morning before school. To the boy, a confrontation with an angry security guard who had previously driven the two off his industrial property workplace serves as a rite of passage as he stands his ground and inspires the grown man’s respect. *Cans Before Dawn*, which features Los Angeles based actor José Yenque as guard,³⁷⁰ had already been screened at Cannes’s Court Métrage / Short Film Corner

³⁶⁹ *En Tiempo de Guerra* was also a finalist in the BAFTA-Los Angeles Student Film Awards 2011 (BAFTA: British Academy of Film and Television Arts; CSUN website).

³⁷⁰ Known through numerous roles in mainstream television and film, such as Stephen Soderbergh’s *Traf-fí*, Yenque has also been associated with social activism in the youth sector, such as his co-founding of TELA SOFA (The East Los Angeles Society of Film and Arts). His involvement thus enhanced RRAFF’s educational goals. Yenque is also the son of 2012 PA honoree Teresa Yenque.

and continued to receive a wider exposure, as it was shown at a number of festivals around the U.S. and abroad and received two more awards.³⁷¹

5.2.1.4 Best Documentary: *The Calling*; *TRUST: Second Acts in Young Lives*

In his classic introduction to the genre, film scholar Bill Nichols (2001) has argued that “[d]ocumentary film and video stimulates epistophilia (a desire to know) in its audience. It conveys an informing logic, a persuasive rhetoric, or a moving poetics that promises information and knowledge, insight and awareness.” (Nichols 2001:40) In a similar vein, RRAFF’s selection of ambitious, socially relevant documentaries underline the festival’s dedication to education.³⁷² Just as RRAFF’s honoring of pioneering documentary filmmakers Sylvia Morales and Lourdes Portillo by means of career awards, this competitive category also underlines the recognition reserved for the documentary genre. In its championing of the documentary, the festival goes against the local (and overall) dominance of fictional formats – entertainment – due to their better marketability³⁷³. As is the case with the previously discussed example of Tijuana’s BorDocs, RRAFF’s interest in the documentary, in its inherent desire for knowledge is to some extent also inspired by RRAFF’s academic roots.

Furthermore, the documentary genre connects the festival to first wave Chicano/a-Latino/a film activism as well as its continuation by a younger generation. Filmmakers from this first generation such as Sylvia Morales and Jesús S. Treviño showed and sometimes premiered their latest works at RRAFF (Morales: *A Crushing Love*, 2009; Treviño: *Visions of Aztlán*, 2010 and the *Latinopia* website with its wealth of documentaries in 2011); in 2008, Roberto Oregel, from a younger generation of documentary filmmakers and RRAFF co-director in 2010 premiered *Casa Libre / Freedom House* there. RRAFF’s insistence on the documentary genre resulted in the fact that the element of competition in this programming category frequently became less of a priority: In 2011, RRAFF featured only two medium to full length documentaries in competition; in 2012, too, there were only four. RRAFF had not sought to fill the gap by accepting more films as to boost the category’s competition factor, something, one is to infer, which would have undermined its own quality standards. In fact, organizers even risked alienating audiences and their frequent predilection for fictional formats. This in turn meant a potential hazard not only to box office turnout but also to sponsor satisfaction.³⁷⁴

³⁷¹ Festivals include: SDLFF, Santa Barbara International FF, New York Latino International Film Festival (“Botes al amanecer”, imdb.com). Awards: Best Film at the Downtown Film Festival Los Angeles; Best Short at the First Annual Mexican Film Festival of the Americas 2012, Chicago.

³⁷² Examples from RRAFF 2012 may suffice to attest to the diversity of issues debated, including, as it does, Gloria Morán’s *Home for the Homies* (USA 2012), which raises awareness of the gentrification of San Francisco’s Mission neighborhood; *La Linea Invisible / The Invisible Line* (Lisa Diez Gracia, France 2012), on a Mexican village that thrives on making re-enactments of illegal border crossing a tourist spectacle; and *When Will the Punishment End?* (USA 2012), a gripping social study by sociologist and first-time filmmaker Marta López-Garza on the reintegration of female ex-convicts.

³⁷³ Here, Scott L. Baugh too has observed that “[p]erhaps more so for fictive-narrative films than for documentaries and the avant-garde, marketing traditionally has played no small role in helping to shape American cinema, in general, and for present purposes, Latina and Latino cinemas” (2012: 54 ff.).

³⁷⁴ In a personal conversation on the sidelines of RRAFF 2010 the festival director told me that *The Calling* had drawn only a handful of viewers, all of them festival associates. This lack of rapport from “regular” audiences may be owed to the genre. But there is also a more general tendency at RRAFF, this filmmaker’s festival, as to a considerable portion of the audience’s being composed of peers of the respective films on show. Considering also the fact that festival attendance for out of town filmmakers may not always be feasible financially and / or timewise, this puts contestants from other parts of the U.S. at a certain disadvantage.

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

Both awarded films, by New York based filmmaker David Ranghelli (*The Calling*, RRAFF Best Documentary 2011) and Northern Californian producer-filmmaker couple Nancy Kelly and Kenji Yamamoto (*TRUST: Second Acts in Young Lives*), correspond to RRAFF's goal of educating their audiences about the multifacetedness of Latino/a experiences, *The Calling*, on religion and family; *TRUST*, on the cathartic power of art as a means to overcome trauma and to achieve self-worth, or empathy, respectively. Incidentally, neither of both films was made by Latinos/as; and neither of the out of town filmmakers involved attended the respective screenings. Both films added new facets to RRAFF's community building project: Ranghelli's film follows a religious order that comes to challenge and replace established family patterns; Kelly and Yamamoto's film records an amateur theater group's communal growth through the reworking and reenactment of a young Latina's experiences both of emotional abandonment by her family and community and sexual abuse. Through their multiple awards at other arenas of exhibition both films in turn also enhanced RRAFF's own prestige.

David Ranghelli's film, *The Calling*, enters transnational terrain since the film takes place both in the U.S. and Peru. The film focuses on two topics traditionally associated with Latinos/as – the family and religion, thus “provid[ing] a glimpse into the personal nature of belief and the bonds of family [...] as it delves into the fundamental and enduring questions that provide meaning and value to our lives.” (*RRAFF 2011*: 10) By honoring this unusual film, RRAFF instigates a critical re-evaluation of the family in the age of patchwork families and of families departing from the heteronormative mould. *The Calling* also provides a glimpse into an uncommon Roman Catholic order in a time when many Latinos/as have begun to look for a spiritual home outside their traditional affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church.

The film by New York based filmmaker David Ranghelli was featured widely in the U.S. film festival circuit and abroad, including SFLFF and SDLFF as well as Chicago's CLFF.³⁷⁵ It follows the members of the newly founded “Family of Jesus the Healer” to their first base in Tampa, Florida, and eventually to their spiritual leader's native Peru. The film focuses on three members of the community, who each must follow their own calling even though this may create conflict with their biological families.

Both religion and the family have traditionally served as pillars of Latino/a identity, often regarded as a bulwark against the U.S. cultural mainstream's individualism and its Anglo-Protestant leanings and as spiritual and / or economic support systems, respectively. However, *The Calling* shows that religion can also forge new meanings of family and kinship. On the one hand, this means that in keeping with the rules of his new religious family which has dedicated all their energy to aiding poor communities in Peru, young novice Orlando, too, is expected to curtail the contact with his Nicaraguan immigrant parents, whose only son he is. On the other hand, the religious group grants privileges less common among traditional Roman Catholic religious orders; another member, Mother Mary Elizabeth, thus is granted a sabbatical to reconnect with her secular family of two grown daughters and their families.

³⁷⁵ Costa Rica International Film Festival at Montezuma, Costa Rica: Winner, Best Documentary; Gasparilla International Film Festival, Tampa, Florida: Special Mention for Cinematic Achievement Award; Queens International Film Festival, New York, New York: Best International Documentary (*The Calling*; thecalling-documentary.com).

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

Its focus on family and community also makes David Ranghelli's *The Calling* a contribution to the longstanding conversation in conjunction with what Rosa Linda Fregoso has called Latino/a cinema's traditional predilection for *la familia*, "the family romance," and here, to its more recent discussion of "other models of kinship" (2003: 90). Even though its composition is modelled on the traditional family, it is a family by choice and one which grants a certain amount of freedom.

Incidentally, *TRUST: Second Acts in Young Lives*, in turn, focuses on the way a theatrical troupe functions as the protagonist's substitute family, helping her process past abuse inflicted onto her by biological kin. It was made by Marin County based filmmaker-producer team Nancy Kelly and Kenji Yamamoto. The film garnered two more awards at Northern California based film festivals³⁷⁶ after its premiere at MVFF. *TRUST* follows an enactment project by the Chicago based Albany Park Theater Project (AFTP), staging the story of an eighteen year old Honduran born young woman, Marlin, who changes her name to "Nellie" in the play, thus shares intimate details of her troubling past – having been left behind as a child when her mother had already relocated to the U.S.; sexual abuse suffered both in Honduras, and later in Chicago; her subsequent drug problems and countless nights spent at the psychiatric ward. The group's adaptation of "Nellie"'s story serves to empower the entire troupe and establish a mutual bond of trust. This also includes AFTP director David Feiner whose first such project this is after the untimely demise of his beloved wife and workshop co-founder.

5.2.1.5 Web based genres: Focus on nurture and new technology

The introduction of its web based category (since 2010) into RRAFF's programming and awards politics is important for a number of reasons. First, RRAFF thus has recognized the World Wide Web as an increasingly relevant and widely accessible arena of communication, including the dissemination of film and other audiovisual media. This stance ties in with my earlier discussion of Juan Flores (2003) noting the internet's democratizing potential, offering "radically new levels of interaction and interconnectedness" (194) for underrepresented groups as it may function as a resource both for connecting remote communities and for educational reasons. One example is Jesus S. Treviño's *Latinopia* (latinopia.com), launched at RRAFF 2011, as this internet platform with its wealth of videos draws attention not only to the rich and varied Latino/a cultural production in a variety of genres but also the overall diversity of the Latino/a experience.

Second, it is also in terms of RRAFF's dedication to nurture and its insistence on creating an atmosphere that allows for experimentation that web based genres are an enrichment of its programming range. RRAFF's keeping up with new trends further increases its relevance to its filmmaking stakeholders but also vis-à-vis its supporters; and in fact, web based formats are an attractive platform for up and coming filmmakers with limited financial resources. Festival director John Ramirez has stressed the possibilities for experimentation and honing one's talent using internet based formats, "giv[ing the] filmmaker the opportunity to work through a complete narrative concept, and to develop it and see it grow" (J. Ramirez Interview 2011). Web based formats meet the needs of a younger generation of film professionals and their necessary pragmatism, facing a higher level of competition and fast paced, ever transforming markets. Such formats may also serve as stepping stones for beginning filmmakers in terms of audience building, as well as for pitching their artistic portfolio to studios or

³⁷⁶ Sebastopol Documentary Film Festival's Jury Award (Sebastopol, California) and the Youth Vision Award of the United Nations Association Film Festival (Bay Area) (*TRUST*; trustdocumentary.org).

distributors.³⁷⁷ Their relative affordability resonates with the festival's embrace of *rasquachismo* in its credo of using limited means in a "down-to-earth, resourceful, creative" manner (*RRAFF 2009*: 4).

But web based formats also provide more artistic freedom; incidentally, they are often characterized by *lo rasquache*'s boldness and resilience. As will be made clear in my discussion of the 2011 and 2012 winners, webisodes may challenge the status quo due to their unconventional content and / or circumstances of production. Furthermore, as my conversations with a number of filmmakers working in digital genres have shown, many webisodes attest to the fact that the scarcity of financial resources has necessitated for media workers to resort to intense networking and teamwork; hence, they are also means to build community.³⁷⁸ Their many possibilities for artistic expression make web based genres such a convenient format in the light of RRAFF's goal to show "the many real and rich dimensions of the U.S. Latina/o experience" (*RRAFF 2010*: 4). And not least of all, RRAFF's webisode programming slot also provides a unique possibility to showcase one's work to a wider public when, in the realm of the film festival, the usually isolated online viewing experience is turned into a communal one. Thus, for the filmmakers, the festival provides a unique opportunity to receive immediate rapport by audiences who have been part of a communal, synchronic screening, which also makes them an important instantiation of RRAFF's community building project.

5.2.1.5.1 Best Webisode: *Police Chicks: Life on the Beat* [episode one]; *Fixing Paco*

Police Chicks: Life on the Beat was the first episode of what was later developed into a small series by Los Angeles based actor and producer Carlos Zelaya. The series is an example for the innovative group spirit that inspires a young community of mostly Los Angeles based film professionals who use web based formats. Zelaya's long-term goal was to pitch the series to Comedy Central, the cable television channel, counting on its crossover abilities.

Centering on two "female, sassy cops" (Zelaya), the webseries features as its leads two female police officers, played with a lot of swagger by Miriam Peniche and the series' co-producer, Nicole Ortega, whose characters go by the actresses' last names. *Police Chicks* celebrates Eastside Los Angeles in all its multi-ethnic glory – something, the producers claim, which has been frequently obfuscated in the mainstream media (C. Zelaya & N. Ortega Interview 2011).

Another such challenge are the characters of Officers Ortega and Peniche themselves, who, owing to their gender and ethnicity, fuller figures, and strong sexual appetite are a refreshing new take on the police film's "buddy" theme and the often one dimensional representations reserved for women on the force, let alone ethnic women. In terms of its crossover or "Latino/a formula" potential, the miniseries thrives on what I would call a specifically "LExploitation" aesthetic, featuring Angeleno/a

³⁷⁷ One example is Richard Montes's webseries *Los Angeles Ward* (2011), entered into the 2012 contest, which built visibility for his comedy, *Aguruphobia* (2015).

³⁷⁸ One striking example for one such collaborative project is RRAFF associate Miguel Torres and Mauricio Mendoza's gritty supernatural drama series, *Encounters: An Original webseries*, an episode of which was entered into the 2011 contest. The show is comprised of thirteen episodes, each created by different writers and directors from the local younger Latino/a Hollywood community, including Shawna Baca, Joe Camareno, Kenneth Castillo, Emanuel Gironi, David Sifuentes, Miguel Torres, David Valdez, and others; each a separate story about redemptive or enlightening "encounters" with beloved ones returning from the afterlife (or coming from the future).

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

local color and a culture of food trucks, white wannabee *cholos* (homeboys) and hipsterdom – and on an ensemble of quirky characters and a unique sense of humor spanning a spectrum from silly and deadpan to morbid. All the while, the police comedy format also allows to address a range of more serious issues which may or may not resonate with its multicultural agenda – such as racism, sexism, and gentrification as well as mental illness.³⁷⁹ The series' mixture of irreverent representational politics and improvisational “guerrilla techniques,” such as shooting without permit on rooftop and parking structures (C. Zelaya, RRAFF 2011 Webisodes Q & A) resemble the *rasquache* spirit both of attitude and necessity.³⁸⁰ This impression was reinforced in the following year when Zelaya, Ortega and their team returned to RRAFF with a new *Police Chicks* double sequel and further described his team's working ethic of reciprocity – which to some extent made up for the fact that none involved received a salary – featuring friends or colleagues hired through laworks.com, a web based non profit company featuring a professional network for media professionals (and also a RRAFF sponsor). Their dismissal of Hollywood's competitive edge resonated with RRAFF's workshop atmosphere and that of MACSD's *Frontera* Filmmakers.

However, contestants' spirit of solidarity was somewhat put to a test facing the winner in the same category in 2012. This was when an episode from the ten-sequel web series *Fixing Paco* (2012) came in first, the third award in a row at RRAFF secured by director-producer Joe Camareno.³⁸¹ There are some substantial differences to *Police Chicks* and other competitors in the web based genre, from content to imagined audiences and respective conditions of production. *Fixing Paco*'s eligibility for this category and its eventual success in garnering the award both attest to the web based genre's many facets but also to RRAFF's prioritization of content and production quality with a certain disregard to the rather asymmetrical production conditions. Narrated in an offbeat, humorous manner by Paco's teenage daughter, Margie, the family comedy revolves around Paco Fuentes, a handyman whose professional prestige is based on his ability “to fix anything,” and whose need for a kidney transplant gradually transforms the entire family dynamic as it demands their joint support. The show features popular Chicano actor-comedian Paul Rodriguez in the lead (*Born in East L.A.; A Million to Juan; Tortilla Soup*), and a Latino/a cast which assured some degree of recognition value for an imagined U.S. Latino/a viewership³⁸².

Educational and family/community oriented, *Fixing Paco* ties in with the goals of RRAFF and RRAFF's sponsors as it provides vital (sic) health information to today's lesser privileged yet increasingly communications savvy constituencies. Produced in alternative Spanish and English language formats, *Fixing Paco* aims to enlighten bilingual audiences about how to “access and learn about

³⁷⁹ One example is how the twin episodes entered into the contest in the next year, 2012 are a gruesome, modern spin on the Mexican folk tale of La Llorona, the Weeping Woman, who abducts strange children after she lost her own in the course of her immigration. Here, the cop duo investigates a case of disappearing babies and an ominous food truck vendor (Elena Campbell-Martínez) selling Salvadoran fare (“Enter: The Pupusa Lady” and “Exit: The Pupusa Lady”).

³⁸⁰ Different sequels of the series were entered into the competition of RRAFF 2011 and 2012, respectively.

³⁸¹ In 2010, *Ylse*, which he produced, received the best webisode award.

³⁸² In addition to Paul Rodriguez, a comedian with his own television show and a fixture in Latino/a-Chicano/a cinema (*Born in East L.A., A Million to Juan*), the cast included Puerto Rican Gloria Garayua, “Mexican” Marabina Jaimes who already had collaborated with Camareno on *Bimbots*; U.S.-Nicaraguan Ingrid Oliu (*Stand and Deliver; Real Women Have Curves*); Panamanian U.S. Soledad St. Hilaire (*Star Maps; Real Women Have Curves*); and Miriam Peniche, who also starred in *Police Chicks*.

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

transplantations” (RRAFF 2012 Web Series Q & A). Furthermore, *Fixing Paco*’s focus on public health is also consistent with a specific tradition in U.S. minority activism which has informed grassroots organizations as well as academic institutions.³⁸³

The example of *Fixing Paco*’s nomination yet again shows how film festivals such as RRAFF grant insights into the wide range of strategic identity positionings embraced by a younger generation of media professionals, such as their usage of the “Latino/a formula” as a negotiation between cultural affirmation and commerce. On the one hand, as a vehicle for its educational agenda, the series draws on the genre of the family comedy, which, from *Father Knows Best* (CBS / NBC 1964-60) to ABC’s multi-ethnic *Modern Family* (2009-2020) has been so enduringly popular among U.S. audiences. On the other hand, the theme of *la familia* itself with its special meaning in Latino/a culture and cultural production also further normalizes its content.

The fact that *Paco* was a sponsored and commissioned work underlines and at the same time interrogates RRAFF’s nurture project. That said, it so happened that the series had been co-produced by Los Angeles based Mendez National Institute of Transplantation (MNIT, since 1984), a clinic “advanc[ing] the science and practice of organ transplantation” (mnitf.org).³⁸⁴ As a consequence, *Fixing Paco* possessed a comparatively solid financial basis which allowed different production conditions³⁸⁵ and a fairer working environment, including a (more expensive) union affiliation often avoided in shoestring productions.³⁸⁶ What struck me as remarkable and perhaps problematic were two aspects, the proverbial “elephant in the room.” One point was a possible interrelation of interests with regard to the sponsoring transplantation clinic and ensuing ethical conflicts – the undisputable benefits of providing public health education to poorer communities weighed against the fact that organ transplants are a profitable business, and RRAFF’s providing a platform for promoting the clinic. Second, there was *Paco*’s evident competitive advantage as a competitor in a class of its own; and this was only revealed by the somewhat tense atmosphere among other contestants. This episode underlines the limits of RRAFF’s nurture ambitions and its sheltered workshop image – the latter being not least of all also curtailed by the proximity of the industries and, as a result, a higher degree of competition on the other contestants. Furthermore, this example points at the limitations of positing smaller Latino/a film festivals such as RRAFF in terms of “networks of solidarity” (Torchin) encouraging cooperation among its filmmaking stakeholders and the seemingly inevitable level of competition that is the result of how such special interest, minority festivals, while outside a possible “field of film festivals,”

³⁸³ Examples include TELA SOFA with its programs providing information on the prevention of teen pregnancy, and AIDS prevention; furthermore, academic institutions such as UCLA’s Chicano Studies Research Center (CSRC) are committed to community outreach and research projects on a range of public health issues, such as the access to healthy food in East Los Angeles’ communities (“Corner Store Makeovers in East Los Angeles: Improving Healthy Food Access,” project leader: Alex Ortega, since 2012). (“CSRC: Public Health”; www.chicano.ucla.edu).

³⁸⁴ That said, the show’s two writers of the show previously had to secure financial backing for the series in three years’ time. (J. Camareno; RRAFF 2012 Webisode Q & A). Additional sponsoring came from Los Angeles based UniHealth Foundation.

³⁸⁵ Other 2012 webisode budgets ranged from 500 USD (*Off and Running*) to “mostly none” (*Los Angeles Ward; Police Chicks*). *Fixing Paco*’s were 300.000 USD. (Ch. Montiel Reagan; R. Montes; C. Zelaya; J. Camareno; RRAFF 2012 Webisode Q & A)

³⁸⁶ Indeed, *Paco* had been made entirely with SAG (Screen Actors Guild of America) accredited team members, as well as Richard Montes’ *Los Angeles Ward* and Carlos Zelaya’s *Police Chicks*, while the cast of another series, *Off and Running*, had to remain non-union. However, in the case of the two other series featuring union members, not every union member was paid (RRAFF 2012 Directors’ Roundtable).

are still dominated by the field's major players – business festivals; the film industries – whose rules (competition) may also complicate and curtail smaller festivals' prioritization of such solidarity.

6. Resource: Education and nurture

6.1 Relationship triangle RRAFF – CSULA – sponsors

This section looks at how the symbolic resources of education and nurture impact the relationship triangle between RRAFF; its first fiscal sponsor and long-time host, CSULA; and Disney, representing the festival's corporate sponsors. I will examine the dynamics at work in this complex relationship, involving as it does mutual dependencies regarding the transfer of symbolic and economic capital from one party to the other.

Earlier on, I have already argued that nurture/education involves two steps. First of all, nurture is provided by RRAFF (via the “value of participation” itself, involving all filmmakers; by competitive awards; and by additional measures such as workshops with industry representatives, directors' roundtables, and more). Principal recipients of nurture and / or education are all the filmmakers whose works are shown; university students who volunteer at RRAFF; and high school students participating in the youth showcase. Last but not least, the festival's audiences are also at the receiving end of education and moreover provide (primarily) symbolic capital via their attendance; they validate the festival's mission, the filmmakers' productions, and the involvement of sponsors. Moreover, RRAFF's focus on nurture and education serves as an incentive for sponsors and other collaborators pursuing a specific educational, multicultural agenda. This way, education and nurture are a resource for prestige bestowed on the filmmakers and prestige provided for the festival and its supporters.

This transfer of symbolic capital takes as its starting point the aforementioned “new legitimation discourse encourage[ing] partnerships between government, business and the third or non-profit sector” (Miller & Yúdice 2000:63). Inspired by a “new academic and cultural narrative” (2000:63) surrounding cultural policy in the early 1990s, this change impacted universities such as CSULA as well as arenas for cultural production such as RRAFF but also sponsors now capitalizing on their support of academia and culture on the basis of their own ambition to fashion themselves as corporate citizens. In this context, one needs to bear in mind U.S. universities' traditionally strong dependency on outside sponsoring, coming from corporations, foundations, or private patrons. As a result, universities were forced to rebrand themselves not only in terms of marketability and as corporations in their own right; moreover, as Miller and Yúdice argue, they were expected to cast themselves in the light of meritocracy in order to become eligible for public and corporate support. In fact, CSULA has to some extent always corresponded to this “pragmatic defense of the humanities and culture” (63) due to its long-standing vocational orientation rather than one geared towards academic scholarship. According to this logic, RRAFF provides a valuable supply of symbolic capital both in regard to on-the-job training and professional enhancement opportunities available to CSULA students and as to its function as a flagship event for CSULA's educational mission. To CSULA's students, RRAFF, by means of manifold volunteering opportunities, offers both professional enhancement and the opportunity to earn additional credit points; the latter serve as an incentive particularly for students from the Film and Television Studies program where festival director John Ramirez is also a tenured pro-

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

essor; yet over the years, RRAFF has also attracted other majors and students from other universities. Like other campus founded festivals, RRAFF also serves as a recruiting and outreach tool aimed at an upwardly mobile, increasingly ethnically defined demographic. Moreover, for students and staff, RRAFF has enhanced the quality of CSULA's campus life particularly during the time when it was held at CSULA (2004-2009), where only few such recreational possibilities exist (C. Rocha Interview 2010; Ch. Best Interview 2010). Furthermore, as to RRAFF, as I have previously argued, their activism was always inspired by goals such as cultural affirmation and education, so they never pure *l'art pour l'art* events. When it started out in 2004, RRAFF continued in the tradition of these festivals in a climate when state support was waning and earlier compensatory and affirmative action programs had been *de facto* eroded. RRAFF requires the symbolic capital provided by an institution of higher learning such as CSULA because this legitimates the festival's educational mission in the eyes of corporate sponsors. Furthermore, RRAFF also requires the support of CSULA, which consists of public relations and sponsor outreach (and which in fact is a mix of symbolic and economic capital also due to the wo/manpower involved in providing these services), while there is no financial support *per se* coming from CSULA.

Lastly, for sponsoring corporations, in turn, the "new legitimation discourse" (Miller & Yúdice 2000:63) meant an opportunity to fill the gap left by the state by supporting Latino/a and other ethnic cultural production and its various arenas in conjunction with their own multicultural/diversity programs. Dr. Efraín Fuentes, director of Disney's Multicultural Program, framed the company's motivation both according to the company's own philanthropic mission and according to a consumer citizenship logic when he said that they wanted to "give back, not only to the artists, but also to the community" and to a loyal group of consumers, with Spanish being one of the major languages spoken at Disney's holiday resorts in California and Florida (E. Fuentes Interview 2011). The company wished to prioritize on sustainable, long term relationships with selected partners, preferably in the region. RRAFF's ties to CSULA, its nurture in particular of U.S. Latino/a filmmakers, and its youth showcases all registered favorably in terms of eligibility for support. Disney has sponsored RRAFF from its inception with an annual sum of USD 5000.00. (E. Fuentes Interview 2011) While the company did not interfere with the programming content of its sponsored partners³⁸⁷, the validation of RRAFF's educational mission by CSULA was an essential requirement for their support.

6.1.1 Close-up: Examining CSULA's support of RRAFF

In an interview conducted in 2011, Collette Rocha, vice director of CSULA's Development program, delineated four important aspects which, from the point of view of the university, made the collaboration with RRAFF highly desirable. In order to present a fuller picture of the complex relationship between RRAFF, CSULA, and its educationally minded corporate sponsors, I will now discuss the words of Rocha's arguments in conjunction with statements from RRAFF director Ramirez and others who are or were involved in the festival.

First, at a legal and fiscal level, Rocha argued, there was a personal affiliation with the festival: the university needed to get involved since the festival had been initiated by a faculty member (John

³⁸⁷ "One thing we make clear is that we don't get involved with the selection of films, with the editing and so on. That's your job, that's what you do best. We give you full latitude. We're not going to push a Disney film or anything. We support something that is already on the way" (E. Fuentes Interview 2011).

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

Ramirez) and required external funding; thus, the university embraced the festival as sponsor (C. Rocha Interview 2011). Through pointing at the need for external funding, Rocha actually positioned CSULA at the interface between sponsors – sometimes acquired through CSULA – and the festival. As John Ramirez explained, in turn, in the majority of cases, incoming sponsoring monies for RRAFF were channelled through CSULA's account when CSULA was still RRAFF's sole fiscal co-sponsor. (J. Ramirez Interview 2009). More than once in our interviews RRAFF director Ramirez criticized the university's exercising a certain authority in financial matters. One is to infer that this was a by-product of CSULA's own obligation to fashion itself in terms of entrepreneurship. Most importantly, there was CSULA's tight control of RRAFF's relations with its sponsors, including not only repeated interventions regarding sponsor acquisitions but sometimes even the claiming of part of incoming monies for other university departments (J. Ramirez Interview 2010). Also, despite its own benefits from the festival and Ramirez's personal affiliation with the university, the latter claimed that during RRAFF's entire time as a campus festival, the university had not been able to make any financial concessions in regard to RRAFF's rental of CSULA facilities and equipment, including the Intimate Theatre at the Luckman Complex where RRAFF was held (J. Ramirez 2009; 2010). One is to infer that all the above factors were contributed to RRAFF's struggle for autonomy and eventual move off-campus. (J. Ramirez Interview 2011). But severing its ties with the university once and for all was not a desirable step. One important reason for RRAFF was the symbolic capital associated with the university's involvement under the heading of education. In my interview with Disney's Efraín Fuentes, the latter underlined the necessity for the festival to retain its affiliation with the university because the latter validated RRAFF's educational mission and was key to sponsorship eligibility (E. Fuentes Interview 2011).

The second aspect was the extent to which the festival yielded opportunities for students. It was students "who helped putting the festival on, who were part of RRAFF's planning and execution, and of the overall learning experience" (C. Rocha Interview 2011). The opportunity to offer their students additional professional immersion in a variety of fields, from technological support to public relations, in turn further validated CSULA as an educational institution. Both for CSULA and RRAFF, this nurture factor served as another important incentive for sponsors. Former CSULA Development associate Christopher Best, who had coordinated the university's support of RRAFF in 2006 and 2007, further underlined how the festival was promoted by the university as a professional "springboard" for CSULA students. Best points to the many ways the university benefited from the cooperation, having a "thriving if underfunded film program" with a high percentage (about forty to forty-five percent) of enrolled Latinos/as. A related goal was to attract the attention of the studios as a way to providing more professional opportunities for its students:

We [i.e., the university] were trying to position CSULA in terms of building a pipeline of talent both above and below the line that the studios could hire. The film festival was a way to bring some attention to the campus, of bringing in young filmmakers, of potentially giving young graduates the opportunities to showcase their work. (Ch. Best Interview 2011)

Studios, in turn, could not only make their support by way of a comparatively moderate and easily tax deductible financial grant work for them as part of their philanthropic and diversity missions, all the while "knowing [RRAFF was] making sponsorship deals but at the same time there was still an

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

underpinning of basic stateside support, so they knew they would get a certain amount of exposure without having to spend an awful lot of money [...]. (Ch. Best Interview 2011). Again, Disney is one such example. From the perspective of permanently understaffed RRAFF, in turn, student volunteers provided invaluable organizational support. This situation set RRAFF apart from festivals featuring their own fiscally autonomous not for profit organizations, such as SDLFF. In addition to the dependence on CSULA in this regard, the festival director himself presented an link between film professional constituencies (filmmakers; students as aspirational workers in different branches of the film industry) and the symbolic resource, education. However, a trump in favor of RRAFF that appealed to students were the benefits of volunteering, including the possibility to earn credit points. This, too, was only possible because of John Ramirez's affiliation both with CSULA and RRAFF.

Thirdly, Rocha pointed to RRAFF's outreach possibilities. There were the youth showcases in terms both of the learning experience and the outreach to possible future students of CSULA. As we have seen in conjunction with SDLFF's youth component, for RRAFF as well as for other involved sponsors, its high school program was a way to reach out to local Latino/a communities; these programs were always well-attended not only by the young filmmakers and their instructors, but also turned into family events. Not only did they boost RRAFF's programming range and age demographic, but they also contributed to higher numbers in festival attendance, anchoring the festival in the local Latino/a community and thus further legitimized RRAFF in the eyes of its education-oriented sponsors. In fact, they provided a more encompassing tool for audience building since the festival's youth showcases were exempt from its strategic essentialism and thus not limited to Latinos/as but to the schools and community arts organizations collaborating with RRAFF on this venue. In addition, the youth showcase program yet again situates RRAFF in the specific politics of place of Los Angeles' Latino/a-Chicano/a social and educational activism. All the while, such audience building had proved more difficult when still at CSULA. Even though the existence of a three day festival greatly enhanced the university's recreational options, and a university's promise of a "captive audience" (Ch. Best), RRAFF's success to attract students and staff had always been somewhat limited. This was also due to CSULA's vocational orientation which, as Rocha put it, usually attracted students "leading very full lives," many of them older (twenty-seven being the average age), working on the side, commuting, and having family obligations (C. Rocha Interview 2011). In addition, it is also the very shortcomings of such a recreationally oriented infrastructure which curtailed the development of a festival atmosphere where discussions could extend. Thus, there was a great contrast to other university based festivals where one could at least count on a certain "captive audience" (Ch. Best Interview 2011). In addition, as is the case with all campus festivals, the university location may have posed a psychological deterrent to blue-collar audiences from adjacent East Los Angeles, despite the university's more practical, vocational orientation.

The final point cited by Collette Rocha revolved around possibilities of branding CSULA in conjunction with RRAFF's unique focus on U.S. Latinos "as a special place in the market." Rocha's statement helps to explain the many ways how RRAFF supported CSULA's advertising itself as a diversity conscious and Latino/a friendly institution offering professional opportunities for its minority students, including its many Latino/a students; this is further underlined by my previous example of CSULA's extending its congratulations to CCA 2009 winner Luis Valdez while embracing the opportunity to advertise its own long-standing Department of Chicano Studies; *RRAFF 2009*: 24).

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

Former CSULA associate Christopher Best estimated that in the late 2000s, more than sixty percent of CSULA's student body consisted of Latinos/as, and more than twenty percent of Asian Americans. (Ch. Best Interview 2011) However, while CSULA was able to capitalize on RRAFF, after all a Latino/a themed festival, as a token of the university's commitment to ethnic diversity, there was also a catch, owing to "the university's difficult rules and regulations of not being able to use state money for the benefit of just one ethnic group" (Ch. Best Interview 2011). Here, CSULA's fiscal and diversity policies were strikingly at odds with the university's desire to brand itself in terms of diversity and to appeal to a major Latino/a identified potential clientele. However, this posed a challenge during RRAFF's time at CSULA.

This zooming in on RRAFF's relationship with CSULA and corporate sponsors sheds light on the mutual dependencies between the three stakeholders involved. RRAFF's move onto the facilities of its fiscal co-sponsor CASA 0101 in 2012 no doubt eased this overall mutual dependency. CSULA's validation of RRAFF's educational focus remained, and so was the indispensable influx of volunteers from CSULA; this educational and professional angle was enriched by CASA 0101's own multicultural and educational agenda. In terms of audience building, RRAFF could count on the hosting organization's regular attendees and the proximity both to CSULA and to East Los Angeles; there was the hope that the arts component could be given more visibility due to the organization's exhibition spaces and its overall visibility in the cultural hub of Boyle Heights. It seems that festival's own strategic essentialism resonated with Boyle Height's own *gentefication* and its booming arts scene while being held in check by CASA's own (irregularly staged) women's film festival, the Boyle Heights Latina International Film Extravaganza (BHLIFE) with its transnational scope. All the while, the aim to reach out to a wider demographic also including non-academic constituencies was likely to continue to pose a challenge, also owing to the city's famously long commutes.

7. RAAFF: Home for the Future?

Throughout the eleven years of its existence, and at three different locations – the state university, the cinema, and finally, the hope-inspiring move to a Latino/a theater and arts organization, RRAFF has seen the growth of a team of dedicated, unsalaried staff members and numerous volunteers; it has shaped its identity as a sheltered workshop where it extolled valuable nurture for many beginning and accomplished filmmakers, while honoring some outstanding Latino/a film professionals and works through its career awards and tribute films; it has steadily increased its renown as an arena permitting audiences to catch a glimpse of the rich variety of U.S. Latino/a filmmaking and stories; and it has created sustainable relationships with its sponsors and community partners, including other local film festivals, thus also continuing in the footsteps of Los Angeles' substantial Latino/a arts and film activism. RRAFF has thus also braved the changing tide for Latino/a driven events in Los Angeles and beyond, having made the task of securing sponsorship more difficult over the years; this impression was further confirmed by my conversation with Mexican born film producer Patricia Nava, who had served as curator of the Los Angeles' Student Film Festival organized by the Latin American Cinemateca of Los Angeles (LACLA) between 2009 and 2011. She stated that while the 1990s had seen a relative scarcity of Latin American and U.S. Latino/a films in circulation that also lent a certain novel-

V. The Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (RRAFF)

ty character to showcasing events and thus attracting sponsors, the 2000s had experienced a proliferation of Latino/a film and an ensuing decline of interest on part of sponsors (P. Nava Interview 2011).

Throughout its existence, RRAFF's prime stakeholders have shifted from students and filmmakers to filmmakers – for reasons that were first and foremost a result of the way local members of Latino/a Hollywood readily and enthusiastically embraced the festival and its workshop atmosphere. This has been a terrific accomplishment for the festival, also in view of its limited resources. Yet there was an obvious dominance of entertainment-heavy formats with their more commercial repercussions, which are a result of RRAFF's proximity to Hollywood; at their most extreme, as I have shown with regard to *Fixing Paco*, these entertainment formats also led to moments when the festival's enablement of such a sheltered atmosphere was curtailed.

In its programming politics, RRAFF sought to establish a balance by expressedly supporting voices from inside and beyond Hollywood; the latter aim has been most of all manifest in RRAFF's curation of ambitious and unusual documentaries. In this context, RRAFF's strategic essentialism, whose main purpose has been to use the festival's limited resources in order to support the work of underrepresented U.S. filmmakers but which meant the exclusion of works from outside the U.S., may have served as a hindrance to potentially enable transnational exchange inspiring a greater degree of departure from the industry's overwhelming entertainment logic (that said, despite Hollywood's globalized pull and the way it has impacted the international filmmaking community). In this regard, RRAFF's embrace of *lo rasquache* as a term or brand not necessarily known outside the U.S. Southwest may have aggravated the situation because this too may have hindered the attraction of filmmaking community more heterogeneous in regard to individual Hollywood leanings. In fact, the term *rasquache*, as powerful as it is as a link to the festival's goals of cultural affirmation and education and to a local history of creativity and resistance that has inspired generations of filmmakers and artists, due to its countercultural repercussions, perhaps is no longer serving its purposes in conjunction with the cross-over and commercial ambitions of some of RRAFF's filmmaking constituencies.

That being said, the expressions of regret and support upon the cancellation of the 2015 festival speak to RRAFF's substantial uptake within Latino Hollywood and beyond. This is underlined by the reactions to John Ramirez's official cancellation of the 2015 edition on the festival's official Facebook page (02/26/2015), including those of previously featured filmmakers, such as Cheyann Reagan (participant in the webisode category, RRAFF 2012), John Camareno (Best Webisode 2010, Best Feature 2011, Best Webisode 2012), Ramón Hamilton (Best Feature 2012), and Kenneth Castillo (Pioneer Award 2013). In his post, Ramirez appealed to RRAFF's followers both to “[p]lease keep RRAFF in your prayers and good wishes” and to “continue to always support Latino films and continue to make excellent Latino films so that RRAFF 2016 will be the best celebration yet.” It remains to be hoped that RRAFF will eventually return to continue its valuable task of celebrating and serving a more comprehensive vision of *latinidad*. [^1]: Falassi's examples from modern Italian include *feria*, which he translates as “abstinence from work in honor of a saint,” and *ferie*, “time away from work” (1987:2).

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción's festivals, the International Latino Film Festival San Francisco, and the San Francisco Latino Film Festival

In the 1990s and 2000s, the Northern Californian city of San Francisco and its surrounding Bay Area featured two long-standing Latino/a festival organizations. Both left powerful legacies that have both impacted and served as a foil to Cine+Mas's San Francisco Latino Film Festival (SFLFF, since 2009). With their first festivals hosted nine years apart from one another (in 1988 and 1997, respectively), they both represent different and sometimes complementing ways as to how their respective activism has resonated with the specific politics of place of the Bay; Latino/a defined and other minority and arts activism; and politics of commodification. Even though both had been terminated when I started my fieldwork, I have been able to explore their history, drawing both on numerous interviews with former members of both organizations and on publications materials, such as catalogs, newsletters, and interviews.

First, there was pioneering film board, Cine Acción (1980-2006), responsible for ¡Cine Latino! (1993-2004), a festival preceded by a one-time festival event dedicated to transnational Latina made cinema, "Women of the Americas in Film and Video" (1988). These festivals were a logical continuation of their mother organization's groundbreaking role as a meeting ground for filmmakers, scholars, and media advocates with a keen interest in promoting both Latin American cinema – with a particular affinity for New Latin American Cinema, as was also reflected by its name – and U.S. Latino/a cinema. The second prominent Latino/a film festival in the Bay was the International Latino Film Festival San Francisco (ILFF, initially named Latino Film Festival of Marin; 1997-2008). ILFF's great success and popularity with audiences was particularly owed to its timely approach of blending education and star-studded entertainment, and to its far-reaching branching out to different locations all around the Bay – a mix not least of all also appealing to patrons and sponsors.

I argue that the festivals considered in this chapter all have tapped the Bay's specific politics of place and unique role in the U.S. cultural and academic landscape. In fact, the North Californian Bay Area has been dubbed the "Left Coast," owing to its progressive-radical atmosphere. For one, the Greater Bay is a hub for academia. It is home to prestigious Ivy League institutions such as the University of California-Berkeley and Stanford University as well as many more state and private universities. Furthermore, the region features a vibrant artistic community and has long been a mecca for independent filmmaking and film festival epicenter³⁸⁸; among the latter, there are the veteran San Francisco International Film Festival (SFIFF, since 1957) and equally renowned Mill Valley Film Festival (MVFF, since 1977) as well as countless special interest film festivals.³⁸⁹ But the Bay has also been known for its social activism of many different stripes. Bay writer-activist-and public intellectual in residence,

³⁸⁸ Thus, a tourist website lists thirty-four such festivals for the 2016/2017 season for San Francisco only. ("San Francisco Film Festivals 2016." www.sftourismtips.com)

³⁸⁹ These include LGBT themed FRAMELINE (since 1977), the American Indian Film Festival (AIFF, since 1975, and relocated to San Francisco in 1979), and the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival (SFJFF, since 1980), all three being the world's oldest and, in the case of FRAMELINE and SFJFF, also largest of their kind; as well as the Asian American and Asian themed CAAMFest (organized by the Center for Asian American Film and Media, since 1982) the San Francisco Black Film Festival (SFBFF, since 1998) and many more festivals dedicated to short, silent, noir, and other genre films.

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción's festivals, the International Latino

Rebecca Solnit (2002) has described San Francisco's traditional function as "one of the great laboratories for broadening and transforming our understanding of human rights, justice, economics, work, gender, sexuality, the natural world, as creative in its activism as its arts" (168). Examples go well beyond the city limits as they include UC Berkeley's free speech movement (1964-65); the foundation of the Black Panther Party in Oakland (1966); the Alcatraz occupation by Native American and Inuit activists and other allied protesters (1969-71); and the Bay's sizable LGBT community, with slain gay rights advocate and local politician Harvey Milk serving as a prominent figurehead. Longstanding Latino/a cultural organizations include the Galería de la Raza and the Mission Cultural Center for the Latino Arts (MCCLA), both in San Francisco's Mission District, and La Peña in Berkeley.

As my investigation will show, one important characteristic marking the Bay's cultural and arts activist communities is their particularly high degree of collaboration among different groups and, in regard to its local Latino/a-Chicano/a groups, an intersectional, particularly non-essentializing orientation. While historically, densely populated, compact urban areas such as San Francisco's Mission District or parts of Oakland allowed for encounters between different groups, limited resources also required the creation of strategic cross-alliances, as evidenced by the foundation of Cine Acción as a relatively loose and fluctuating association of Latino/a and non-Latino/a filmmakers, activists and scholars. Meanwhile, the younger Cine+Mas and its SFLFF have also continued in the tradition of building relationships with many smaller cultural arts organizations of different ethnic-racial and artistic affiliations all around the Bay; this move is driven by their championship of locality – the empowering of local communities – but also by their limited means. Furthermore, the Bay's unique atmosphere with its great appreciation of and openness for the arts has normalized liberal-progressive-radical political tendencies – a factor that was resourced by all three festival organizations, if to different ends: ILFF's triumph throughout the Bay started by way of bringing educational and entertaining film to affluent and liberal San Rafael, Marin County's middle class communities, thus securing and subsequently broadening its sponsoring base. Cine Acción built an impressive network of activists, scholars, and filmmakers sharing its passion for political and experimental Latino/a and Latin American film. The heir to these two organizations, SFLFF, has appealed to a wide variety of constituencies, the young, trendy urbanites as well as educators and working class immigrants.

All the while, there is another Bay Area characteristic that somehow sits squarely to its liberal-artistic atmosphere, namely, the particularly wide gap between affluent and poor communities. Here, a more recent phenomenon ever since the second half of the 1990s, particularly with the arrival of more affluent "dot com" or "tech" communities, has been gentrification (Díaz Casique 2013:1). This is the case in San Francisco, a city well known for its steep cost of living, with the traditionally racially-ethnically heterogeneous (if Latino/a dominated), more recently fashionable "Mission" (the Mission District) as one of the foremost examples. In fact, according to a study from the Brookings Institution (2016), on a national level, the two of Bay's metropolitan areas that hosted the majority of festival venues, namely those of San Francisco (also including cities such as Berkeley, Oakland, Richmond, and Redwood City and San Rafael) and Silicon Valley's San José rank third and sixth in regard to income inequality, with a ratio of 11 and 10.5 (Berube 2018, no pag.). This means that "families on the high end of the income spectrum earn 11 times more than families on the low end" (Kendall 2018, no pag.). Citing findings of the Silicon Valley Index for 2018, Marisa Kendall has also pointed out that even though at 8.6 percent, San José's Silicon Valley's poverty rate compares favorably to statewide

(14.4) and national (14.1) such figures, “nearly a third of Silicon Valley households don’t earn enough to meet their basic needs without assistance, and more than 10 percent of the population lacks regular access to nutritionally adequate food” (Kendall 2018; Massaro 2018).

It is important to note that this economic rift also runs across the Bay’s Latino/a communities: Historically, the Bay has featured a high proportion of working class people of Mexican origin but also a rising middle class. Ever since the 1970s, the region has seen both a growth and continuing diversification of its Latino/a demographic in regard to cultural-national background, class and income as part of California’s “Latino immigration boom of the 1970s and 1980s,” largely caused by the paradigm shift “from bracero to immigrant” among Mexican constituencies when farmworkers were able to be joined by the families (Hayes-Bautista 2004:93). Of particular impact were the Bay’s growing numbers of Central Americans residents, refugees of their war and, subsequently, crime and poverty ridden countries; this trend turned the region into one of the largest coherent Central American constituencies in the entire nation. Another significant group is the Bay’s Southern American enclave, many of them political émigrés from countries such as Argentina, Brazil and Chile.³⁹⁰ Marin County, for instance, features one such enclave, which calls among its most prominent members the Chilean born writer Isabel Allende.

The Bay’s Latino/a film festivals considered in this study all have benefited from the region’s inspirational diversity and immensely creative, liberal-artistic atmosphere on the one hand; on the other hand, they all (have) had to face the many challenges coming with a region marked by high disparities between its more affluent, highly educated constituencies and its many underrepresented and poor groups. Cine Acción’s philosophical leanings towards New Latin American Cinema and other political cinematic traditions signaled a rejection of Hollywood’s primacy on entertainment, which is underlined by the group’s chosen name, a reference to Getino and Solanas’s (1968; trans. J. Burton 1969) aforementioned, seminal manifesto, *Toward a Third Cinema (Hacia un tercer cine)*, and its demand for “a film act or action” as opposed to “movies as shows” (132).

Through its festivals and other year-round activities, the organization promoted the visibility of Latinos/as and national and international Latino/a film in a time before streaming and video on demand; it offered professional enhancement opportunities to its filmmaking constituencies; and it served as an important arena for intellectual-academic-artistic exchange. In this respect, the building of alliances attuned to a vision – both transnational and local as it was in line with to the Bay’s intersecting social and arts activism – has always served as an important strategy. In its formative first decade, the 1980s, its priorities were both the community building among the different emerging scholarly and film professional-artistic fields revolving around Latino/a film and the dissemination thereof, such as by its ever-growing film and video archive and its own bulletin. Cine Acción’s first ever film festival, a four-day event in 1988 dedicated to contemporary and classic Latina filmmaking in the Americas attested to its intersectional and transnational orientation. In the 1990s, the organization broadened its repertoire by intensifying outreach to more encompassing imagined audiences by means of its monthly, sometimes traveling, “Cineteca” filmic exhibitions and annual festivals (¡Cine Latino!, since 1993). Crucially, these events were hosted at multiple locations in the Bay, including academic institutions, community arts organizations, and commercial theaters.

³⁹⁰ In fact, the Bay’s Chilean community has even longer standing roots in the area due to a historical enclave who had followed the city’s late 1840s Gold Rush (Bevk 2012, no pag.)

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción's festivals, the International Latino

While Cine Acción had been initiated by filmmakers, film activists and scholars and its dependence on many different people who gave their work on the voluntary basis and a challenging financial situation led to its termination in the 2000s, ILFF was founded by an Argentine émigré as First Annual Latino Film Festival of Marin with the help of committed teachers in affluent Marin County in 1998. Its backing organization, ILFS, followed in 2006. In a time that saw an increased commercialization of Latino/a film festivals all over the country, ILFF's business strategy combined education and entertainment in ways that were increasingly celebrity-driven. Right from the start, ILFF sported an impressive network of patrons and sponsors, including diasporic Latin American communities, educators, and, particularly in the 2000s, when it took over as the Bay's prominent Latino/a film festival, Latino/a Hollywood. It was then that ILFF branched out to multiple venues throughout the Bay, including San José, the gateway to Silicon Valley. The financial crisis and its negative impact on sponsoring matters was the official cause for the discontinuation of the festival in its old shape in 2009 (S. Perel e-mail 04/19/2010; J. Petrovsky Interview 2010), even though the ILFF founding director added two more downsized, weekend-long festival editions in 2010 and 2011 in Redwood City. A related reason was how ILFS's balance increasingly had swung towards costly, star powered events in many different locations rather than community arts organizations which would have been easier to maintain. ILFF founding director Sylvia Perel eventually concentrated her activities on a festival she had started to create in Mexico's Baja Sur in the early 2000s (www.todossantoscinefest.com).

Finally, Cine+Mas's SFLFF (since 2009), the would-be successor of both festival organizations, has also established many alliances to local partners from the Latino/a and or cultural arts organizational sector, to local media, public museums and universities. The organization has thus further validated the respective outreach programs of its partners. Even though some of the venues are of an educational nature, intended to attract poorer and underrepresented local groups as well as to foster understanding and solidarity (such as those in cooperation with Latino/a cultural arts organizations and / or others sponsored by local public media provider KQED), this is just one faction of the festival's clientele, which also includes the region's substantial cinephile, upwardly mobile and affluent constituencies, Latinos/as as well as non-Latinos/as, and the region's many cultural tourists. That said, intrinsic to Cine+Mas' goals is the way it seeks to inspire Latinos/as to "take ownership" (L. Ramirez, in L. Ramirez & D. Díaz Interview 2010) and participate politically. Apart from being unthinkable without strong local partners (since the organization lacks headquarters or one focal festival venue), SFLFF's wide programming repertoire also benefits from the ways it resonates with its affiliated organizations and their respective target communities; it thus includes social justice themed documentaries but also features arts and entertainment driven genres. A characteristic difference to ILFF is the way how Cine+Mas and its festival to this day have deliberately refrained from celebrity appeal despite its advantages as vehicle for sponsorship and audience outreach. While this is in tune with the Bay's independent scene, this also results in an economic frugality which also means that they have also limited their commitment to nurture to the exhibition of films by local filmmakers.

1. Cine Acción

1.1 Core facts

Name of organization:	Cine Acción (1980-2006) ³⁸⁸
Festivals:	“Women of the Americas in Film and Video” (one festival; 1988); ¡Cine Latino! (annual, between 1993 and 2004)
Locations:	Multiple locations in San Francisco and the Bay Area
Festival directors and co-directors:	Various, including: Luz Castillo, Liz Kotz, Celeste Greco, Elaine Vergelin (“Women of the Americas,” 1988); Gina Hernandez and Jennifer Maytorena Taylor (¡Cine Latino! 1993); J. Maytorena Taylor (1994); Ethan van Thillo and Rosalía Ruíz Valencia (1995); R. Ruíz Valencia and Ray Santisteban (1997); R. Ruíz Valencia and Sergio de la Mora (1998); Dario Sanmiguel (2001); Ron Ponce (2004)
Sponsors and supporters:	State agencies and foundations; media, corporate, and community sponsors and collaborators ³⁸⁹
Target films:	National and international Latino/a film

³⁸⁸ Due to my reliance on archive material, I could not obtain the 1996, 2000, 2002, and 2003 ¡Cine! Latino catalogs.

³⁸⁹ So for instance, the 1997 program acknowledged support by the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) Extension Arts program; the California Arts Council; Grants for the Arts of the San Francisco Tax Fund; the San Francisco Arts Commission; the John D. And Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; the Charles Schwab HOPE Group; the Zellerbach Family Fund, (“Acknowledgements”; ¡Cine Latino! 1997:44), and others; and corporate sponsors including Trader Joe’s, Chevron, and United Airlines, a number of hotels, local Latino/a centred publications (*Frontera Magazine* and *El Mensajero*), and the National Latino Communications Center (NLCC), among others (“Sponsors”; ¡Cine Latino! 1997:4).

1.2 Beginnings: 1980-1990

In 1980, Cine Acción set out as a loose association of a younger generation of filmmakers, scholars, and film activists. The choice of name invokes Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino’s essay “Toward a Third Cinema” (1969), both a manifesto proclaiming a militant cinema of liberation (Cine Liberación) and of action and a companion piece to their pioneering documentary, *La Hora de los Hornos / The Hour of the Furnaces* (1967). In a similar vein, Cine Acción made a point of situating itself in the tradition of the New Latin American Cinema of the 1960s and ’70s with its anti-imperialist, anti-Hollywood repercussions. It is important to note, however, that even though Cine Acción shared some of the same goals as Cine Liberación in particular and New Latin American Cinema in general, there were also many differences due to the fact that the group was started more than a decade later and inserted in a different national, cultural-political, and not least of all socio-economic context. As part of its community building endeavors, Cine Acción thus linked itself to New Latin American Cinema’s project of paying attention to national specificity while advocating a “supranational ideal”:

By invoking a continental ideal of unity grounded in Latin America’s distinctiveness, the movement has aligned itself with the discourses and representations through which Latin American histories and cultures have been mediated. Moreover, the ideals of continental solidarity – its unity within diversity – have enabled the movement to incorporate the political goals of its constituting cinematic practices into a continental and modernist project. (Pick 1993: 2)

I argue that Cine Acción's founders were well aware of these many distinctions; its connection to New Latin American Cinema also made it possible to embrace this "unity within diversity" as a helpful ideal that would support their own promotion both of U.S. Latino/a and Latin American-international Latino/a cinematic visions. And indeed, there were striking parallels between the beginnings of New Latin American Cinema, here represented by Cine Liberación, and Cine Acción. Like the former, Cine Acción had been founded by a young generation of filmmakers and scholars. They saw themselves in opposition to established mainstream film economies and practices, even though they were neither working from the political underground nor from a position of militancy. Instead, they were united by their desire to work against the underrepresentation of U.S. Latino/a and Latin American film in the U.S., and by their goal to "increas[e] the participation of Latinos and Chicanos in media and [of] providing the community with contemporary Latino / Latin American film and video (*Women of the Americas 1988*: 11).³⁹¹ Their idea of community building thus centered on uniting and supporting emerging and established film professionals and on bridging national as well as international *latinidad*. These notions established a contrast to Cine Liberación's focus on the protagonists of the struggle – Latin America's oppressed masses,"the principal protagonists of life" (Solanas and Getino 1969: 130) – and its prioritization on mobilization and the granting of an (ephemeral) "free space" in regard to the film making and exhibition practices.³⁹²

Cine Acción, too, was to maintain a particular focus on politically relevant film; this was also due to formative work experiences of some of its members in Latin America (Lourdes Portillo or Jennifer Maytorena Taylor) and with local Latino/a communities – including political immigrants from South and Central America. Throughout its existence, the organization broke new ground for some of the most artistically innovative and politically relevant filmmaking of Latinos/as from the U.S., Latin America, Spain and Portugal for over two and a half decades. It did so first by facilitating encounters between different local, national, and international actors – filmmakers, scholars, and media advocates; by making films accessible through its film and video library; and through its newsletter (initially called *Cine Acción News*; from 1993 on, *El Boletín de Cine Acción*). From the late 1980s on, Cine Acción's activism increasingly shifted towards a broader public – first by means of an all-women's film festival (1988), then by way of its ambulant Cineteca screenings, and finally in the shape of its annual festivals (1993-2004). These measures can also be read as an emulation of New Latin American cinematic practices with their focus on the film viewing experience as they granted a symbolic sanctuary to those longing for on-screen Latino/a representations and for connecting personally and symbolically with a more encompassing vision of *latinidad* – a vision largely absent in mainstream cinema. Moreover, Cine Acción's encounters, publications, and, from the late 1980s on, festivals provided an important forum for the Bay's academic communities, particularly emerging, and frequently intersecting, new fields and / or generations of scholars – working in fields such as ethnic, gender, and film studies.

³⁹¹ In its focus on the appreciation, production, and dissemination of critical, independent film, Cine Acción was part of a tradition of grassroots film organizations emerging in the 1970s and 1980s throughout the country. Cine Acción's office was located in the same building as another, bigger local film organization, the Film Arts Foundation San Francisco (FAF, 1976-2008). FAF's co-founder and co-director, Gail Silva was on Cine Acción's board in the 1980s and continued to support the organization in the 1990s.

³⁹² Indispensable to such films intended for mobilization or the "film act" and "film action" (Getino & Solanas 1969:131) were "three valuable factors" (130): One was the "**participant-comrade**, the man-actor-accomplice who responded to the summons"; the second, "[t]he **free space** where that man [sic] expressed his concerns and ideas, became politicized, and started to free himself." A revealing fact is the role of film which, as the third factor, was "important only as a detonator or pretext" (130; emphases in the original).

1.2.1 *Latinidad*: Non-essentializing, diverse, and intersectional

An important aspect that distinguished Cine Acción from other Latino/a audio-visual media organizations was its intersectional, rather than monolithic and essentializing outlook on *latinidad*; this means that its focus was on “the relationships among *multiple* dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations” (McCall 2005: 1771, my italics). In the context of Cine Acción, the experiences of founding member Lourdes Portillo when filming the critically acclaimed *Las Madres: The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo* (1985) may illustrate how such uneven power relationships complicate a shared vision of *latinidad*. Back in Argentina, Portillo’s ability to bond with people via their shared *latinidad* (or feminism, for that matter) was severely thwarted by the racism she experienced due to her *mestiza* features; however, she was able to connect to the subjects of her film, the mothers of the young political activists who had been “disappeared” during the military dictatorship, due to their shared motherhood (Newman & Rich 2001: 63-64).

While Cine Acción’s intersectional outlook manifested itself even more poignantly in the second half of the 1980s with the group’s creation of arenas for Latina filmmaking (its film festival and a conference), this attitude also reflected a more general philosophy that Chon A. Noriega has called “pan-ethnic, hemispheric, and gender-balanced” (Noriega 2000: 146). In fact, this tendency was both motivated by political intention and born of necessity. For one, in the late 1970s, there were few Latino/a identified filmmakers in the Bay. This scarcity had inspired filmmaker Lourdes Portillo’s search for new allies, including a stint with the communist group Cine Manifest. In her interview with scholars-activists Kathleen Newman and B. Ruby Rich (2001),³⁹³ Portillo recalled the endeavors “to gather every Chicano filmmaker [...], through the efforts of the Galería de la Raza and Ralph Maradiaga³⁹⁴, Ray Telles³⁹⁵ and Luis Pérez.” (Newman & Rich 2001: 49)

This episode illustrates how, contrary to the situation in Los Angeles, the need to forge alliances not necessarily based on shared ethnic-cultural-national backgrounds but on a common objective to promote Latino/a film and vistas, and to inspire creativity and self-expression, was key to the organization’s activism. Thus, people associated with Cine Acción in the 1980s (with some of them staying on beyond the first decade) were united by their dedication to U.S. Latino/a and Latin American film, particularly New Latin American Cinema. In addition to the transnational trajectory of Cine Acción’s activism, its board was also more ethnically diverse. Early Cine Acción included Latino/a filmmakers Lourdes Portillo, Ray Telles, and Rick Tejada-Flores and Spanish born Vicente Franco, but also non-Latinos/as, such as media activist and Film Arts Foundation (FAF) founder Gail Silva and John Hess, one of the editors of renowned media journal *Jump Cut*. In this regard, there is a striking difference to festivals such as San Antonio’s CineFestival, rooted in a politics of place defined by a strong, more homogenously Mexican-Chicano/a presence, even though, as I have shown previously, Cine Festival had also been inspired by transnational factors such as its relationship to Havana’s Festival of New Latin American Cinema. Contrarily, Cine Acción’s immersion in the heterogeneous activist scene of the Bay shaped its intersectional and diverse outlook, the result of which was its prioritization on La-

³⁹³ This interview was originally conceived on the event of the pioneering conference between Mexican and U.S. Latina filmmaker and film scholars, at the Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 1990, which was yet another instantiation of Cine Acción’s activities.

³⁹⁴ Chicano artist and one of the founders of the Galería de La Raza.

³⁹⁵ Documentary filmmaker (*The Fight in the Fields*, 1997) and producer.

tinias – women filmmakers – during the second half of the 1980s. In my interview from 2010, Lourdes Portillo stated that at the time, the organization had felt women to be underrepresented if not absent at other such organizations, a point she has reiterated several times in other interviews.³⁹⁶

Another, related reason for the organization's intersectional and non-essentializing politics of identity was that the intimate yet multi-faceted art world of the Bay, with its relative distance to Hollywood, allowed a different perspective on film. The latter was not so much regarded according to its commercial dimension (entertainment; celebrities) but rather as a political and artistic genre, owing to the Bay's own busy independent film scene. Latino/a studies and film scholar Rosa Linda Fregoso, a long-time Bay resident and Cine Acción board member from the late 1980s well into the next decade, emphasized the region's traditional such role which she contrasted to Los Angeles' industry orientation – even while, as she conceded, this distinction has become more blurred today (R.L. Fregoso Interview 2010). Conversely, in Los Angeles, the heart of the film and television industries, Latino/a-Chicano/a media activists of the 1970s had based their claims for access to then largely state owned media industries on the underrepresentation of ethnic professionals, therefore demanding equal opportunities; this also made necessary a more essentializing perspective on identity (as ethnic minority within the U.S. American nation-state) – a standpoint to be retained also with the increasing privatization of the media, in the 1980s and after, vis-à-vis the Hollywood industries, and within a new narrative of film consumer citizenship.

1.2.3 Intersectional *latinidad* in practice: “Women of the Americas in Film & Video” (festival, 1988) and “Cruzando Fronteras” (conference, 1990)

One of Cine Acción's milestone events in the 1980s, “Women of the Americas in Film and Video/ Festival de Cine y Video: Mujeres de la Americas,” the organization's first ever, all-Latina festival, with venues both in San Francisco and Berkeley serves as an example for Cine Acción's reliance on forging alliances to local, national and international artistic and scholarly communities. Cine Acción's commitment to women's films underscores its fresh take on New Latin American Cinema as it ties in with concurrent trends when “women filmmakers and video collectives played a major role, and their work represented new challenges for the movement” (Pick 1992: 35). As Zuzana Pick has noted, not only did the production of all-female film production groups such as Colombia's Cine-Mujer continue in the tradition of the filmmaking collectives of the 1960s, thus “reflect[ing] former initiatives based on nonhierarchical modes of production and reception.” More important in a U.S. context was the fact that “[t]he incorporation of women's issues also opened the way for renewed representations of gender, challenging the deferred debates on the significance of feminism as a poli-

³⁹⁶ In the Newman & Rich interview, Portillo recalls how an earlier event at the Colegio de la Frontera Norte (COLEF) originally devoted to the celebration of three Latina filmmakers (Mexican Rosa Marta Fernández, and Chicanas Nancy de los Santos and Portillo) turned out to give all the spotlight to another filmmaker, whose film screening was attended by the press and even by celebrated journalist and writer Carlos Monsiváis. The male colleague is most likely Gregory Nava, since she describes him as a “a filmmaker who came from San Diego,” as a Chicano, and Nava had just won accolades for his long narrative feature, *El Norte* (1983). As Portillo points out, “And when it came time [sic] to show our films, we didn't have a projectionist. We were in a room that had a skylight as big as this room – and it was still daylight!” Upon the protest of the attending women, COLEF's director agreed to host an all-women's conference at COLEF. (Newman & Rich 2001: 48) In addition to highlighting the asymmetrical amount both of visibility and recognition given to male filmmakers, this incident, and its consequences, further underlines the hemispheric, transnational dimension of Cine Acción's scope.

tical practice within the New Latin American cinema" (35).³⁹⁷ One significant antecedent for "Women of the Americas" had been a one-edition, all-women's film festival in Mexico City, titled "Cocina de Imágenes: Primera Muestra del Cine y Video Realizado por Mujeres Latinas y Caribeñas" ("Kitchen of Images: First Festival of Film and Video by Latin and Caribbean Women"), held October 1-8, 1987 and organized by Angeles Necochea and Julia Barco (Noriega 2000: 186; Pick 1993: 67). Zuzana Pick states that around one hundred participants – "producers, distributors and programmers, critics and scholars" – from the Americas and Europe were part of this exchange, with the topics prioritizing on "the accessibility, effectiveness, and circulation of women's films and videos in Latin America" (67). A similar spirit informed Cine Acción's "Women of the Americas," with the festival's welcome note, co-authored by festival coordinator Liz Kotz and Luz Castillo, Cine Acción's development director, articulated an activism that was feminist, as it addressed "the common misperception that all major Latin American directors are men"; intersectional, as it took issue with the assumption that "all successful women filmmakers are white"; and one which critiqued the homogenizing, essentializing nature of labels such as "'Latino,' 'Chicano,' the hopelessly artificial 'Hispanic,' [and] the even worse 'Spanish-surnamed.'" (Kotz & Castillo 1988: 2).

The festival presented six features, eight short films, and forty-five documentaries from fifteen countries.³⁹⁸ It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss these films – covering a time span from the late 1960s up to the time when the festival was held – and the wide range of issues covered in greater detail. A few examples, however, will suffice to illustrate the extent to which the festival chartered new ways of understanding for Latina filmmaking, and for a mise-en-scène of stories and experiences cutting across demarcations of nation and culture; class (privilege); race and ethnicity; age; and sexuality – an encompassing and ambitious program of films frequently resonating with one another. Accordingly, there is the sense of displacement and cultural loss shared by the exiled middle class subjects in Marilú Maillet's *Unfinished Diary* (Canada 1982), an autobiographical documentary by the filmmaker who had fled Chile for Canada with her family after the military coup d'état of 1973. The film contrasted with Patricia Boero's documentary short set within another diasporic community, Uruguayans in Australia. At the center of the film is Gloria Caballe, a mother, grandmother, and political activist. Gloria petitions for the release of Rita Ibarburu, a journalist and political prisoner back in Uruguay, and Gloria's friend ever since their youth in Spain, when they were fellow combatants in the fight against Franco (*Gloria*; Mexico 1984).³⁹⁹ Other films deal with impact of the legacies of the dictatorships sweeping Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s – for women but also for all. Two documentaries, one by Lourdes Portillo and Susana Blaustein Muñoz, the other by Estela Bravo, dealt with the fight of *las madres*, the mothers of Argentina's "disappeared" political activists, for the memory of their children, and, in the case of Bravo's short film, also for the custody of their

³⁹⁷ The focus on women also corresponded to the diversification in other fields of Latino/a cultural production, such as writing, and the rise of women of color feminism, which had as two of its major protagonists Bay based activists-scholars Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, editors of the pioneering anthology *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1981). Cherríe Moraga was also featured in one of Lourdes Portillo's film projects of the 1990s, the video *Conversations with Intellectuals about Selena* (1999), a companion to her documentary about the slain Tejana singer Selena Quintanilla-Pérez, *Corpus* (1998).

³⁹⁸ Production countries were: Argentina (2), Brazil (10), Bolivia (1), Canada (1), Canada & Chile (1), Chile (1), Colombia (2), Cuba (4), Mexico (7), El Salvador (2), Nicaragua (2), Puerto Rico (2), Ecuador (1), Peru (2), Venezuela (2), USA (16). This means that 16 films were from the U.S. and 39 films from outside the U.S.

³⁹⁹ The film is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDpMAdRiCYc>; accessed 10/30/2016.

grandchildren, who had been taken away by the authorities (*Las Madres: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo*, Argentina / USA 1984; *Los Niños Desaparecidos*, Cuba 1985). Other films dealt with encounters between Latin America and the U.S. – where, as with SDLFF's border theme discussed previously, the Mexican-U.S. border serves as a synecdoche for the political, socio-economic, and cultural implications of Latin America's many border zones. Here, on the one hand, *Esperanza* (USA 1985), a video by Chicana filmmaker Sylvia Morales, thematically belongs among to a more recent genre of social realist dramas on, and / or by U.S. Latinos/as,⁴⁰⁰ “giv[ing] subject voice to immigrants from south of the border, recounting the obstacles they confront on a daily basis” (Fregoso 1993:87). On the other hand, *De Aquí de Este Lado / From Here, From This Side* (1986) by Mexican filmmaker Gloria Ribe is a short video collage of the seductive power of the images that continue to produce the immense attraction that the U.S.'s “cultural imperialism from the other side” holds in stall for those south of the border (“From Here, From This Side”; wmm.com).

Other differences were generational, which also meant that some filmmakers were more directly associated with the first wave New Latin American cinematic traditions – committed to changing the political situation in their home countries – than others, who represented the next cohort working in a more globalized and commercial cinematic context. Among the former group, there was the documentary filmmaker-anthropologist Marta Rodríguez (Colombia), whose work exposes the hardships and the exploitation of the country's rural, indigenous and African diasporic populations. The festival showed her then most recent film, *Nacer de Nuevo (To be Reborn; 1986/87)*, about a couple in their seventies forced to start anew after a volcano eruption had destroyed the foundations of their livelihood (“Marta Rodríguez”; wmm.com). Another such example was *Patriamada* (1984) by Tizuka Yamasaki⁴⁰¹, a Brazilian of Japanese descent. The film reflects Yamasaki's attempt to capture the country's hopeful transition from military dictatorship to democracy and with it, the reawakening of the people's love for their country: “I wanted to register all the enthusiasm, all the activity, all the doubt and debate in a film.” (Burton 1987:2) The film combined fact and fiction, using the narrative plot of a love triangle and real life footage from demonstrations, indigenous protest, and interviews. In the same vein, the festival featured two films by the late Afro-Cuban filmmaker Sara Gómez, the documentary *... y tenemos sabor* (1967) and the long narrative *De Cierta Manera* (1977). The latter was posthumously released, a romantic drama set against the backdrop of the Cuban revolution. Furthermore, an observation by Zuzana Pick, originally made with regard to Brazilian and Cuban film, also holds true regarding all three films' challenging of hegemonic ethnic paradigms, since they

have also questioned ahistorical presumptions and romantic celebrations of cultural difference in order to free ethnicity from the problematic notion of *mestizaje*. Their films expose the evolving, rather than foundational, essence of national narratives and, in particular, the exclusion of native [sic] American and African populations." (Pick 1992: 154)

And yet other filmmakers on exhibition in 1988 were part of a younger generation that was beginning to gain the recognition of the globalizing film industries. There was María Novaro, whose feature-

⁴⁰⁰ In this context, Fregoso mentions *Esperanza* alongside Gregory Nava's *El Norte* and Robert M. Young's *¡Alambrista!*.

⁴⁰¹ Yamasaki's career, however, also points to the fact that the distinction between committed and globalized filmmaker is a makeshift one; as someone who worked with Cinema Novo filmmakers Glauber Rocha and Nelson Pereira dos Santos, she later moved on to work in the more commercial telenovela format (“Tizuka Yamasaki”; imdb.com; en.wikipedia.org).

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción's festivals, the International Latino

length romantic drama, *Danzón* (1991), later came to be part of a new wave of internationally appreciated Mexican cinema; the festival screened her short, *Un Isla Rodeada de Agua* (1986). Then there was also U.S.-Venezuelan Betty Kaplan, whose 1981 short, *Neurosis on Wheels*, preceded her success both in 1980s Venezuelan television and as a Hollywood director in the 1990s and after – achievements already discussed in the previous chapter on RRAFF, which honored Kaplan with its career achiever award in 2010.

These examples show “Women of the Americas” pioneering role as the first U.S. based large scale filmic exhibition dedicated exclusively to national and international Latina filmmaking. In addition, the festival also served as a forum for new encounters and exchange among participating filmmakers and audiences. It was geared to academic audiences in particular, which underlined how, in the light of the institutionalization of minority studies and other emerging fields at the time (such as the budding Latin American, Chicano/a, Latino/a, and Raza Studies as well as Queer / Women’s / LGBT and film / media studies), the festival provided an important arena for the cross-validation and the transfer of symbolic capital among, and to, a number of these relatively recent academic disciplines. Thus “Women of the Americas” featured no less than five female scholars serving as humanities advisors, hailing from the University of California (at its Berkeley, San Diego, and Santa Cruz subdivisions) as well as from San Francisco State University and Stanford University (*Women of the Americas 1988*: 11). Additional support also came from the Center for Cuban Studies, New York City. In fact, the lineup of advisors included Julianne Burton, who had introduced New Latin American Cinema to U.S. film studies, social anthropologist Mary Louise Pratt, who would publish the seminal *Imperial Eyes* in 1992, and filmmaker and Third Woman scholar-activist, Trinh T. Minh-Ha, director of *Surname Viet Given Name Nam* (1989). Moreover, the festival featured a documentary by feminist film scholar and *Jump Cut* co-founder, Julia Lesage.

But despite these strong ties to academia, the fact that the festival was held in different locations acknowledged the heterogeneity of its imagined audiences.⁴⁰² It was spanning both San Francisco and the East Bay, and it encompassed an academic venue (UC Berkeley Theater, which emerged as a frequent venue for future festivals organized by Cine Acción) along with three more non-academic ones: the York Theatre, a commercial cinema in the Mission, and two cultural arts organizations, the Mission Cultural Center for the Latino Arts (MCCLA, since 1977⁴⁰³) and La Peña in Berkeley⁴⁰⁴ (*Women of the Americas 1988*: 10).

⁴⁰² Future academic venues in the 1990s and 2000s included the San Francisco Art Institute (where, for instance, a specially curated series of experimental films was shown in 1997) and the University of San Francisco (USF), a denominational (Jesuite) institution (2004). Another long-standing venue in the arts-performance sector was the Yerbabuena Gardens Center for the Arts (since 1993), where many sidebars of Cine Acción’s 1990s festivals as well as its year round Cineteca film screenings were held.

⁴⁰³ MCCLA had been founded by arts activists dissatisfied with the lack of representation of Latino/a cultural art forms in the city’s art spaces. It was housed in a former furniture that provided room for different artistic genres. It was created with the support of various state and private foundations and private patrons (“About Us”; missionculturalcenter.org).

⁴⁰⁴ La Peña was opened in 1975 “as a response to the military coup in Chile that overthrew the democratically elected socialist government of Dr. Salvador Allende on September 11, 1973” (“About”; lapena.org). In the 1980s, it became a focus for Central American civil rights groups. Its reach is pan-ethnic with a special regard for U.S. Latino/a and Latin American cultural expressions.

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción's festivals, the International Latino

While it is important to note that these three non-academic venues served the important function of lowering the bar for audiences feeling perhaps less comfortable in a university environment, it was the collaboration with the two cultural arts organizations that not only served as a mutual validation of political and artistic agendas but also paved the way for future festivals and their outreach to different communities in the Bay. As was the case with Cine Acción's headquarters, MCCLA is located in the Mission and in close proximity to Latino/a – mostly Chicano/a and Central American – communities as well as to a number of other important cultural arts organizations, such as the Bay's oldest enduring Latino/a-Chicano/a cultural organization, the aforementioned Galería de la Raza (since 1970).⁴⁰⁵ Berkeley's La Peña (established in 1974), in turn, had originated in a solidarity effort with Chile's overthrown Allende government, serving the Bay's expatriate Chilean community and more encompassing constituencies from academic and activist circles due to its location close to the city limits of Oakland, a traditionally African American enclave.

York Theatre, in turn, validated the festival agenda by inserting it into the logic of traditional cinematic-theatrical exhibition,⁴⁰⁶ as well as serving as a link to the specific history of San Francisco's landmark cinemas.⁴⁰⁷

"Women of the Americas" put Cine Acción on the map as part of a number of hemispheric artistic, scholarly and political exchanges. In 1990, the festival was followed by the aforementioned conference hosted at El Colegio de la Frontera Norte (COLEF), Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico, which served as a meeting point for female film professionals from both sides of the border, "Cruzando Fronteras: Encuentro de Mujeres Cineastas, Videoastas Latina – Mexico-U.S." This conference anticipated some of the major themes that have defined Cine Acción's community building project as emerging in its festivals and also those of other festivals discussed in my study. While the conference signaled a hiatus in Cine Acción's creation of strategic alliances and artistic-professional networks, it also highlighted common threads as well as ruptures in chartering transnational *latinidad*, most of all revolving around the different notions of privilege associated with the notion of woman filmmaker. Focusing on filmmaking by U.S. Latinas and *mexicanas*. Organized by a bi-national team, Norma Iglesias-Prieto (COLEF) and Cine Acción member Rosa Linda Fregoso (University of California-Davis), it featured around eighty Latina film directors, scholars, and representatives from the media from both countries, and its proceedings were published in a bilingual anthology, also in 1990.⁴⁰⁸

As co-organizer Rosa Linda Fregoso put it, the conference was a "border crossing produc[ing] an articulation of similarities in concern between media practitioners from Mexico and the U.S., just as profound differences emerged as well" (Fregoso 1990:14). Regardless of such diverging viewpoints, participants were united by "a common concern about the position of women in patriarchy within two national contexts" (14). Importantly, and ironically, the most blatant differences emerging in

⁴⁰⁵ Associated with Chicano/a-Latino/a visual artists such as Ralph Maradiaga (1934-85), Francisco X. Camplis, and Amalia Mesa-Bains, the Galería de la Raza was to become a key venue for SFLFF.

⁴⁰⁶ Located in the heart of the Mission, the York Theater was taken over by a women's cultural arts initiative and renovated in 1996, now bearing the name of Brava! For Women in the Arts / Brava Theater Center (www.brava.org).

⁴⁰⁷ Future cinematic festival venues included the Victoria Theatre in the Mission, the city's oldest such space (since 1908; "Home"; www.victoriatheatre.org), and the Castro Theater, in district of the same name, the heart of the Bay's LGBT community (since 1922; "History"; castrotheatre.com).

⁴⁰⁸ *Miradas de Mujer: Encuentro de Cineastas y Videoastas Mexicanas y Chicanas*, eds. Norma Iglesias and Rosa Linda Fregoso, Tijuana, Baja California; Davis, California: COLEF / CLRC, 1998.

the course of the three-day encounter – questions revolving around ethnicity, and frequently also class privilege – pitted the Mexican participants' more traditionally "first world" feminist orientation against U.S. Latinas and their intersectional stance. Fregoso writes,

“[W]hereas the Mexicanas concerned themselves primarily with gender, the Chicanas were more interested in the interplay of gender, class and race. On the U.S. side, organizers were deliberately inclusive, combining Chicanas and Puertoriquenãs under the rubric of Latina identity in order to draw attention to the race politics in this country.” (14)

Among Mexican participants, Fregoso points at indigenous filmmaker Teófila Palafox's addressing the matter of race as one notable exception. Likewise, I argue, there was a connection to the way class / income and ethnic-racial minority status all played a decisive role regarding other differences mentioned – differences which concerned the “nature of [the participants'] experience in cinema” (Fregoso 1990: 14): On the one hand, Mexican female filmmakers were able to look back at a longer-standing female presence in national cinema (since the 1930s), and at a tradition of working in the more expensive format of long narrative features. Their U.S. Latina colleagues, on the other hand, had to rely on less expensive short and video formats (Fregoso 1990: 14). Regarding financing matters, contributions to the conference proceedings underline additional differences: U.S. Latinas were able to draw on networks and resources that had been established as a result of social, ethnic and media activism and thus, on professional outlets such as Women Make Movies (WMM) and public broadcasting / minority consortia, as the participation both of a WMM and a KCET-Los Angeles representative shows. The Mexicans, in turn, secured the support of national agencies such as IMCINE or the academia, and sometimes international support (as the example of María Novaro shows; cf. Fregoso 1990: 15).

The conference signaled a hiatus in Cine Acción's creation of strategic alliances and artistic-professional networks and its programmatic exploration both of common threads and ruptures in chartering transnational *latinidad*. At the same time, there was also the recognition that an increase of local outreach was in order. For an organization that had started out as a loose coalition of like-minded activists this meant an increase of liabilities in terms of committing themselves to the organization. Moreover, there was a growing involvement of younger, Latino/a self-defined filmmakers and film activists.

1.3 1990s: Increased cinematic exhibition: From Cineteca to ¡Cine Latino!

As I have shown above, during the first eight years of its existence – a time for ideological-artistic incubation and intense transnational networking – film exhibition, for Cine Acción, had remained one activity among several; one is also to infer that film exhibitions, let alone festivals, were more demanding in terms of planning, cost, and personnel. If “Women of the Americas” had already both entered new territory in terms of Cine Acción's local, national, and international collaborative network and addressed a broad spectrum of audiences, most of the organization's other, more visible activities, such as its collaborations with COLEF, had been catering to a predominantly academic and artistic filmmaking clientele.

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción's festivals, the International Latino

In 1992, however, Gina Hernández and Jennifer Maytorena Taylor, Cine Acción's new executive and program directors, respectively, shifted activities towards an expansion of outreach, which eventually led to the implementation of an annual film festival in 1993 (¡Cine Latino!). In a revised mission statement (first issued in 1992's *Cine Acción News*, reprinted by *Jump Cut* in 1993), released, New Latin American Cinema style, under the name of the collective rather than individual names, the organization took inventory of its beginnings, in particular, the way how "Cine Acción [had been] founded on the principle that Latin American cinema must be promoted in the United States and that Latinos in the U.S. must be actively encouraged to produce media" ("Cine Acción" 1993; *ejumpcut.org*). While the authors conceded that the organization had struggled to provide financial support to filmmakers,⁴⁰⁹ it was on the premise of promotion of finished products that they based their decision to increase film screening events since, as they argued, "Latin America can be better understood through cinematic presentations in this country and similarly Latinos here could utilize media for the greater understanding and advancement of our communities" (*ibid.*).

Accordingly, Cine Acción's Cineteca program started in 1991 and was shown twice a month at San Francisco's Yerbabuena Gardens Center for the Arts and in other locations throughout the Bay.⁴¹⁰ It was inspired by the tradition of traveling film exhibitions serving remote rural areas, something Maytorena Taylor had witnessed during her film student days in Latin America (J. Maytorena T. Interview 2010). Cineteca, however, was intended to provide wider exposure to U.S. Latino/a film, programed alongside with Latin American classics, some of the latter "right out of our film school textbooks" (J. Maytorena Taylor Interview 2010). Maytorena Taylor emphasized the unglamorous and improvisational nature of these screenings, events which, due to the high demand of these films, nevertheless elicited satisfactory turnouts. The media advocacy measure of privileging film exhibition provided visibility to Cine Acción's filmmaking constituencies since it prioritized on "works by local artists, members and friends of Cine Acción [being] seen, engaged and encouraged on a regular basis" ("Cine Acción" 1993; *ejumpcut.org*).

Ironically, though Cineteca had been intended as a "shift away from programming festivals and large events – such as our 'Women of the Americas Film & Video Festival' in 1988 – in favor of consistent and stable exhibition of Latino/Latin American film and video for the local community" (*ibid.*), in 1993, Cine Acción once again shifted its focus, with the first edition of ¡Cine Latino! hosted between October 22 and 24, 1993. In a move consistent with the organization's more recent attempt of reaching out to more encompassing audiences, the festival was hosted at MCCLA. In terms of its media advocacy goals, with the nationwide increase both of festivals such as San Diego's Cine Estudiantil (the future SDLFF) and the Latino/a film and video community, a more prominent event was expected to provide more opportunities for national Latino/a filmmakers; enhance the visibility and prestige of national and international Latino/a film as well as that of Cine Acción; and attract more audiences to the organization's events.

⁴⁰⁹ However, in terms of its archives, the organization had been able to offer serve many different constituencies as an invaluable source of current Latino/a film production. As such, it "ha[d] been accessible to regional and national exhibitors for consultation about available titles," thereby "hav[ing] served local and non-local producers." In the social sector, too, Cine Acción had provided s "assist[ance] [to] one social service agency in its pre-natal care for Spanish speaking women" ("Cine Acción" 1993, no pag.).

⁴¹⁰ Unfortunately, with the exception of the bi-monthly Yerbabuena Gardens Center for the Arts screenings, I was not able to attain any further information regarding the other venues.

Accordingly, in *El Boletín de Cine Acción's* September 1993 issue, the new event was validated in advance by way of placing its side by side with profiles of the country's two biggest and longest enduring such festivals, CineFestival, whose most recent edition had just taken place that previous month, and the upcoming CLFF.⁴¹¹ While CineFestival was given credit for being not only "the nation's oldest and largest Latino film festival" ("Latino Film Festivals Around the U.S.," 1) but also a "focal point for the San Antonio media arts community," the profile also stressed CineFestival's role as a "great opportunity for producers, exhibitors, administrators, advocates, and scholars to gather and discuss the direction in which independent Latino media is moving in this country." Conversely, CLFF was described in terms of its role as a "very exciting *international* event" (my emphasis) and its focus on "recent cinema from Latin America, Spain, Portugal and the U.S." Cine Acción's upcoming ¡Cine Latino! was described like a cross between both, combining CLFF's transnational and CineFestival's media advocacy aspects – as an

eclectic mix of work in all genres and many formats [...], present[ing] the latest films and videos by renowned and award-winning producers from the United States and Latin America, as well as introduce Bay Area audiences to the dynamic work of emerging Latino media artists." (ibid.)

1.3.1 Resource: Cine Acción's "networks for advocacy"

The ¡Cine Latino! festivals once again underscored the continuing significance of Cine Acción's ties to many organizations in the Bay and beyond, as part of what I want to call the organization's "network[s] for advocacy" (Torchin 2012: 1). The latter included also many up and coming and established actors in the intersecting circles of local and translocal activism, art/filmmaking, and academia. These strategic resources generated considerable symbolic capital (prestige) for the festival as they made it possible for Cine Acción to establish itself as an arena both for media advocacy and for the promotion of committed, distinguished, and new and exciting U.S. and international Latino/a cinemas.

Contrary to the 1980s, when Cine Acción was a less close-knit group – particularly before "Women of the Americas" – and featured more non-Latinos/as, the 1990s saw a younger, now predominantly Latino/a, professional cohort of media workers and arts administrators. They filled various positions with a versatility that was "marr[ying] creative energy with administrative organization," a phrase originally used to characterize the activism of Jim Mendiola but one which may stand for many other filmmaker-activists contributing to Cine Acción's legacy in manifold ways (Baugh 2012: 166). Among those associates whose involvement in the 1990s was particularly long-standing, there were Jennifer Maytorena Taylor and Gina Hernández. Not only had they opened up Cine Acción to more outreach programs; they also continued in the tradition of Cine Acción's commitment to translocal networks. Particularly enduring ties existed to San Antonio's CineFestival; both Hernández and Maytorena Taylor, immediately preceding the inauguration of ¡Cine Latino!, had served as panelists at a

⁴¹¹ September 24 through October 4. This was the last CLFF edition to be held in fall.

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción's festivals, the International Latino

conference in conjunction with CineFestival 1993 at the GCAC.⁴¹² Maytorena Taylor, after single-handedly directing the second edition of ¡Cine Latino! (1994), then returned to her filmmaking and producing career.⁴¹³ Meanwhile, Hernández remained involved in Cine Acción's board activities, as the 1997 catalog attests. UCSC graduate Ethan van Thillo directed the 1995 edition of ¡Cine Latino!, with his own festival in San Diego just having kicked off the year before; his festival assistant, Rosalía Ruíz Valencia, became one of the longest-standing actively involved associates both of the festival and its organization, subsequently co-directing and directing most of ¡Cine Latino!'s editions until her exit around 2000. She also co-directed the 1997 festival, together with filmmaker-media activist Ray Santisteban, a festival edition which featured the aforementioned seminal retrospective on Mexican cinematographer Gabriel Figueroa Mateos curated by film scholar Sergio de la Mora. While de la Mora was promoted to join Ruíz Valencia as festival co-director in 1998, Santisteban, in turn, became another link to CineFestival, which he subsequently directed between 1998 and 2000 and then became part of the permanent staff of GCAC. Another, even earlier association to CineFestival was filmmaker Jim Mendiola, who had collaborated with the festival on behalf of his position at the time as "Yerba Buena Center [for the Arts]'s first media arts curator" (Baugh 2012: 166), where ¡Cine Latino! was held in 1994. Mendiola, originally from Texas, relocated to San Antonio in 1996 to direct that year's CineFestival.⁴¹⁴ For ¡Cine Latino!'s 2001 festival, he was to return as a co-host of a professional enhancement workshop geared towards the festival's filmmaking community.

In addition to the many Latino/a associates and collaborators, there were also non-Latinos/as like Maureen Gosling, who joined the board in the 1990s. The career of this Bay based documentary filmmaker and film editor had started in the mid-1970s, and her work had been deeply influenced

⁴¹² The festival edition was titled "Resistance and Affirmation: A Continuum of Chicano Film and Video" ("Latino Film Festivals around the U.S.", 1). In a list telling of the way early festivals were busy arenas for exchanges among emerging Latino/a film / cultural scholars and film professionals, Maytorena Taylor and Hernández are credited as participants (of the festival's workshops and panels) along with Carlos Ávila (director), Beverly Sánchez-Padilla (director), Evelina Fernández (actress), Cheryl B. Leader (director), Jorge Sandoval (director), José Piedra (scholar), Chon A. Noriega (scholar), Sylvia Morales (director), Liliana Haugen (director) and José Luis Ruiz (director) ("Flyer: The Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center presents the 17th Annual San Antonio CineFestival").

⁴¹³ One key work was the critically acclaimed documentary, *Paulina* (USA/Mexico/Canada 1997), which Maytorena Taylor produced together with Vicky Funari. Funari was involved at Cine Acción as well, from the early until the late 1990s (she was among the persons acknowledged in the 1994 catalog and mentioned among the organization's board of directors in the 1998 catalog; see "Gracias por su apoyo"; ¡Cine Latino! 1994:10; "Cine Acción Staff"; ¡Cine Latino!1998: 52). Both filmmakers were part of a younger generation of Bay based filmmakers, renowned for social justice themed documentaries which became part of the PBS canon, such as Funari's *Maquilapolis* (USA 2006, together with Sergio de la Torre), filmed in Tijuana, Mexico, about the consequences of globalized labor; and Maytorena Taylor's *New Muslim Cool* (2009), on a Puerto Rican Hip Hop artist and Islam convert in the post-09/11 U.S.

⁴¹⁴ Mendiola is the recipient of several art fellowships; his portrait of a Chicana punk rocker, *Pretty Vacant* (1996), placed him at the forefront of a younger cohort that deviated from the more conservative, culturally affirming trends of Hispanic Hollywood and "caus[ed] a stir at many festival and academic venues in the United States and Mexico." (Baugh 2012: 166) Mendiola is also the current director of CineFestival (2017; 2018).

by working on various film projects in Latin America and with marginalized cultures in the U.S.⁴¹⁵ Gosling's long-time involvement in the local and international independent film scene was another asset to Cine Acción.

One is to infer that the high degree of cooperation and solidarity rather than competition that marked U.S. Latino/a film activism and the corresponding festival circuit was also a due to the fact that even though the community of involved social actors had grown bigger, there was still room for everyone; in Cine Acción's case, this meant that its associated festival was still the only such event in the Bay. As the previous example of San Diego's Centro Cultural de la Raza has shown, the situation of cultural arts organizations across the board became increasingly more difficult as they were expected to adapt to a changing environment (Rüling 2009:60) demanding a growing professionalization involving arts administrators and business plans; a more steady involvement of associates; mainstreaming and commercialization of events as to appeal to a wider clientele; and the attraction of sponsors, preferably also from sectors beyond the state and academia. While this changing situation was in favor of ILFF, which soon became the other big festival in the Bay, the situation of Cine Acción was aggravated by the very fact of what otherwise had been such a valuable asset, namely, the flow of creative associates from the evolving Latino/a film community as described above. This was because their respective involvement (sometimes with a greater focus on board activities, sometimes on the festival) was, for the better and the worse, subjected to their unfolding careers. From an organizational perspective, too, the ensuing lack of permanence posed a challenge since it meant the need for a frequent regrouping of personnel when financial and other resources were very limited, particularly since Cine Acción had committed itself to staging the festival on a regular, yearly basis, in addition to its other, year round work, such as screenings, the maintenance of its film and video archive, and its newsletter.

1.3.2 Academic and artistic cross-validation: Curation and festival catalog articles

With ¡Cine Latino!, Cine Acción continued a tradition started with the 1988 festival, namely, of attracting renowned guest curators for ambitious sidebars which met the interests and tastes of the Bay's discerning and politically minded audiences. They included showcases highlighting aspects of different Latin American national cinemas frequently accompanied by introductions or short essays, such as independent filmmaker-scholar María Luisa Mendonça's "Brazilliance. Community video making: Brazilian popular movements tell their stories" (Mendonça 1994: 9), and "Mexican Love Stories" (*¡Cine Latino! 1997*: 18), a program of five critically acclaimed short films produced with the support of the Instituto Mexicano de Cinematografía (IMCINE) in response to the recent worldwide popularity and box office success of long dramatic features such as Alfonso Araú's *Como Agua Para Chocolate (Like Water for Chocolate, 1991)*; Sergio de la Mora's essay, along with the retrospective he had curated, "Gabriel Figueroa: Mexico's Master of Light" (de la Mora 1997:5-8). Other programs attested to the multifacetedness of recent U.S. Latino/a film, such as "Experimental texts: Other authors, other forms," curated by independent filmmaker and film scholar, Rita Gonzá-

⁴¹⁵ Gosling has frequently collaborated with documentary filmmaker Les Blank, such as on the groundbreaking *Chulas Fronteras* (1976), on Norteño music on both sides of the U.S. and Mexican border, and *Burden of Dreams* (USA 1982), on the laborious making of Werner Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo* (Germany / Peru 1982). An appreciation for Latin/o and Latin American culture also informs her own documentary *Blossoms of Fire* (Mexico / USA 2000) on the fiercely autonomous women of Oaxaca's Juchitán region, whose main source of income is textile manufacture and floral embroidery. The film won Havana's Coral Award for the Best Foreign Documentary on Latin America.

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción's festivals, the International Latino

lez, which featured works by Willie Varela, Henry Gamboa, Adobe I.a. / Jesse Lerner, Rene Moreno, Lourdes Portillo, and Enie Vaisburd (*¡Cine Latino! 1997*: 25-26). Finally, there was, as part of the last (2004) festival, the transnationally oriented "Our African Heritage" (*¡Cine Latino! 2004*; no essay), curated by filmmaker, curator and scholar Terezita (Tere) Romo of San Francisco's Mexican Museum, featuring two films from the U.S. (on the black Seminoles) and from Brazil, respectively.

Another important point was written contributions by scholars and activists to Cine Acción's publications. Ever since its creation, Cine Acción's newsletter had featured articles on many facets of Latin American and U.S. Latino/a film. It was particularly in the second half of the 1990s when articles and other written contributions to the festival catalog further validated the festival's political and artistic ambitions. At the same time, and in ways similar to "Women of the Americas," these publications provided an arena for scholarship and activism and in conjunction with this, for many emerging scholars who had followed in the footsteps of those giving esteem and visibility to the 1988 festival. There was the 1998 edition, for instance, featuring, in conjunction with its impressive line-up of venues, a number of articles by curators and filmmakers, once more attesting both to ¡Cine Latino!'s high esteem in these circles and its wide and encompassing interpretation of *latinidad*. Accordingly, the catalog included articles by Puerto Rican scholar-media activist Frances Negrón-Muntaner, "In Praise of the Spitfire: Rita Moreno" (there was also a tribute to Puerto Rican veteran writer Piri Thomas, who attended the festival in person for a reading); by Spanish-Argentine veteran filmmaker-activist Octavio Getino ("*The Hour of the Furnaces: Thirty Years Later*")⁴¹⁶; an introduction of Chicano scholar-filmmaker Paul Espinosa to his own film, screened at the festival, "*The Making of The U.S. Mexican War (1846-48)*"; and "Tribute to Santiago Alvarez," the Cuban documentary filmmaker whose artistically innovative films and ties to revolutionary Cuba were bound to resonate with Left Bay audiences, penned by Julianne Burton, previously also associated with "Women of the Americas." Of all these contributions, Getino's bestowed a particular symbolical capital to the festival, bringing it full circle with Cine Acción's beginnings and mission: Not only did the essay connect both to the documentary-essay film *La Hora de los Hornos (The Time of the Furnaces, Argentina 1968)*, and thus to one of the most celebrated and widely discussed works in both in New Latin American and Third Cinema traditions; it furthermore reinforced Cine Acción's mission and its dialog with Latin American political cinemas.

As such, Getino's contribution and overall personal participation in the festival uniquely validated Cine Acción's project of promoting the production and exhibition of U.S. Latino/a cinema alongside Latin American-international Latino/a cinema. In the same vein, the festival directors' welcome address reminded audiences that

Cine Acción takes its name from the classic essay "Towards a Third Cinema: Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World" (1969), written by Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas, in an activist impulse that foregrounds the crucial political importance of representations as well as the role of the media can play as a tool for consciousness raising and social change. (de La Mora & Ruíz Valencia 1998: 3)

In his essay, in turn, Getino made the case for New Latin American Cinema's enduring legacy in ways, I argue, tying in with Cine Acción's own, frequently challenging task of providing an arena for *lati-*

⁴¹⁶ For the catalog, the essay was translated by Elena Feder.

nidad in all its complexity and diversity. This included Cine Acción's negotiation of a space placing U.S. Latino/a film side by side with international Latino/a cinemas – a task both imperative considering in its own situation in the Bay Area's cultural and political climate as well as more generally speaking, in the U.S. This mission resembled the way New Latin American Cinema “respond[ed] to the difficult and uncertain search for a means to express the cultural diversity of every community according to the ideology, aesthetics, and narrative form best suited to its ends.” (Getino 38) While in his 1998 essay, Getino's focus has shifted on Third Cinema's fusion of both Hollywood's mass appeal and auteur cinema's stamp of individual expression (a major step towards commodification, considering that back in the 1969 manifesto, these cinematic traditions had been relegated to the – then despised – ranks of “First” and “Second” Cinema; cf. Getino & Solanas 1969:120), his acknowledgement of a need for a “situated universalism” makes his assessment so fitting for Cine Acción:

“[...] ‘Third Cinema’ has many points in common with many filmmakers of our day – in particular, with those who, in one way or the other, continue to give voice to the national cultures and film industries in Europe, Asia and Africa, and their counterpoints among U.S. independents. ‘Third Cinema’ is neither restricted by a false chauvinism nor does it lean towards the abstract authoritarianism and endured by the many. It presents itself by a situated universalism, and, from each ‘place’ or situation it occupies, it aims to be recognized in its diversity.” (Getino 1998: 38)

1.4 Challenges: Facing a changing organizational environment

In its day, Cine Acción established itself as a force in U.S. Latino/a film activism and in the emerging national Latino/a film festival circuit. Likewise, ¡Cine Latino! was also involved in numerous co-operations with local non-Latino/a film festivals, many of them special interest events sharing Cine Acción's activist and minority oriented approach, such as its partnerships with the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival (SFJFF) and LGBT themed Frameline, but also the San Francisco International Film Festival (SFIFF). However, the organization seemed to be less prepared for the more drastic changes that impacted not only academia and the world of mainstream culture but also arenas for ethnic cultures considered niches. As I have already discussed, also against the background of less reliable support coming from state agencies such as the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA), the 1990s saw an increased pressure for U.S. cultural arts organizations to brand themselves in terms of usefulness and merit (Miller & Yúdice 2002), a paradigm change towards professionalization frequently also requiring new administrative and fundraising strategies. Furthermore, the second half of the 1990s had seen the rise of entertainment and celebrity driven Latino/a film festivals and their promotion of a more commodified version of *latinidad*, such as Hollywood based LALIFF (1997). Meanwhile in Southern California, Ethan van Thillo had re-branded Cine Estudiantil as San Diego Latino Film Festival and was to found SDLFF's own non-for profit in 1999, all the while drawing on the organization's strategic border situation and a mixture of star power and education as resources both for sponsorship and box office appeal. Conversely, in San Antonio, CineFestival had long secured its survival by attaching itself to GCAC.

All the while, Cine Acción and its festival went on pursuing, extending, and tapping – in ways that hitherto had afforded it its long-standing considerable renown – its alliances to artistic, scholarly and activist communities (communities, however, as I have argued earlier, in perpetual transition); the or-

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción's festivals, the International Latino

ganization did so without being able to strengthen its administration or to market itself in such a way as to face the changing funding politics. Cine Acción's reliance on its undeniable achievements for U.S. Latino/a and Latin American cinemas is also reflected in the festival's 1998 welcome address; here, the organizers point to how the festival was "unique because it [was] the only non-profit event of its kind in Northern California geared towards promoting independent media arts by, for, and / or about Chicanos, Latinos, and Latin Americans" (De La Mora & Ruíz Valencia 3). And in fact, in addition to its key role in terms of introducing Latin American film to the Bay, it did the same for a younger generation of (mostly) U.S. Latino/a filmmakers, for whom Cine Acción's festivals served as an important springboard, such as Natalia Almada (2001), Cruz Angeles (2001), Carlos Ávila (1997), Cristina Ibarra (1997), Jesse Lerner & Ruben Ortíz Torres (1995), Alex Rivera (1995), Enie Vaisburd (1997), and Laura Varela (1997).

However, while its enduring association of *latinidad* with committed and artistically ambitious cinema attested to Cine Acción's loyalty both to its chosen lineage to New Latin American Cinema and the Bay's cultural activist politics of place, these factors contributed to a certain anti-materialistic attitude which once again, from the perspective of organization theory, reflected a lack of sufficient adaptation to the cultural industries' changing "environment" (Rüling 2009:60). Thus, the platforms created for ¡Cine Latino!'s alternative celebrities were not seen according to an entertainment and commercial but an academic and artistic logic, and one that prioritized solidarity over competition, without being able, it seems, to generate resources to sustain this logic. One example is the prestigious Figueroa retrospective curated by Sergio de la Mora for ¡Cine Latino! 1997, which had traveled the Latino/a film festival circuit, fully or in part: LALIFF, for its festival premiere in October 1997; ILFF, in November 1997; and SDLFF and Cine Festival, in March and June 1998, respectively; here, it is a telling detail is that it was eventually LALIFF, not Cine Acción, which was able to further capitalize on Figueroa and his symbolic ties both to Mexico's Golden Age of Cinema and to Hollywood by dedicating its own first-ever, most important award, the "Gabi," to the Mexican cinematographer.

A related problem was that Cine Acción had also begun to lose its once strong footing in academic scholarship, evident in the decrease of such contributions in the catalogs. But while at SDLFF, a similar such trend was characteristic of its increased commercialization, with respect to ¡Cine Latino!, this decline suggested two things: one, that the institutionalization of these more recent academic-

trends had found other arenas of validation⁴¹⁷, two, featuring longer essays became less economically affordable. In fact, in talks with former Cine Acción associates, the scarcity of funding and challenges in terms of changing personnel available was a recurring topic; even back in the early 1990s, before the creation of ¡Cine Latino!, Cine Acción's directors had pointed to the fact that "[m]any arts organizations, including Cine Acción, ha[d] felt the financial pinch as the economy worsened throughout the 1980s" ("Cine Acción," 1993, www.ejumpcut.org). The organization's strategy, at least as far as put forth in the mission statement, was to underline its untiring commitment to ethnic media advocacy and, in the face of an increased interest in Latin American film, nurturing an "awareness of the need for more Latino producers, writers, and directors" (ibid.). In later years, too, Cine Acción's associates had to face the ongoing struggle to secure financial support, and to create sustainability in terms of its ever too small, and ever-changing, staff and volunteers.⁴¹⁸ In 2000, the organization also lost its long-standing associate Rosalía Ruíz Valencia, whose involvement throughout the 1990s had guaranteed a certain degree of continuity. The organization's combination both of lacking continuity in terms of staff and financial problems, one is to infer, gave way to occasional challenges in organizational matters, a repeated criticism articulated in conversations with people who had served as Cine Acción, ILFF and SFLFF festival volunteers and who were thus able to compare the three (J. McCarthy Interview 2012).

Finally, a related aspect that contributed to Cine Acción's weakening as an organization was that the emerging Latino/a film festival circuit, as I have shown in regard to the festival's dependency on its ties to organizations and actors from the local and translocal cultural sphere, was based on solidarity. Contrary to ¡Cine Latino!, the new Latino/a film festival in the Bay's Marin County was a festival which – as I will show later in more detail – had a competitive edge as it was banking on the exclusi-

⁴¹⁷ Thus, early Cine Acción resonated with a number of volumes on Latin American, feminist and LGBT film, some of them by academics involved in the 1988 women's festival and / or the COLEF conference. They included Julianne Burton(-Carvajal), *Cinema and Social Change in Latin America* [Interviews] (1986) and, as editor, *The Social Documentary in Latin America* (1990); Trinh-Thi Minh-Ha, *Writing Postcolonialism and Feminism* (1990); Mary-Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes* (1992); and Zuzana Pick, *The New Latin American Cinema* (1992). Later in the 1990s, the proceedings of the pioneering Mexicana-Latina conference, "Cruzan-do Fronteras" (1990) at COLEF were published as Rosa Linda Fregoso and Norma Iglesias, ed., *Miradas de Mujer* (1998); that time also saw a two-volume publication assembled writings of scholars on the forefront of Latin American and Latino/a film (The New Latin American Cinema, both edited by Michael T. Martin). Volume 1, *Theories, Practices, and Transcontinental Articulations*, featured contributions by Ana M. Lopez, B. Ruby Rich, Julianne Burton, Michael Chanan, Zuzana M. Pick and a number of filmmakers; and *Volume 2, Studies of National Cinemas*, by Charles Ramírez Berg, Frances Negrón-Muntaner, David R. Maciel, Carlos Dignes, John Hess, Catherine Benamou, John Ramírez (the later RRAFF director), Robert Stam, et al. (1997). All the while, the 1990s also saw a widening of the repertoire to encompass more books on U.S. Latino/a film. Among them were two volumes of essays on Chicano/a and Latino/a film and media arts, Chon A. Noriega, ed., *Chicanos and Film* (1992); and Noriega and Ana López, *The Ethnic Eye* (1994); and the first study solely dedicated to Chicano/a film, Rosa Linda Fregoso's *The Bronze Screen* (1993). The 1990s and turn of the millennium saw a multiplication of Latino/a but also Latin American themed books, a number of whom solely or in part dedicated to cinema, among them Frances Negrón Muntaner, *Puerto Rican Jam* (1998); Rita González, Jesse Lerner, Isabelle Marmasse, *Mexperimental Cinema* (1998); Carla E. Rodríguez, ed. *Latin Looks* (1997); Chon A. Noriega, *Shot in America* (2000); Rosa Linda Fregoso, ed. *Lourdes Portillo: The Devil Never Sleeps and Other Films* (2001); Charles Ramírez Berg, *Latino Images in Film* (2002).

⁴¹⁸ Attesting to Cine Acción's creativity in terms of volunteer outreach was an initiative in conjunction with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA). It involved ads in *El Boletín de Cine Acción*, inviting parking offenders to volunteer at Cine Acción: "If you have parking tickets like most humanoids living in the Bay Area and you don't want to shell out your hard earned and too rare *lana* [money], you have a choice! You can work your tickets off through Project 20 and help your favorite media arts center in a variety of fun and exciting projects" ("Parking Tickets?"; 1992: 7).

city of events. ILFF also operated within a far more extensive network of patrons and sponsors while possessing a more clear-cut business strategy. In the spirit of solidarity, too, some of Cine Acción's board members and associates went on to support ILFF in its early stages.⁴¹⁹ The competition between the two organizations became more pronounced during the early 2000s after ILFF had re-branded itself by taking on its new name and extended towards many more venues in the Bay.

1.4.1 ¡Cine Latino!'s reinvention and demise in the 2000s

In its final years, ¡Cine Latino! saw a number of changes, most importantly by steering its course towards a more marketable vision. While the festival board's welcome address of its 2001 edition somewhat nebulously referred to "many daunting challenges some of which threatened to scuttle our organization" (¡Cine Latino! Catalog 2001: 2), this was to be amended by way of a new director, Colombian American Dario Sanmiguel⁴²⁰, and the organization's determination to embrace "a new vision" while returning to ¡Cine Latino!'s "roots in the Mission by making the renovated Brava Theater [the former the York Theatre], our primary venue." 2001's overall theme, diversity, was a remarkable yet curious choice, considering diversity had always been integral to Cine Acción's vision and programming practices; the board's statement itself owned up to this.⁴²¹ This choice suggests the organization was intent on redirecting its course towards a more marketable vision, despite the defiant stance expressed by Sanmiguel, whose own welcome editorial combined, in at times idiosyncratic ways, the anti-imperialist rhetoric of New Latin American Cinema and the more recent logic of ethnic marketing. The opening lines described the diversity of Latino/a culture in terms of a redemptive force, the

recogni[tion] we have a conscious choice to experience life and our future on an international scale. Regardless of whether or not the cultural imperialism of Hollywood numbs another generation, it's an empowering perspective worth considering and taking on. As our mighty Latin culture revolutionizes the American experience, we latinos [sic] must find way to represent ourselves with our best face forward if we are to advance and progress as a people. (Sanmiguel 2001: 2)

Sanmiguel then went on to praise the Bay's "wide mix of diversity" as "an exciting demographic," declaring the 2001 festival

the force which will test niche market theories by targeting cross cultural viewers and developing new audiences. With cultural battle lines drawn, we will boldly use Hollywood to promote our independent vision and spread the Latin agenda. The ends will justify the means in our struggle for self-determination ... if only for a 10-day festival. (ibid.)

⁴¹⁹ Board member Vicente Franco was credited for his help with the first edition of ILFF. Co-founder Lourdes Portillo became a ILFF honorary board member. Maureen Gosling screened her film, *Blossoms of Fire*, at ILFF. Sergio de la Mora worked as a programmer for both organizations.

⁴²⁰ Sanmiguel, a media professional himself, had a long-standing association to Cine Acción, having contributed an essay to the September 1992 issue of the organization's newsletter, which critically discussed culturally insensitive casting in Hollywood and the threat of homogenizing the Latino/a experience (Sanmiguel 1992: 4).

⁴²¹ As the Cine Acción board claimed in their 2001 festival catalog's welcome address, "Cine Acción has always showcased the diversity of the Latino community. This year we are going one step further. We are making the very diversity the theme of the Festival" (Cine Acción Board 2001: 2).

The focus on diversity was further qualified by expressions such as Latinos/as' purported "collective identity of a wakening [sic] giant" (ibid.) with its repercussions of the Decade of the Hispanic; both signaled the determination to appeal to the multicultural-diversity agendas of sponsors.

Furthermore, the reference to ¡Cine Latino!'s strategic exploration of niche markets for the sake of audience development also points to how the festival intended to promote itself by way of marketing such diversity / difference in terms of exclusivity and political-ethical righteousness, a mix particularly appealing to the Bay's politicized and cinéaste audiences. This line of reasoning resonates with Geoff King's (2009) observations on specialty cinema's promise not only of "higher quality in the product (on whatever grounds that might be judged or contested in one case or another) but also via eliciting" a subjective impression of difference, distinction and superiority on the part of the viewer" (12). Obviously, this determination to embrace ethnic marketing in order to revamp itself in terms of a more commodified image can also be read as a battle cry against the festival's local competitor, ILFF.⁴²²

And in fact, ¡Cine Latino! presented an ambitious and multifaceted program. It featured an impressive number of films (96) and countries of production, encompassing twelve countries including six cities or regions in the U.S. As the board's welcome address emphasized, ¡Cine Latino! 2001 was the most extensive festival edition, "running its program over an ambitious ten-day period rather than the customary two weekends" (*¡Cine Latino! 2001 Catalog 2*).⁴²³ The films cast a wide net, including Alejandro González Iñárritu's celebrated feature *Amores Perros* (Mexico 2000), a retrospective of pioneering 1970s Texan independent filmmaker Efraín Gutiérrez; a number of shorts programs ("Experimental," "Cantos de Alma," "Youth in the Arts," "Our Spiritual Life," "Mexican Shorts," and "Voices of Our Ancestors"), and a number of films nominated for awards and co-sponsored by SFIFF. At the same time, the catalog had cut back on articles, featuring only one short introductory essay on Gutiérrez.⁴²⁴ Instead, the festival prioritized on glamor: five galas, one of which featuring Culture Clash's Herbert Siguenza. There were four professional workshops for filmmakers: A "TV sitcom and pitch bootcamp" in collaboration with ITVS (Independent Television Service); a funding workshop involving an old collaborator of Cine Acción's, filmmaker-curator Jim Mendiola; screenwriting and actors' workshops, featuring panelists such as actors Danny Trejo (*Desperado*), Jesse Borrego (*Blood In, Blood Out*), Danny de la Paz (*Seguín; Boulevard Nights*) and Miriam Colón (*Lone Star*), all of whom also starred in various films screened at the festival. However, and in ways that can be considered perhaps the greatest tragedy in the history of Cine Acción (even though it happened as the result of yet another tragedy of far greater dimensions), ¡Cine Latino! 2001 took an entirely different turn than anyone would have imagined and the question as to the potentialities of its old-new festival image had to remain unanswered. It so happened that the festival had been scheduled for September

⁴²² The extent of this competition has been described in different ways by people involved. While some underline the respectful manner of cooperation that marked the dealings of the two organizations with one another, as evidenced for instance in regard to coordinating festival schedules, others, who were volunteers at ILFF at the time, witnessed Cine Acción members attending ILFF and handing out info on their own organization in protest of ILFF (J. McCarthy Interview 2012). By all accounts, there was an obvious degree of threat felt regarding ILFF's fast and self-confident expansion from Marin County into the Bay, its gradual self-fashioning as activist festival, and its growing endorsement by some who supported Cine Acción in the old days.

⁴²³ The countries, cities and regions encompassed Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Canada, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, Spain, USA (Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Northern California, and San Antonio). (*¡Cine Latino! 2001: 2*)

⁴²⁴ "Retrospective: Run, Chicano, run... the cinema of Efraín Gutiérrez," by Fred García (García 2001:24).

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción's festivals, the International Latino

13-23, 2001. According to former Cine Acción board member José Torres, the terrorist attacks of 09/11 led to a nationwide shock and, temporarily, to a sharp decline of interest in cultural activity all around the Bay. The festival registered a considerable slump in ticket sales and subsequent financial losses from which the organization was never to recover (J. Torres 2012 Interview).

¡Cine Latino!'s last, downsized 2004 edition marked a contrast to the 2001 edition. One important change concerned the way the festival had been divided over two separate long weekends, taking place at different venues. The first part took place at the Mission's Victoria Theatre (August 26-29, 2004), the second, at the University of San Francisco (USF; and between September 17-19), also owing to the fact that two Cine Acción board members, Deanna Pachinger and José Torres, were both on staff with the USF administration at the time. Even though many pre-2001 festival editions had consisted of two long consecutive weekends with a break during weekdays, the gap of two and a half weeks was considerably wider, creating a substantial interruption of the festival time-space continuum, its "time out of time." In his welcome address, Cine Acción board president Ron Ponce attributed the unusual agenda to Cine Acción's determination to keep up its quality standards, and he expressed the organization's "hope to be able to build off the expanded format to bring a wider variety of works to the audience of the Bay Area." (*¡Cine Latino! 2004*: 1). Rather than continuing in ethnic marketing spirit of 2001, Ponce's vision focused on Cine Acción's long-standing goal of "encouraging the production, distribution, and understanding of independent Latino cinema" and the key role of "promoting Latino self-presentation and empowerment." All the while, the schedule lacked professional enhancement programs. Titled "Latino Lens – Global Perspective," the festival's theme was once again diversity:

Though united on many fronts, we each bring a different vision and perspective on life. Through the lens of our filmmakers we will see very different stories and angles of family, friends, and ourselves. We are here to celebrate the diversity that makes up *nuestra comunidad*. (Ponce 2004: 1)

Carefully sorted by curators, the schedule featured thematic foci such as Chile, immigration, African ancestry; LGBT and Latino/a spirituality. ¡Cine Latino! 2004 engaged in prestigious collaborations with three San Francisco based museums, the Mexican Museum, the Museum of African Diaspora, and the Legion of Honor (a San Francisco based, public fine arts museum), as well as with distribution agency Women Make Movies (WMM). However, it was telling that more than half of the forty-something films of the program were less than 30 minutes long: If the 2001 program had also been dominated by short formats, this tendency had become even more pronounced in 2004. Even though on the one hand, the short film genre as a typical beginner's format signaled a commendable inclusion of up and coming filmmakers; on the other hand, the predominance of shorts, like the split both of venues and the festival schedule and the lack of panels or workshops all also pointed to the organization's tight finances, an impression further suggested by the fact that fewer productions came from outside the U.S.

1.4.2 Discontinuation of Cine Acción

Four years after its last festival, Cine Acción was legally discontinued in 2008 (J. Torres Interview 2012). Cine Acción's files were subsequently moved to Stanford University's Greene Library / Spe-

cial Collections; its vast video and film archives were taken over by the University of San Francisco (USF) in 2010. It was USF's Susana Kaiser, a Latin American and media studies professor of Argentinian origin, who initiated a lengthy stock-taking and filing process of the organization's media materials. Some of these films and videos since have been subject to selected screenings under the heading of "USF presents Cine Acción." Importantly, the legacy of Cine Acción was also invoked – under the tutelage of José Torres, in 2011 and after – by way of exchanges between members of Cine Acción and its would-be follow up organization, Cine+Mas (L. Ramirez interview 2011; S. Kaiser Interview 2012; Torres Interview 2011).

2. The International Latino Film Festival San Francisco (ILFF)

2.1 Core facts

Name:	Annual Latino Film Festival of Marin (until around 2001); International Latino Film Festival (ILFF)
Existence:	1997-2008
Established:	1997, in Marin County
Locations:	Multiple locations in San Francisco and the Greater Bay Area
Director:	Sylvia Perel
Frequency and duration:	Annual (November)
Producing organization:	International Latino Film Society (ILFS), since 2006
Sponsors and supporters:	Private patrons; corporate and media sponsors; high school and community collaborators
Target films:	national and international Latino/a film; film from the U.S., Latin America, Spain, Portugal
Non-cinematic sidebars:	Parties, galas, and receptions

2.1.1 Profile

Initially named after its place of origin, as Annual Latino Film Festival of Marin, and renamed in the course of its expansion throughout the Bay, the International Latino Film Festival San Francisco⁴²⁵ (ILFF) was both founded and directed throughout its existence by Argentinian born cultural entrepreneur Sylvia Perel. Like CineFestival, CLFF, and SDLFF, ILFF started out as a campus festival, even though its educational venues at the College of Marin – a private high school where the festival's first student sidebar was hosted – were complemented by commercial, theatrical ones. In fact, from the start, ILFF was backed by a substantial network of sponsors, patrons, and other supporters. It was thus particularly well equipped to meet U.S. cultural policy's changing tide of funding politics. ILFF successfully tapped both the progressive-liberal climate of the Bay and the high demand of entertaining yet quality cinema, and here, the public's particular interest in Latin American cultural production. ILFF thus started out as an event intended to celebrate Latino/a culture while also prioritizing on its educational component. Both increased the festival's appeal to its patrons and sponsors, many of whom, particularly in the beginning, were hailing from affluent middle and upper middle class Marin County. ILFF tended to rely on an entertainment orientation which, in the years to come,⁴²⁵ In order to avoid confusion, and unless necessary to do otherwise, I will use the acronym ILFF also when referring to the times when the old designation – Annual Latino Film Festival of Marin – was still used.

was further emphasized by its focus on celebrities. In the early 2000s, it created more alliances with popular representatives from Latino/a Hollywood and thus became more political, a trend that coincided with the weakening and eventual demise of Cine Acción's ¡Cine Latino!.

2.1.2 Resource: Education

To ILFF, its adopted role as a provider of education was an important resource and served as a basis for its expansion to many more venues throughout the region. In its first mission statement issued in 1997, ILFF had committed itself to the ambition of initiating a “year-round outreach program [...] bring[ing] high-quality films on the Latino experience to schools, colleges, and other community venues” as well as different venues not only catering to wealthier audiences “but to the low-income and student populations as well” (ILFF 1997 Steering Committee 1997: 2). The prominence of ILFF's educational focus was underscored by the fact that the festival's first edition already featured a media and outreach director (Victoria Vieira, also on staff at the College of Marin) and a youth component, a “Video Fiesta,” shown at two venues in Marin County (College of Marin and the Dance Palace at Point Reyes; ILFF 1997 Catalog 6). The mission statement also expressed the goal envisioned for ILFF's youth component to create scholarships, mentoring and networking opportunities with film professionals (ILFF 1997 Catalog 2). ILFF's “Youth in Video” (YIV) media producing program, introduced only one year later (1998), included programs in the Bay Area and in Buenos Aires, Argentina and increasingly reflected ILFF's political commitment as well.⁴²⁶ Accordingly, YIV California created “*Sueños Arrestados / Arrested Dreams* (2007),” on the ICE raids of San Rafael in the March of 2007 (ILFF 2007 Catalog 43). One earlier, on the occasion of the festival's tenth anniversary, ILFF's youth component had been given special attention by way of a “First Annual YIV Festival,” hosted at Dominican University (Perel & Perel 2006: 4).

Over the years, as the festival grew in venues, ILFF was also to collaborate with many more educational partners, schools and academic institutions, some permanently, some more irregularly. Among the long-standing allies was Marin County's Dominican University California-San Rafael, which also housed ILFF's film library. Others included San José State University (2001), Sonoma State University (2000), Skyline College (2006) and UC Berkeley's Center for Latin American Studies (also 2006; a former partnering institution of Cine Acción, which had by then terminated its festivals), and California State University Sacramento (2007) (ILFF 2006 Catalog 4; ILFF 2007 Catalog 1).

Thus, two kinds of supporters were especially important in the early days and helped building the foundation of the organization's success: Patrons and educators. The festival director herself, too, had a background as an artist and educator (J. Petrovsky Interview 2010). ILFF's educator constituencies came from the county's own more upscale schools and tended to be bilingual Spanish and /or media teachers. To them, the festival offered a way to enhance their teaching agendas while holding in stall the potentially gratifying involvement in events celebrating Latino/a culture and the Spanish language in a framework defined to a lesser degree by ethnic (Latino/a) identity politics than by the consumption of Latino/a culture (G. López-Gutiérrez Interview 2010). At the same time, their commitment resonated with the Bay's specific politics of place in respect to the mainstreaming of

⁴²⁶ Its YIV Argentina program featured the 2003 project *Shabab Be Iadad / Jóvenes Juntos (Youth Together)*, a documentary film created in Argentina by local Buenos Aires youth from Jewish and Muslim communities (ILFF 2003 Catalog 5) and other programs in the years to come.

progressive ideas that would help establish ILFF's strong footing among its original middle and upper middle class audiences. The examples of two of ILFF's most devoted and long-standing associates, John Petrovsky Carvajal and Gloria López-Gutiérrez – both bilingual teachers on staff at College of Marin – further underscore this argument. John Petrovsky, ILFF's director of educational programs, had been with the festival from the beginning and became Sylvia Perel's most consistent associate and sometimes assistant executive director. Gloria López-Gutiérrez, in turn, had joined ILFF in the late 1990s. Residents of Marin County, both moved in social circles similar to Perel's, and like her, they were inspired by their great appreciation of the Spanish language and Latin American and U.S. Latino/a culture. Petrovsky had grown up in San Francisco's Latino/a dominated Mission District within a family of Russian and Chilean descent. Coming of age in the mid-1970s, and helped by the Bay's liberating atmosphere, he had come to embrace his queerness and his Latino roots (J. Petrovsky Interview 2010). López-Gutiérrez, the daughter of Mexican immigrants, had grown up in the suburban San Fernando Valley-Greater Los Angeles region and relocated to the Bay for her university studies. To her, ILFF continued the Spanish language tradition of literature appreciation circles (*tertulias*). She regards her profession as a bilingual teacher as inevitably political, particular with regard to the 1990s and the anti-immigrant rhetoric in Californian politics and the media⁴²⁷ – a time “when everything Spanish was under attack” (López-Gutiérrez Interview 2010).

2.1.3 Envisioned situation in the film festival network / circuit

From the very beginning, the festival modelled itself on bigger, commercially successful festivals while also targeting viewers from beyond its Marin home base. This was not only expressed by ILFF's mission statement, according to which the festival's programs were “for the benefit of the Bay community” (ILFF 1997 Steering Committee 1997: 2) but also indicated by the welcome note from the executive director (Perel 1997: 5). Here, Perel's tracing a lineage to Mill Valley Film Festival (MVFF), the international arthouse and independent film festival also based in San Rafael, is indicative both of ILFF's own ambitions and its determination to attain symbolic capital through its powerful association to the international film circuit. Conversations with long-time collaborators, too, corroborate ILFF's continued identification either with MVFF as well as with SFIFF (G. López Gutiérrez Interview 2010). It was also by way of mentioning her own involvement in MVFF's board that Perel situated ILFF in Marin's “great tradition of screening fine films” and in the way MVFF had brought

⁴²⁷ The rising antagonism against Latinos/as was also fueled by the shock of the violent aftermath of the Rodney King case which saw numerous Latino/a victims but which also featured Latinos/as as perpetrators (violence, looting) (cf. Hayes-Bautista 2004: 118-25). One result was California governor (1991-99) Pete Wilson's “beat[ing of] the immigration drums” (Sherwood 1995, quoted in Hayes-Bautista 2004: 126) – with the word immigrant serving as a code for Latinos/as – in his attempt at re-election. Wilson's campaign included the circulation of disproportionately exaggerated numbers of Latin American immigrants entering the state, the introduction of the catchphrase of “illegal” immigration to the public debate, and the dissemination of negative images of immigrants which, in the public eye, facilitated a conflation of documented and undocumented immigrants (cf. Hayes-Bautista 125-136), leading to the passing of Proposition 187 as an attempt to deny basic services to undocumented immigrants; furthermore, there was Wilson's championing of an erosion of affirmative action (Proposition 209, the so-called “Civil Rights Initiative”), which “forbade the state from providing any advantage to any person due to race, ethnicity or gender.” Even before taking effect, the bill was reduced to universities in order to “eliminate the use of affirmative-action admissions and simultaneously raised the bar for admission by mandating that a certain percentage of students must be admitted on the basis of Grade Point Average (GPA), test scores, and other such ‘objective’ criteria alone.” (Hayes-Bautista 2004:136). Finally, there was also the campaign against bilingual education, sponsored by tech millionaire Ron Unz (Proposition 227) (cf. Hayes-Bautista 2004: 137-8).

“to our community the artistry of international filmmaking and foreign cultures allowing us to experience the world on the big screen” (Perel 1997:5). Likewise, MVFF festival director Mark Fishkin was acknowledged in ILFF’s “amigos de festival” category further on in the catalog (ILFF 1997: 24).

However, ILFF also claimed kinship to “the network of emerging Latino film festivals,” even though a number of omissions suggest a somewhat sketchy familiarity and perhaps also lack of deeper engagement with the former. These lapses may also be attributed to the circumstances of Perel’s first-time and (nearly) single-handed organization of ILFF; however, in their entirety, they underscore the extent to which ILFF aspired to join the ranks of MVFF. For one, Latino/a themed film festivals were referred to in terms of their “recent blossoming in the United States” during “the last five years” (Perel 1997: 5) while in fact, San Antonio’s CineFestival was about the same age as MVFF, whose twenty years of existence at the time had been acknowledged in the editorial. Even though Perel situated ILFF alongside those in “San Antonio, New York,⁴²⁸ Los Angeles” (in fact, LALIFF’s Edward James Olmos contributed a guest editorial), she did not mention CLFF, thirteen years old at the time and then the nation’s biggest festival even though CLFF and its director were listed among ILFF’s supporters in the catalog’s back matter. One last revealing detail is the omission of the Bay’s other Latino/a film festival, ¡Cine Latino!, even though its organization is credited on the catalog’s “Acknowledgements” page as “Cineacción” [sic] (ILFF 1997: 24). In hindsight, and considering the emerging competition between the two organizations, this omission becomes even more meaningful.

2.1.4 Cross-validation: 1997’s endorsement by Edward James Olmos

If I have remarked earlier on that the festival back then, in 1997, was not yet counting on celebrities to enhance its recognition, there was one important exception that foreshadowed this strategy: the endorsement by iconic Latino/a Hollywood actor and director Edward James Olmos in his “Letter from Edward James Olmos” (Olmos 1997b: 4). Not only did Olmos’s celebrity status and renown as a social activist bestow prestige to ILFF; he furthermore served, as I have discussed earlier, as an important association to a newer type of commodified Latino/a film activism, prioritizing on entertainment and reliant on mainstreaming tendencies, buzz, and corporate sponsorship; this also resonates with Sylvia Perel’s reference to Latino/a film festivals’ more “recent blossoming” (Perel 1997: 5). For Olmos, whose own LALIFF had started out just one month earlier, the invitation to speak on behalf of ILFF also provided an opportunity to promote and receive validation for LALIFF’s mission to bridge U.S. and international Latino/a film production in Hollywood. Accordingly, Olmos pointed out similarities between both festivals – their timeliness (or the “amazing” circumstance of their concomitant creation); their shared goal “to disseminate Latino culture in the U.S.,” and, further on, to “provid[e] a venue where the community can share the best of U.S. and international films, culture, education, and entertainment as a way to foster cultural harmony” (Olmos 1997b: 4). The success of his own film festival’s premiere in October 1997, Olmos claimed, gave him reason to believe “that the Latino presence in California is starting to bloom through the most powerful media known to us in this point in

⁴²⁸ Her mention of a New York based festival, in turn, could only refer to a by then long terminated sidebar of Joe Papp’s theater festival, since the other long-standing New York based Latino/a themed festival, New York International Latino Film Festival (NYILFF), was not to be created until 1999 and El Museo’s festivals, as I have shown previously, were all too infrequent.

life: film.”⁴²⁹ Olmos's pronouncements are a much softer take on the “access” rhetoric used by groups such as the Chicano Cinema Coalition or Cine Acción's advocacy of Latino/a filmmaking, lacking also a critique as to the stereotypical representations of Latinos/as in Hollywood. Incidentally, what the several near-identical phrases in both texts underscore are tendencies ultimately shared by both festivals, ILFF and LALIFF. They attest to a new trend in the 1990s: The celebration and commodification of *latinidad* as “entertainment,” rife with harmonizing (in the sense of the above “cultural harmony”) and homogenizing repercussions, all of which obfuscate not only the ongoing struggle of ethnic filmmakers in the U.S. to participate in the film and television industries but also the many differences in the imagined transnational Latino/a film professional communities promoted by both festivals, not to mention the conditions under which the respective film productions on exhibition were being made.

2.1.5 ILFF's success formula: Celebration and marketing of *latinidad*

Like other U.S. based Latino/a film festivals, ILFF never became a major arena for film sales such as its role model, MVFF. However, increasingly, with its lavish parties and prioritization on star power, ILFF represented a more recent type of commodified, celebrity driven event, in some ways similar to festivals like CLFF, SDLFF and in particular LALIFF. While the festival's first edition had steered clear of greater financial risks by featuring only two honorary guests and a number of select films – productions which, however, had already accumulated a recognition of their own and were helpful for ILFF's building of a reputation – the catalog reveals that the festival had already been able to secure an impressive line-up of supporters. A breakdown of sponsors (ILFF 1997: 26ff.) includes the categories “food” (fourteen sponsors); “assorted” (eight); and “media” (five, including Univisión's 14KDTV, and Lucasfilm, owned by Star Wars director George Lucas, a fellow Marin County resident and a member of ILFF's honorary board). There were corporate sponsors such as Wells Fargo and Kaiser Permanente; there was also the Marin Community Foundation. Furthermore, even in 1997 the festival had already been able to rely on the aid of several diplomatic missions. These relationships proved invaluable and long-lasting over the years and were built on the mutual benefits arising from co-hosting glamorous public relations events. The Spanish consulate, for instance, which had been supporting the festival from its early days on, was to host receptions and occasionally bring in films from Europe in the diplomat's pouch as to save costs (López-Gutiérrez 2010; Petrovsky 2010). Finally, sponsors and supporters also included private patrons⁴³⁰ and a wide range of national and international cultural organizations: The 1997 catalog recognized the help of film festivals, such as CLFF, Cine Acción, San José's CineQuest, LALIFF, and the Italian Film Festival; local and national Latino/a defined cultural organizations, such as the Latino Council, Hispanic Chamber, Hispanic Education and Media Group and from abroad, CNAC Venezuela and IMCINE Mexico; and altogether fifty-one more individuals listed as “Amigos de Festival,” among them LALIFF's co-director Marlene Dermer and Cine Acción's Vicente Franco (ILFF 1997: 24).

⁴²⁹ Incidentally, the wording is almost identical with his own welcome editorial for LALIFF: “We live in the Entertainment Capital of the World – the center of the most powerful and influential media we have: MOVIES (capitalizations in the original; 1997a: 8).

⁴³⁰ Contributing members fell into the categories of “producer” (USD 500): 3, “luminary” (USD 250): 7 and “astro” (USD 100): 14 (ILFF 1997: 24).

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción's festivals, the International Latino

ILFF's first edition was an event mostly driven by the goals of empowerment and education; here, the mission statement pointed to ILFF's "commitment to featuring Latino films of significant artistic merit for the benefit of the Bay Area community" (ILFF 1997: 2) and to the films as an expression of a national-cultural diversity as means "to inspire and empower our Latino population, and to share our rich cultural heritage with the public at large" (ibid.), which in turn was used to market the festival to its audiences and sponsors. In the program notes, this diversity was reflected by a nationally and thematically diverse and at times nostalgic image of *latinidad* intended to appeal to an educated audience. Accordingly, film settings and stories were described by the executive director in flowery and frequently exoticizing language, namely, as "lush Venezuelan jungle," or "Borgesian labyrinth of subways below the pulsing the streets of Buenos Aires," as "Mapuche territory where the world ends on a remote Chilean coast," but also in a startlingly tone-deaf phrase praising the "poetic beauty of a migrant worker's life" (ILFF 1997:5). All the while, special attention was given to "some very talented filmmakers as well as films with a strong emphasis on women's issues." The selection included a wide range of themes and stories, and films from Spain, Mexico, Venezuela, and Argentina, with *Eva Perón, La Verdadera Historia* by Juan Desanzo screened twice, a biopic on the Argentinian presidential wife and national icon. While it would have been less likely for the film to be screened at ¡Cine Latino! due to "Evita" Perón's association with her husband's controversial political career, it was a telling pick for ILFF. Not only was this choice bound to resonate with the Bay's Latin American, and particularly Argentinian émigré circles; Evita's story had long garnered wider interest, first in Europe and then worldwide, thanks to the successful eponymous musical by British composer Andrew Lloyd Webber (1974)⁴³¹ and, only recently, a biopic (Alan Parker, USA 1996) featuring pop icon Madonna both in the leading role and as producer.⁴³² The number of films screened in 1997 ran up to about thirty films. A number of films shown had already been featured at ¡Cine Latino! only two months earlier, which suggests some degree of collaboration and once more casts the lack of mention of the older festival in the welcome address in a competitive light.⁴³³

As to the impact of entertainment at ILFF, Gloria López-Gutiérrez recalls its reputation for being "really good at parties." (G. López-Gutiérrez Interview 2010) ILFF's increasing prioritization on the exclusivity factor based on a presence of celebrity actors or directors resonates with what de Valck & Loist (2009) have called the festival's specific "event nature" (185); its competitive repercussions tie in with a business festival logic differentiating ILFF from most other Latino/a festivals, who were primarily defined along the lines of solidarity. It was particularly ILFF's celebrity and glamor factor which worked reciprocally as a great incentive for sponsors and other festival patrons, who were able to tap ILFF's symbolic capital in exchange for their support. At the same time, the Bay's liberal and progressive mainstream enabled the festival to secure some of its key audiences – educated constituencies with a strong interest in Latin American and social commentary film. ILFF director Sylvia Perel's substantial connections to the Latin American exile community, Argentine and other, played

⁴³¹ *Evita* (musical; Music: Andrew Lloyd Webber; Libretto: Tim Rice, 1974).

⁴³² *Evita* (film, USA 1996, Alan Parker).

⁴³³ These films were: The documentary *Shepherders Homecoming* (USA, Lou Werner and Allen Moore, no date available); four Mexican short films (*Cuatro Maneras de Tapar un Hoyo / Four Ways to Cover a Hole*, 1995, Guillermo Rendón and Jorge Villalobos; *De Jazmín en Flor / Jasmine in Flower*; 1996, Daniel Grubner; *El Héroe / The Hero*, 1994, Carlos Carrera; and *De Tripas Corazón / Guts and Heart*, Antonio Urrutia, Mexico, 1996). (ILFF 1997: 6; 23; ¡Cine Latino! 1997: 37-41). ¡Cine Latino! was hosted September 18-28; the First Annual Latino Film Festival of Marin ("ILFF") November 6-9, 1997.

an important role as well. Regarding these audiences in particular, there was a strong sense of identification with ILFF and the way their cultural-national background was honored and validated.

At ILFF, the exclusivity of stars in attendance was key to the festival's viewing experience and prestige. As Gloria López-Gutiérrez has pointed out, celebrities were the main attraction for people who would otherwise turn to resources like Netflix.[®] (G. López-Gutiérrez Interview 2010) Even though it was only towards the end of ILFF's existence that streaming emerged as the popular source it is today, it may stand for other providers such as video and DVD rentals that made it possible to access independent and foreign films more widely. This also meant that in terms of ILFF's reliance on star power, the Bay's geographic situation could at times provide certain setbacks, owing to the region's relative distance to Hollywood which occasionally could cause interferences with the availability of invited guests of honor.⁴³⁴ López-Gutiérrez mentioned one such case involving popular Cuban American actor Andy García's last minute cancellation of a visit to ILFF (G. López-Gutiérrez Interview 2010).

In ILFF's history of film exhibitions, a milestone screening that also sheds light on the organization's culturally affirming and commercial politics in its promotion of *latinidad* was that of Julie Taymor's *Frida* (USA 2002). The biopic on Mexican painter and feminist icon Frida Kahlo, co-produced by and starring Salma Hayek in the lead, was presented by ILFF at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) as an opener of its 2002 festival (Monday, October 7th). ILFF's particular triumph involved its having been able to beat the venerable SFIFF to the San Francisco premiere (J. Petrovsky Interview 2010). In an interview with the local paper *SFGate*, Sylvia Perel said that she had been offered to premier the film by the distributor, Miramax, a statement also underlining the festival's renown with the intersecting Latino/a Hollywood / indie wood industries (Clarke 2002, no pag.).⁴³⁵ In her editorial to the ILFF 2002 catalog, Perel called Frida [Kahlo] "a symbol for the festival itself. Her courage in giving a voice to the voiceless, and her strength and passion in overcoming obstacles reflect our own struggles in turbulent times" (Perel 2002: 2). This remarkable analogy refers, on the one hand, to the historical figure – her legendary status due to her commitment to the poor, feminism, outstanding strength in the face of illness and depression; qualities which endeared her to feminists not only in Mexico and other parts of Latin America but also to U.S. Latinas. On the other hand, this statement is also fit to describe Hayek's long struggle to secure the rights to and eventually realize this project; a struggle pointing all the way back to fellow director Luis Valdez's aforementioned, abandoned biopic. By linking ILFF to the struggles revolving around the historical Frida Kahlo, Salma Hayek, and the film, Perel elevates her festival to an arena giving voice to the underrepresented voices of Latinos/as in the U.S., and particularly in Hollywood.⁴³⁶ In the same vein, she calls Hayek's successful film

⁴³⁴ This is not in contradiction to the aforementioned statement by MVFF programmer Zoë Elton (quoted in the previous chapter on RRAFF), who described her festival terms of its proximity to Hollywood. In fact, this contrast draws our attention to how proximity is defined by what is actually better described in terms of the hierarchy between audience festivals such as ILFF and industry arenas such as MVFF.

⁴³⁵ However, the overall Bay premiere happened at the Mill Valley Film Festival, on October 3, 2002, four days earlier than ILFF's prestigious venue at the San Francisco Museum of Art (SF-MOMA) on October (Toushin 2002, no pag.).

⁴³⁶ There is also a less overt association to the "turbulent times" in the post 9/11 U.S. when many politicians as well as the media perpetuated an increasingly counter-immigrant rhetoric. This aspect is given more consideration in the next paragraph, in which Perel emphasizes, as a result of "last year's dramatic events," the festival's timely dedication to "increas[ing] cultural understanding between the U.S. and the Spanish speaking world" and the realization according to which "the subject of individual freedom is more relevant than ever" without, however, referring to individual programs or films save a rather unspecific "large number of shorts and documentaries" (Perel 2002: 2).

project a “triumph” and tells her: “Gracias, Salma, for being an inspiration for us all, and a powerful force in the industry, as you open up doors by virtue of your beauty and intelligence” (ibid.). However, if we were to read Perel’s words as a call to arms in the tradition of the 1970s Chicano/a-Latino/a film activism and its fight for respectful representations and access to the mainstream media, we would be quickly reminded that even though *Frida* was a modest production when compared to bigger, blockbuster projects, the film provides an arena for international *latinidad* made in Hollywood, pushed by the buzz generated by a powerful mainstream film industry and by its potential to create cross-over audiences. This notion also corresponds to the way *Frida*’s casting politics has favored U.S. “Anglos,” Europeans, and Latin Americans over U.S. Latinos/as in ways that correspond to Hollywood’s ““preferred Latin look”” (Beltrán 2009:123). Seen in this light, Perel’s pronouncements take on additional meaning and give us an impression as to how ILFF’s own brand of activism is a negotiation between industry and a more commercial and mainstreamed type of *latinidad* on the one hand, and the old activist struggles on the other. Accordingly, in the aforementioned interview with *SF Gate*⁴³⁷ journalist Terence Clarke, Perel emphasized the importance of seeing the overall festival as commodity and event. Her words are summed up as follows:

To be successful, a festival needs the help of many entities important to mainstream Hollywood. A large paying audience, first of all. Numbers of Spanish-speaking people and Anglos. Corporate funding. An organized marketing effort. In [Perel’s] mind, the festival had to be an Event, in the same way that more established festivals like Cannes and Berlin are Events (Clarke 2002; capitalizations in the original).

ILFF’s emulation of the big European festivals regards resonates with some basic thoughts on the economic side of today’s bigger film festivals as articulated by de Valck & Loist (2009). Even though it does not see ILFF so much in terms of being one of the major “players in the film industry,” it fully embraces ILFF’s role as “even[t] in which various stakeholders are involved” (180) and acknowledges the necessary concessions to be made to the (international) market, to sponsors,⁴³⁸ and paying audiences, and the need to create a cross-over appeal targeting diverse audiences. ILFF’s resulting adherence to an entertainment logic, and its promotion of an international, star power driven *latinidad* is in many ways characteristic of more recent festivals of its day, such as LALIFF, NYILFF, and SDLFF. The interesting point is that ILFF had started out as a festival predominantly promoting Latin

⁴³⁷ *SF Gate* was also one of ILFF’s sponsors that year.

⁴³⁸ Indeed, over the years, there was a steady increase of sponsoring relationships. In 2002, the year of the *Frida* premiere, when the festival featured fourteen long or medium-length features and documentaries and ten short films, sponsors encompassed “major sponsors” (seven); “film and program sponsors” (eleven); “supporting sponsors” (eight, including Miramax, Lucasfilm, and various consulates); “travel” (five); “food & wine” (eighteen); “supporting sponsors” (five); “city, community, education” (three); and another category I have chosen to name media sponsors (ten, including AT & T broadband, Univisión, *El Latino*, KQED and the *San Francisco Guardian*). (“Sponsors,” ILFF 2002 Catalog 20-21) In 2007, the year before the last festival edition (and before the economic crisis), the festival featured ninety-six films; a breakdown of sponsors included: “Official sponsors” (six, including Comcast, Macy’s, Continental Airlines and Wells Fargo); “opening night” (three); “events” (six, including the Mexican Consulate San José, the Mexican Tourism Board, and Visa); “foundations and grants” (six); “official media” (nine); “media” (fourteen); “supporting” (six); “film and program” (twenty-one, among them two consulates generals, four universities / colleges and one students’ association); “hotel” (six); and “hospitality” (thirty-six) (ILFF 2007: 40-41). This means that not only was ILFF 2007 able to rely on a very wide and diverse base of support but that the festival had also seen an exponential growth in sponsor relationships not only in the field of media (twenty-four) but also in the hospitality sector – hotels, restaurants, and airlines. Arguably, it was a decline in support coming from the latter sector that seriously affected the festival and ultimately caused its demise in 2009 (J. Petrovsky Interview 2010).

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción's festivals, the International Latino

American film, and subsequently, in the course of its growth and expansion to different venues, broadened its focus by including more U.S. Latino/a activist perspectives. As I have shown throughout my study, ever since the beginnings of so-called Hispanic Hollywood, mainstreaming and commercial tendencies had increased as well, while the lack of opportunities for U.S. Latino/a filmmakers and the ongoing shortage of respectful and nuanced representations of Latino/a characters and realities have remained critical issues to this day. Convergences between this more commodified kind of film activism and ILFF were thus made easier, particularly since star power played an eminent role for both. By the time the International Latino Film Society (ILFS) had been founded as a backing organization for ILFF in 2007,⁴³⁹ the organization was already promoting an image more in line with U.S. Latino/a demands for representations and access than it had done back in 1997.

One important development was ILFF's increased personal affiliations to U.S. Latino/a Hollywood as a way to balance its international orientation. The 2002 edition had actor and director Cheech Marin (*Born in East L.A.*) contribute a guest editorial for the festival catalog, which in turn is noteworthy for its acknowledgement of *latinidad's* transnational scope while keeping eyes on the prize, access, in times that saw great changes in terms of distribution. Accordingly, Marin praised ILFF's overall work for "filmmakers around the globe (Marin 2002:2)," both in terms of audience appeal and industry exposure. His recognition of the ways ILFF had "created the appropriate platform for independent films to leap from festivals to grand exposure to such elite television networks as the Sundance Channel and HBO (ibid.);" not least of all mirrors the changes happening in the world of smaller, specialty film productions and the growing relevance of such newer, alternative arenas for Latino/a film. In the same vein, Marin also expressed his admiration for ILFF's Youth in Video initiative, "bring[ing] the film industry to less privileged youth, providing career training in and exposure to the film industry (ibid.)." It was ILFF 2002, too, that featured a two-film tribute to Luis Valdez and El Teatro Campesino (ELC) by screening both Valdez's *The Cisco Kid* (1994), as well as Kinan Valdez's *Ballad of a Soldier* (2002), in turn based on a play written by the director's father, Luis Valdez. By doing so, ILFF on the one hand honored its educational goals and the filmmaker / theater director, whose ELC was based in nearby San Juan Bautista; on the other hand, given Valdez's own abandoned Kahlo themed film project, ILFF also created a kind of balance to ILFF 2002's premiere of Julie Taymor's *Frida*. ILFF also created a relationship to Moctesuma Esparza by dedicating its award, the "Mocte de Oro" ("Golden Mocte"), to the pioneering Chicano film activist and industry insider, who also became its first recipient. ILFF's honorary board, too, steadily grew and came to feature a number of U.S. Latino/a filmmakers and actors associated with entertainment and Latino/a Hollywood, such as actors Jimi Smits and John Leguizamo, theater activists and director / musician brothers, Luis and Daniel Valdez, and producers-directors Moctesuma Esparza and Gregory Nava – and, as international Latino/a film artists, Mexicans Salma Hayek and Diego Luna. But there was also documentary filmmaker and Cine Acción co-founder Lourdes Portillo.

Thus, when the newly founded ILFS worked with NALIP on a conference for emerging Bay Area Latino/a filmmakers in 2006, this was in line with its new and old tasks. The latter also included a year round screening program ("Cine 365,") and the longstanding program "Youth in Video," while explaining the need to found the organization as a way to better serve the growing and diversifying Latino/a constituency in the Bay, here articulating its determination to serve possible cross-audien-

⁴³⁹ The first mention of ILFS was in the 2007 festival catalog (ILFF 2007:3).

ces such as the Bay's LGBT communities ("ILFF 2008"; www.latinofilmsociety.org⁴⁴⁰). It was sadly ironic but not entirely coincidental given ILFF's overall more stable position particularly regarding organizational structure and sponsoring relationships / patronage that in the early 2000s, around the same time the younger festival organization gained momentum, Cine Acción's overall visibility and, as I have argued earlier, to some degree also sense of its original mission declined.⁴⁴¹

Finally, one of ILFF's most remarkable achievements was its speedy and consistent growth not only in programs but also venues, which meant that from the 2000s on, it was serving the entire Bay Area. In fact, the 2002 festival edition already showed sixty-four films at sixteen venues in the Bay, including San Francisco; the Napa and Sonoma Counties to the north; San Rafael (Marin County); San José in the south; and Berkeley, on the East Bay. In 2007, the year before ILFF's final edition, there were nineteen different venues; cities now included San Bruno and Redwood City (San Mateo County); Larkspur (Marin County), and Sacramento.⁴⁴² The mix encompassed universities, high schools, cinemas, community centers, (state funded) museums, and Latino/a identified arts organizations. ILFF thus responded to one of the Bay's principal challenges – its multi-level diversity (and resulting fracturedness) – by bringing the festival to a number of very different audiences.

Yet, while many welcomed the ILFF's dispersal of venues in an area difficult to navigate due to geographical circumstances, there are also counter-arguments. One is that of a unity of venues, which prioritizes the increased opportunity for exchange and formation of one albeit idealized festival community, as is the case with SDLFF and RRAFF. Ethan van Thillo, himself a friend of ILFF who visited the festival a number of times, nevertheless noted its "different feel," which I see as a certain lack of a coherent festival atmosphere (E. van Thillo Interview 2011). Even though this observation and overall stance on one unified festival venue needs to be weighed against geographical factors as well as the Bay's multitude of competing events, one could indeed argue that ILFF's dispersal to some extent avoids interrogating the Bay's social compartmentalization, which is at odds with the activist festival's goal of creating community, a utopian festival *communitas* with its "unity in diversity" (Caldaval 1998: 38).

I argue that there is only a thin line between an activist impulse to serve many different constituencies by attempting to validate locality and thus countering the "loss of community" (Castells 1999) on the one hand, and the commercial logic of conveniently packaging events, even though the latter may further reinforce the fracture running through these communities; one strategy to avoid compartmentalization or ghettoization would be to create sustainable partnerships with local partners who share and / or complement the festival's goals of affirmation and empowerment which go beyond a mere charity level (reproducing asymmetric power relations) while also leaving room for drawing in different communities in order to foster the formation of cross-audiences. Unfortunately, it has been impossible to gain first hand insights into ILFF's reception environment since the festival had disbanded in its old form when I began my fieldwork. However, the types of the venues and local collaborators provide some insights into how ILFF navigated this task. And indeed, despite the various occasions

⁴⁴⁰ Page is no longer valid.

⁴⁴¹ This is further confirmed by the way Cine Acción had faded so much into the background of the public perception that a former board member, upon my inquiry as to the fate of the organization, was wondering whether it was still alive – or had already been eclipsed by ILFF.

⁴⁴² The Sonoma and Napa venues had been dropped.

when ILFF partnered up with cultural arts organizations such as MCCLA or La Peña, or with community centers and high schools⁴⁴³, and then usually at much lower admission rates or even free of charge, the majority of events were hosted in the commercial sphere and / or tailored to more affluent constituencies. 2003's "Tribute to Moctesuma Esparza" (tribute / film / gala dinner) at the Castro Theatre, for instance, may have met the expectations of more affluent patrons, but its admission of USD 135 could be considered elitist and did not necessarily resonate with the traditionally egalitarian spirit of the Bay's arts and activist constituencies or the realities of its poorer constituencies (ILFF 2003 Catalog 16). It was here that ILFF followed in the footsteps of business-oriented festivals – such as LALIFF, where such events were intended for patrons and sponsors.

2.1.6 Conclusion: Leadership and brand preservation as strengths and weaknesses

From 1997 to 2008, ILFF had emerged as a successful and well-respected festival in and beyond the Bay. As I have argued before, to no small degree, its continuity and stability both were due to the organization's many dedicated associates, such as teachers acting as multipliers while not being dependent on the festival for their income. Increasingly, as the organization grew, there was also a younger cohort of media and development / fundraising specialists involved. All the while, ILFF director Sylvia Perel remained its *spiritus rector*. From its inception, she had defined the festival's identity through her involvement in many duties from programming to fundraising, and as ILFF's primary representative for sponsors, patrons, and other supporters and collaborators. Her own family had been supporting ILFF as well; in her first welcome editorial, she credits her husband for his support; later, in 2007, her son, Jonathan, shared responsibilities as ILFF's executive director. That ILFF would always remain Perel's creation was evident from the very beginning, as underlined by her engagingly personal welcome editorial, where she recalled her ongoing fascination with going to the movies ever since her childhood days, "spen[ding] every Sunday in the cozy darkness of the Alba Theatre, across the street from my home in Buenos Aires" (Perel 1997: 5). On the one hand, the fact that ILFF was a labor of love no doubt accounted for many of its strengths: In the Bay's ever-changing world of arts and culture, Sylvia Perel's long-standing dedication to ILFF stood for continuity; in the dynamic world of the Bay, with its penchant for alliances, she was both well-connected to the local cultural scene, including its Latin American expat communities and the force behind ILFF's push from Marin into the Bay. Furthermore, there was her often described great personal charisma, translating into a gift of attracting talent, patrons, and sponsors as well as dedicated associates to the festival. On the other hand, a weakness of her leadership was a certain hard-nosed determination, most of all suggested by her domination of the organization, as is evident in how the festival was ended (or, from another perspective, downsized): as a decision seemingly made without her staff.

2008 saw the last edition of ILFF. In our brief exchange of e-mails Perel cited the aftermath of 2008's economic crisis as the main reason behind ILFF's termination (S. Perel e-mail 04/19/2010). This explanation was also confirmed by John Petrovsky, who referred to a decline in sponsors, particularly regarding airlines needed to fly in guests (J. Petrovsky Interview 2010). However, SFLFF co-founder Lucho Ramirez, who had been ILFF's development associate for a couple of years, described a

⁴⁴³ In 2003, ILFF collaborated with MCCLA for one day of films (USD 5 per screening) and with La Peña on one film (normal admission, i.e. 9 / 7.50 USD) as well as with the Berkeley Richmond Jewish Community Center on one film (5 USD). It also featured one reduced (5 USD) film screening at Santa Clara University, San José and another one free of charge at UC Berkeley (ILFF 2003:16).

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción's festivals, the International Latino

somewhat different scenario, according to which the festival had officially been terminated by Perel once and for all, which then was presented to other associates as a closed case. This meant that any opportunities to become involved in the decision-making process had been prevented, including a discussion about possible strategies as to save the festival (L. Ramirez Interview 2012). Perel's apparent single-mindedness in this matter underscores the disadvantages emerging from a festival's identity solely resting with one person. In fact, one possible interpretation is that Perel wished to prevent ILFF's unique brand from being altered – such as by creating a more pared down, less exclusive and less star power-driven version that might have made it possible to keep ILFF in San Francisco and the central Bay. This move would have safeguarded ILFF's availability to locals including the less affluent Latino/a constituencies in the Mission and East Bay, as ILFF's mission would have suggested. Neither was there a consideration, it seems, of teaming up with another organization, such as with MCCLA, which had its own videofest at the time, or with members of the already discontinued Cine Acción.

Thus, while the challenge posed by ILFF's new sponsoring situation is conceivable, one is to infer that another conflict was about leadership regarding vital decision-making processes. After all, the festival's success had also been the result of a joint effort, and Sylvia Perel's committed team was the result of her ability to attract enthusiastic associates to the organization.⁴⁴⁴ In reaction to ILFF's termination, Ramirez and a couple of like-minded friends formed Cine+Mas, a film club whose ambition was to reinstate a Latino/a themed film festival in the Bay.⁴⁴⁵ All the while, Perel, in November 2009 (ILFF's traditional launching month), and thus contrary to her earlier decision to close ILFF, continued the festival as a three day event hosted in Redwood City, one of ILFF's more recent venues with the support of entertainment and educational partners. This festival was held once more in the following year, 2010, and then discontinued. All the while, the Festival de Cine Todos Santos-La Paz (FCTS-LP) has continued until the time of this writing (2018). FCTS-LP had been founded by Perel back in 2004, hosted in the Mexican tourist resort of Todos los Santos, Baja California Sur and later also in the state capital, La Paz. In some ways, FCTS-LP returned to ILFF's roots by featuring mostly Latin American film, an educational component,⁴⁴⁶ and celebrity driven galas.⁴⁴⁷ Somewhat similar to ILFF's early Marin days, many supporters and patrons were connected to the local leisure industries, to real estate and tourism. By reinserting the festival into this different national context, Perel was furthermore able not only to build on her long-standing alliances to international festivals like Gua-

⁴⁴⁴ Again, back in 1997, Perel herself had acknowledged the commitment of those who had supported her in putting up the brand new festival: "It took many devoted friends, talented volunteers, generous organizations, festival sponsors, and nine months of arduous work to give birth to the Latino Film Festival of Marin that makes us all so proud every day" (Perel 1997:5).

⁴⁴⁵ These former ILFF associates included, in addition to Lucho Ramirez, Damian Díaz (formerly involved in ILFF's hospitality team), Jesús Contreras (media and publications associate), Virginia Chávez (events coordination San José; latinofilmfestival.org/2008).

⁴⁴⁶ The festival did so by continuing YIV as "Jóvenes en Video" and by way of its Escuela de Cine Leonardo Perel, which offered free animation film workshops for local youth and which was named after Sylvia Perel's husband and festival collaborator, who had tragically passed away in 2012 in a motor accident (www.todossantoscinefest.com).

⁴⁴⁷ For instance, its Noche de Estrellas / Night of the Stars gala event featuring live music and the attendance of stars like Diego Luna.

dalajara's FICG but also to incur the support of IMCINE without having to address matters of access or representational politics intrinsic to U.S. Latino/a film festivals (cf. FCTS-LP 2016 Catalog⁴⁴⁸).

The end of ILFF reveals how questions of commerce (branding), organization (leadership), and politics of place (commitment to local underrepresented communities) all impact a festival's development and fate. ILFF's discontinuation may be seen as a way to solve the dilemma posed by the sponsorship shortfall after 2008 and the threat to ILFF's identity and its particular events culture, likely to have been further aggravated by the challenge of juggling two festivals in two different countries. However, it also asked some tough questions, for instance, as to the role of exclusivity and glamor as key features of ILFF – namely, whether they took on priority over the organization's educational agenda and the commitment to local underprivileged Latino/a communities. They direct us to SFLFF, the most recent festival considered in this chapter.

3. The San Francisco Latino Film Festival (SFLFF)

3.1 Core facts

Name:	San Francisco Latino Film Festival (SFLFF)
Established:	2009, when SFLFF's producing nonprofit organization, Cine+Mas, was founded and its first festival was held; most original members came from the terminated ILFF
Locations:	Multiple locations in San Francisco and the Greater Bay Area
Chief organizer³⁸⁸:	Luis "Lucho" Ramirez
Frequency and duration:	annual (mid- to end of September; first half of U.S. Hispanic Heritage Month)
Sponsors and supporters:	No fiscal co-sponsor. Media, corporate, and community sponsors and collaborators
Target films:	national and international Latino/a film; film from the U.S., Latin America, Spain, Portugal
Non-cinematic sidebars:	Parties and receptions

³⁸⁸ "Chief organizer" is the organization's choice of label, as opposed to the more hierarchical "festival director."

3.1.1 Key points: Strategic alliances and the Bay's unique atmosphere and politics of place as main resources

While my research on the previous two festival organizations necessarily relied on reconstruction via interviews, catalogs and other printed matter, I was able to attend SFLFF two times, in 2010 and 2012. SFLFF's youth, its strategically lean organizational structure and, most of all, its dispersal across the Bay all posed challenges for my research because these factors made it harder to determine its identity as a festival. All the while, investigating SFLFF also proved immensely rewarding in terms of my being able to watch its rapid progress as to both alliance and audience building and its self-positioning vis-à-vis its predecessors. All of this made SFLFF an exciting and timely addition to my other fieldwork on longer-standing SDLFF and RRAFF.

⁴⁴⁸ FCTS-LP's website www.todossantoscine.org has been redirected to www.todossantoscinefest.com; the 2016 issue is no longer available. The IMCINE website featured a cross-section of films (such as Diego Luna's *Sr. Pig*, 2016; and Rigoberto Pérezcano's *Carmín Tropical*, 2014) and invitees (including Diego Luna and Luis Alberti); see "Festival de Cine Todos Santos y Paz 2016"; www.imcine.gob.mx (bibliography)).

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción's festivals, the International Latino

In regard to its situation in the Bay, SFLFF has taken into account the following old-new factors: It has addressed the continuing, inherent diversity and socio-economic fracturedness of its local communities (Latinos/as and others), which has been intensified as a result of the more recent waves of gentrification of former working class, immigrant and ethnic-racial minority strongholds such as San Francisco's Mission District and parts of the East Bay such as Berkeley and Oakland. Here, I argue that SFLFF's organizers are aware of how the arrival of the Digital Age has provided new possibilities for connections among remote groups and disseminating information – possibilities that are advantageous in terms of outreach and of building a digital community of followers. Moreover, Cine+Mas is united by a shared recognition of the key role of media support in terms of addressing the locally dispersed and culturally as well as socioeconomically fragmented communities in the Bay. While they have made expert use of these possibilities, also in terms of promoting a consistent corporate identity, my main interest, however, lies in showing how organizers have privileged locality – physical, public space as it affects the lives of local communities – by way of forming ubiquitous strategic partnerships, particularly with cultural arts organizations (some Latino/a identified, some not), but also with other partners such as those from the media sector, universities and museums. Cine+Mas thus relies on “network[ing] for solidarity” (Torchin 2012:1) through collaboration with a wide range of different partners and shared resources. It is for this goal, together with its educational and cultural affirming aims, that SFLFF and its year-round organization, Cine+Mas, both are recognized and supported by their media partners and other corporate sponsors.

Moreover, while the immigrant experience serves as a crucial perspective in terms of the organization's commitment to promoting *latinidad* – most of all in terms of inspiring local participation and investment in their communities, Cine+Mas reaches out to more encompassing constituencies because it is part of their aim to “build bridges around the world” (L Ramirez & D. Díaz Interview 2010) and thus inspire dialog and solidarity, not to contribute to a further “ghettoization”; and because this enabled them to make a bigger impact as an organization by bringing to the Bay a wide range of films resonating with their own mission and that of their partnering organizations – films that often foreground social justice topics but also appeal to wide range of tastes.

To sum up, I will show that Cine+Mas / SFLFF has drawn on two resources in particular, doing so with considerable success as demonstrated by its steady growth in films, venues, and partnerships.

- One principal resource is based on the organization's ever-growing strategic alliances. With the profound changes having taken place in the sponsoring landscape after the global financial crisis of 2008 (having brought down a number of star powered festivals), Cine+Mas works with a carefully selected mix of collaborators. This mix reflects the heterogeneity of the Bay's population and therefore brings the festival to different communities. Such on-site partnering organizations include cultural organizations (Latino/a affiliated and not) but also state and private educational / arts institutions, such as universities and museums. For its sponsoring organizations from the media and other corporations, in turn, it is important that SFLFF works closely with local partners, the most important of which entail outreach to underrepresented communities, such as that of media sponsor KQED, but who also wish to cater to the Bay's politicized, sophisticated, and well educated constituencies as is in keeping with the Bay's specific “cultured” and progressive climate.
- And, speaking of which, as its second main resource, Cine+Mas taps the Bay's specific political-artistic climate. This is important in two respects: For one, it means that as to audiences, the organization is serving the Bay's varied and often intersecting special interest communities; the latter is

acknowledged by means of a programming logic attuned to the core audiences of their partnering organizations yet with a great potential to create cross-audiences, thus playing to the urbane tastes of cineastes as well as to its politically progressive audiences. Second, for Cine+Mas's filmmaking constituencies, the Bay's atmosphere is particularly attractive in terms of outreach possibilities and the validation that comes with the region's recognition as artistic, academic and film hub. Here, I will show that SFLFF has emerged as a particularly coveted showcase for a subsection of filmmakers interested in disseminating information on specific social justice issues that intersect with the festival's all-pervasive Latino/a focus (international, national, and local filmmakers alike). The festival and its organization is thus able to tap the immense symbolic capital provided by the Bay's particular artistic-political climate, which in turn contributes to the quality and wide range of films screened; this is particularly important also because Cine+Mas, being a small organization with a limited budget, is not able to pay huge fees.

3.1.2 Key issue: Empowering locality and community

I regard the multi-locational SFLFF as a powerful arena for education, solidarity and empowerment. It is both through the festival and Cine+Mas's year-round programs at a number of specific locations throughout the Bay that Cine+Mas has been able to address the aforementioned ill that Manuel Castells (1999) has called one of the "founding theme[s] of urban sociology," namely, "the loss of community," a condition characterized by factors such as "individualization and [the] atomization of place-based relationships" (365). One constitutive aspect of activist festivals is their encouragement of exchange and "social interaction" – activities which, according to Castells, tend to remain for the most part "organized around places" (ibid.). Place is defined by Castells as "a locale whose form, function and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of territorial contiguity. People tend to construct their life in reference to places, such as their home, neighborhood, city, region, or country." Castells draws attention to the way place has always played a crucial experiential, political, and cultural role – a function of our need to establish a sense of self, but one which has been greatly diminished by the alienation of our postmodern existence. The following pronouncement may ring true particularly with the Bay's immigrant constituencies:

[Y]ou may have no community, but still refer to your place as your main source of experience. Social organization and political representation are also predominantly place based. And cultural identity is often built on the basis of sharing historical experience in a given territory. (365)

Festivals are gathering together "real" people in attendance; as live events, they have visitors "commit" to the specific festival time-space by being present in person (cf. also my discussion of Harbord 2009 in the festival theoretical chapter). Here, Cine+Mas draws on a double strategy. On the one hand, it creates multiple venues in tow with other locally established organizations throughout the geographically, culturally and socio-economically fragmented Bay and thus acknowledges the diversity of its communities and their relationships with "place" as manifest in these partnering organizations. On the other hand, Cine+Mas showcases films with cross-over appeal that serve as a way to prevent further such compartmentalization and fragmentation; ideally, these films bring together people from different social strata. At festivals, exchanges contain, as I have discussed earlier, a range of aspects such as cross-examination and the "performance" and affirmation of community and culture in an atmosphere that allows for "unity in diversity" (Cadaval 1998:34). Cine+Mas's double strategy thus supports the "exchange" nature of festivals and underlines Cine+Mas's mission of education and

entertainment as means to facilitate solidarity and empowerment. This also resonates with Cine+Mas chief organizer Lucho Ramirez's demands as to immigrants' "taking ownership" and "putting down roots" (L. Ramirez & D. Díaz Interview 2010) and his belief in the role of cinema for establishing a relationship with "place" and political participation.

All the while, the digital dimension (Castell's "spaces of flow") also serve to support the festival's exchange character, if in a more ancillary fashion. As I have also argued earlier, the "radically new levels of interaction and interconnectedness among populations at a regional level" (Flores 2003:194) made possible through new communications technologies enhance the buzz necessary to promote events. Here, Cine+Mas's social media presence enables virtual and physical "following" the festival organization's calendar of events; this is also of particular importance in regard to reach out to the dispersed communities in the Bay.

3.1.3 Beginnings and organizational composition

SFLFF was first held in 2009 and organized by Cine+Mas, the San Francisco based film club founded by a couple of like-minded, mostly Latino/a identified film enthusiasts from different professional backgrounds.⁴⁴⁹ Some of the members of the founding team – Luis (Lucho) Ramirez, Virginia Chávez, Damian Díaz, and Jesus Contreras – had previously worked for ILFF. Cine+Mas has always been a professionally heterogeneous group. It first contained media producers, actors, educators, marketers, and others involved in various fields in close relation to the Greater Bay's impactful information technology industries; of these, many had been born in the 1970s and '80s, having grown up in the area or relocated there in their twenties. The organization does not possess official headquarters and, in terms of leadership, adheres to a philosophy of flat hierarchies; that said, Lucho Ramirez has obtained a prominent position and has sometimes been referred to as chief organizer owing to his decision to fully devote his time to an organization otherwise subject to a certain fluctuation of members mostly due to the job market (L. Ramirez Interview 2012). Chicago born and raised, Ramirez had relocated to the Bay in the late 1990s. His expertise both in terms of marketing (he had earned an international marketing and sales degree from the University of Arizona) and in international film business (due to an internship with a French film distributor) are key assets in the Bay's busy cultural scene. Other members of Cine+Mas also have made important contributions to SFLFF's developing its own festival identity in all kinds of functions; including scouting for programs (Gladys Rocha at Havana; Virginia Chávez at nearby CineQuest), or outreach (publicist Juliana Mojica). The association with Mojica is one example for the way the organization has further consolidated after 2012, when Cine+Mas started its exchange with some members of the then terminated Cine Acción; over time, the organization added an official organizing committee and an advisory board and further diversified generationally and professionally, also since some of its more recent members were formerly associated with Cine Acción (such as Mojica, film scholar Sergio de la Mora, and university administrator José Torres) or with sponsors (KQED's Yo Ann Martínez) or the Bay's creative community (Brazilian-American filmmaker Carolina Moraes-Liu).

⁴⁴⁹ The website lists the following founding members of the organizing committee: Lucho Ramirez, Eric Avila Thomas, Mahi Sadeghi, Gladys Rocha, Damián Díaz, Luis Calero, Jesus Contreras, Virginia Chavez, Michelle Gutierrez, David Gutierrez (Cine+Mas website). Other long-standing supporters include Laura P. Ramirez, the chief organizer's sister, as well as Jeremy Bartlett, Lucho Ramirez's domestic partner ("Cine+Mas Organizing Committee"; www.sflatinofilmfestival.com).

Lastly, Cine+Mas also relies on a growing number of volunteers. Some, usually students, come through a partnering institution such as MCCLA, which further underscores the importance of the organization's many partnerships. Others, many of them senior citizens, are of the invaluable "hobby volunteer" variety flourishing in the Bay's political and artistic climate; they help out at a range of festivals whose politics they support. Some had already been on board with the ¡Cine Latino! and ILFF and thus not only provide their expertise but also a symbolic link to these festivals.

3.1.4 Legacies, continuities, and solidarity: Relationships with ILFF and Cine Acción

Considering the fact that the Bay's two recently perished Latino/a film festivals, Cine Acción's ¡Cine Latino! and ILFS' ILFF, each left powerful legacies, it is important to ask as to which extent Cine+Mas has been modelling itself on these two organizations. It is one of the strengths of Cine+Mas that it has striven to create an identity of its own from the very beginning. Among those of Cine+Mas's members having been involved at ILFF / ILFS in the past, there is a general feeling of empowerment as to the learning experience this provided. However, it is important to note that Cine+Mas has repeatedly emphasized its refusal to fashion itself after (or capitalize on former involvement with) ILFF (L. Ramirez Interview 2012). Not only did they want to create something different, this was also necessary for legal reasons and given they lacked the older organization's extensive network, including its influential and wealthy patrons from the film world and Latin American diaspora as well as Perel's substantial symbolic capital by way of her involvement in various functions at other festivals, including Sonoma International Film Festival (SIFF), LALIFF, and FICG (L. Ramirez Interview May 2012). One is to infer that Cine+Mas also deliberately refrained from modeling themselves on the older organization since they did not want to enter the competitive "field of film festivals," in a Bourdieuan sense, contrary to ILFF, for instance.⁴⁵⁰ One example is that while Cine+Mas's parties have remained an important non-cinematic means for outreach, larger scale galas and star power both were deemed less important. Rather, the young organization prioritized on developing "network[s] of solidarity" (Torchin) by creating lasting relationships with other local activist organizations, also in order to share resources. But Cine+Mas has also partnered up successfully with the media and bigger, public or semi-public institutions, such as museums and universities, since casting a wide net of partnerships to strengthen the organization and make the festival available all around the Bay were key concerns. It is this insistence on multiple partners and locations that Cine+Mas yet again shared with ILFS – and also, if to a lesser extent, with Cine Acción and its festivals.

In the long run, Cine+Mas's insistence on solidarity has proven to be a successful strategy. It was also able to secure the help of ILFF's John Petrovsky when hosting a festival venue in 2010 at College of Marin, a key ILFF partner. And even though the young organization had been viewed with suspicion by some members of the late Cine Acción due to Cine+Mas's ties to their old rival, an encounter in 2012, initiated by José Torres and featuring Cine+Mas's Ramirez, some Cine Acción members and some friends of the terminated organization (community group representatives, academics, government affairs representatives, and experts from major corporations and foundations), became a ga-

⁴⁵⁰ That being said, the rift among former ILFF associates about the termination had caused some animosities, which were not to be ameliorated by Cine+Mas and Perel's eventual, if only temporary, competition for the attention of the Bay's Latino/a film supporters. The repercussions of this included the long-time refusal of one prominent ILFF sponsor to work with SFLFF, as Ramirez told me in a private conversation.

me-changer as it contributed to the cultivation of a positive and supportive relationship (L. Ramírez Interview 2012).

In our interview, José Torres had told me that he had been following Cine+Mas's activities right from the start and was motivated by a wish to compensate for the disappointment about Cine Acción's demise (J. Torres Interview 2012). Intended to "build a trust base" (L. Ramirez Interview 2012), the encounter gave Cine+Mas the opportunity to acquaint the other participants with their mission, while the younger organization gained insights into the different funding structures at a number of organizations and foundations previously affiliated with Cine Acción (L. Ramirez Interview 2012). Ultimately, the meeting helped the new organization to establish itself in the Bay and "to put down roots" (L. Ramirez, in L. Ramirez & D. Díaz Interview 2009) both in a practical sense of professional networks as well as in terms of situating its identity. On the one hand, both shared a philosophy of prioritizing on local activism rather than celebrity events; on the other hand, the association with Cine Acción validated Cine+Mas vis-à-vis some of Cine Acción's traditional partners from academic and activist circles.

3.1.5 Festival identity: Cultural affirmation, bridging and putting down roots

My first personal interview in May 2010 with Cine+Mas members Lucho Ramirez and Damián Díaz⁴⁵¹ was impacted by the very recent memory of SFLFF's very first festival edition only half a year earlier (November 2009). Together, they delineated the festival's local and translocal, transnational vision. On the one hand, SFLFF has set out to serve as an affirmation and celebration of Latino/a culture/s. On the other hand, and in ways that echo both Chicago's CLFF and SDLFF's respective emphasis on the transnational, immigrant experience, the organization aims to build "bridges throughout the world" (Ramirez, in L. Ramirez & D. Díaz Interview 2010). This also resonates with this extract from SFLFF's mission statement:

The San Francisco Latino Film Festival showcases the work of emerging and established filmmakers from the US, Latin America, Spain and Portugal. It is a celebration of the latest work coming out of the 20+ countries with which we share a bond. ("About Us"; sflatinofilmfestival.com)

In this context, Ramirez has underlined his belief in the organization's powerful capacity of creating change through education, due to the cumulative effect of "successful changes at a grass root level" eventually bound to resonate globally (L. Ramirez & D. Díaz Interview 2010). This pronouncement ties in with my earlier discussion of how a specific festival environment may serve to reaffirm the power of locality. Cine+Mas has cooperated with many different partners all around the Bay; one priority here is on creating and deepening ties to local film and arts activism in order to go against the today's negative trend in regard to an "atomization of place-based relationships" (Castells 1999: 365). In this context, San Francisco's Mission District is a microcosm that symbolizes the organization's wide and sometimes intersecting, sometimes dramatically diverging range of imagined communities and the more ambivalent repercussions of its mission. This is due to the concentration of film and arts activist organizations, the Mission's traditional role as a hub of Latino/a and / or immigrant communities, traditionally low income and blue-collar, but also ever since the 1970s artistic, college

⁴⁵¹ I am particularly indebted both to Los Angeles based filmmaker Anayansi Prado, who pointed me to SFLFF's Damián Díaz; and to Damián Díaz, who served as my first contact to Cine+Mas and SFLFF. A founding member of the organization, he since has relocated to Los Angeles to further pursue his acting career.

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción's festivals, the International Latino

educated and upwardly mobile, thus in many ways resembling the organization itself. This mix alone had already made the district an important location for the two previous organizations, particularly of course Cine Acción, which was also headquartered there. On the other hand, there are the district's latest affluent inhabitants, associated in particular with the dot.com and tech professional communities. Here, the pronouncement of Cine+Mas member Gladys Rocha is telling; a tech executive herself, she envisions tapping the presence of such tech companies both for sponsorship but also in conjunction with their community events (G. Rocha Interview 2012).

Rocha's statement is characteristic of a younger, more pragmatic generation of film activists. In their attempts to validate locality, they are taking a stand against the displacement of poorer communities here and in other traditionally formerly low income neighborhoods. However, they are also seeing the festival as an ongoing negotiation. On the one hand, such collaborations may hold in stall possibilities for creating cross-audiences and thus may be beneficial in conjunction with their educational and solidarity goals; furthermore, there is also Cine+Mas's need for creating revenue for the organization's survival. On the other hand, they must remain vigilant as to the ways attracting these affluent constituencies – techies, tourists – may help pushing out poorer communities. As such, these negotiations resonate with related issues previously discussed in conjunction with SDLFF and RRAFF.

Accordingly, Cine+Mas' partners include a broad spectrum of cultural arts organizations, from the Mission's MCCLA, the Galería de la Raza, and the non-ethnically identified Artists' Television Access (ATA), to Berkeley's La Peña, Oakland's EastSide Cultural Arts Center, Richmond-San Pedro's Los Cenzotles, and San José's MACLA, to name but a few. (Incidentally, as the example of ATA will show, these partnering organizations may also be endangered by the same socio-economic changes occurring in their local neighborhoods.) Here, one of SFLFF's thematic foci, social justice themed films, underscores and complements the active engagement of their partnering institutions in their respective neighborhoods; frequently these films also have crossover potential as they are in high demand among the Bay's politically progressive audiences. Thus, a film like *Justicia Para Mi Hermana / Justice for My Sister* (Kimberly N. Bautista, Guatemala / U.S.A. 2012), screened at SFLFF 2012, may appeal to local Central American and other Latino/a constituencies, but also to circles interested in women's rights and crime prevention themes, as well as the Bay's traditional predilection for independent and documentary formats. Furthermore, by showcasing locally made low budget productions on the urban Latino/a experience, SFLFF continues in the vein of Latino/a film activism's nurture; Adrián Nava's short, *La Vida Loca* (2012) which, as the subtitle (*A True Story*) suggests, may be based on the experiences of its young Chicano director but potentially attracts other constituencies as well and particularly highlights Cine+Mas's explicit ambition to inspire younger viewers' involvement in their communities (cf. L. Ramirez, in L. Ramirez & Damián Díaz Interview 2009). Another example is the organization's year-round involvement with local festivals such as San Francisco's Bernal Heights Outdoor Cinema, for which Cine+Mas has continued to curate films, such as with regard to its 2011 edition when it programmed a weekend of short films from local Latino/a filmmakers (L. Ramirez Interview 2012).

And yet, Cine+Mas has also screened films in the realms both of the commercial cinema as well as public museums, libraries and universities, appealing to further diversified audiences from students

to out of town cultural tourists; and these different locations have further validated the festival's cinematic-artistic and academic ambitions and its entertainment qualities.

All the while, Cine+Mas's striving for cross-audience appeal also continues in the region's traditional intersectional activism and alliances. If we recall once again McCall's (2005) definition of intersectionality and the way the latter is critically concerned with "the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations" (1771), this perspective to some extent resonates with Lucho Ramirez's biography as part of a blue collar, multi-racial neighborhood in Chicago where it was necessary to build coalitions beyond ethnic-racial boundaries. One is to infer that to some extent, his Midwestern childhood had prepared him for the Bay's non-essentializing take on *latinidad* and the value of intersectional, cross-ethnic and -racial alliances. In this respect, he has also critically interrogated a traditional argument advanced by many Latinos/as of the 1960s and '70s struggles: Ramirez argues that more important than the *inherited* entitlement to political participation is one's own, active own participation, or, in Ramirez's words, the more flexible act of *taking ownership*:

If you want to have political power, a real future for yourself and your family, you have to put down roots and participate politically. You can't be divided where you have ownership [and where you are] a stakeholder [...]. Home is where you are. In my family, we grew up with the knowledge: this is where you are from, not heritage. (Ramirez, quoted in: L. Ramirez & D. Díaz Interview 2010)

Even though Ramirez admits that he has "never thought of movements whole-heartedly" (L. Ramirez & D. Díaz Interview 2009),⁴⁵² his words echo those of William V. Flores (2003)'s pronouncements on "new citizens," namely, members of historically marginalized groups – such as African Americans, women or Chicanos/as, from whom "citizenship rights are not bestowed by the simple act of birth but must be fought for and achieved. Citizenship is an active process of claiming rights rather than the passive acquisition of an arbitrary and limited set of rights" (87). Ramirez said that Cine+Mas did not embrace a divisive view but one that is broader, educating their audiences in empowering and "life affirming" ways, an idea that works both ways for immigrant and U.S. born and raised audiences and Latinos as well as non-Latinos/as. All the while, he, himself the son of Mexican immigrants, acknowledged the many atrocities still faced by the latter, "considered foreigners and thus prey," providing the example of a hate crime back in 2008 involving the killing of a young Mexican immigrant – incidentally, Ramirez's namesake – by a mob of white villagers in the rural town of Shenandoah, Pennsylvania.⁴⁵³ In a manner that leads back to his previous advocacy of "bridging" while also tying in with the Bay's indie film scene ethic, he has praised the role of cinema to play an enlightening role, presenting "wonderful, inspirational, *alternative* voices" (my italics). He hoped that films from outside of the U.S. would make viewers "detect similarities, similar issues, as well as differences, for instance in regard to how class is regarded in Latin America." However, he also warned against

⁴⁵² For the same reason, Ramirez argues that he does not necessarily identify with being "dispossessed" or with ethnicity being liability. He thus refutes ideological positions which he, in our 2010 interview, identified as "generational," and with the Chicano movement in particular: "I know there's a movement, an identity movement, Chicano [identified]... associated with protest culture... and I mentioned earlier how we grew up: without a race politics identity; in a working class, multi-ethnic neighborhood, but not activist. That's the reason why I have never thought of movements whole-heartedly." (L. Ramirez & D. Díaz Interview 2010)

⁴⁵³ *Shenandoah* (USA 2012, David C. Turnley), based on these incidents, was shown by Cine+Mas in the course of its year-round program of films (L. Ramirez 2013, no pag.).

idolizing one's country of origin and points to critical perspectives offered by *Presunto Culpable* (*Presumed Guilty*; Mexico 2008, Roberto Hernández; Geoffrey Smith), a documentary on the Mexican judicial system (L. Ramirez & D. Díaz Interview 2010). These pronouncements make clear that Cine+Mas's vision of *latinidad* is not, to use Stuart Hall's (1996) words, a nostalgic "so-called return to roots but a coming-to-terms with [one's] 'routes'" (4).

One last point also made explicit by Cine+Mas's mission statement is the way the organization has firmly built its identity on the level of exhibition. While international productions, in their entirety, dominate the program,⁴⁵⁴ Lucho Ramirez has emphasized that it is important to screen films with U.S. Latinos behind and in front of the camera. The reason behind is "a need that [...] audiences have and that is not satisfied by means of what is coming out of Hollywood or from [U.S.] indie movies" (L. Ramirez Interview 2012). The showcases of U.S. Latino/a cinema and / or U.S. Latino/a experiences promote a critical appreciation of these films and include programs made in partnership with public media network KQED (which entails joint presentations of LPB supported films – U.S. made cinema on / by Latinos/as) as well as the screenings of locally made film, mostly shorts. All the while, to date, professional enhancement activities targeting filmmakers have been missing from Cine+Mas's programs. In theory, it would be possible to host such programs together with one of Cine+Mas's partners and with the support of advocacy organizations such as NALIP. That the organization has refrained from doing so may be problematic to the extent that this may reinforce the gap between more established, film school trained filmmakers eligible for the support (such as that of LPB or Sundance) and local ones without or with only limited such training. Just as the absence of youth programs – which were not considered a priority, given also their ubiquity with other local film arts organizations (L. Ramirez Interview 2012), this decision has to be seen in terms of how Cine+Mas is hedging its limited resources in the light of its lack of institutional base and its limited budget. However, this decision also points to questions revolving around the future goals and obligations of Latino/a film festivals.

3.2.1 Consistent corporate image

Throughout its existence, SFLFF and its affiliated organization have relied on multiple partnerships in order to bring the festival to many different constituencies all around the Bay. This has made it possible appeal to a wide range of constituencies attracted to the partnering and / or hosting venues's core audiences and to groups interested in Latino/a film. In his investigation of film festivals in a framework of organizational theory, Ruling (2009) has remarked for a festival it may be necessary to be "able to balance innovation with identity" (62). For the same token, in order to compensate for its many venues and partnerships, and its reliance on building cross-audiences, a striking phenomenon is the way how, over the years, Cine+Mas has been able to promoted itself by way of a consistent corporate identity.

⁴⁵⁴ To compare, in a program of altogether 29 films, SFLFF 2010 showed six medium size to long documentaries from the U.S. / U.S. co-productions, one locally made long feature from the U.S., and four shorts from the U.S. SFLFF 2012 featured 17 U.S. productions / co-productions; of these, three were long narrative films, six medium to long documentaries, and eight shorts (*SFLFF 2010*, Screening Info). Thirty-six more productions / co-productions shown in 2012 were filed under ten Latin American countries (including Puerto Rico) and Spain; the majority of these were long features and medium to long documentaries ("SFLFF 2012 Basic Schedule.").

For one, this means that its logo and corresponding font have not changed since 2009, featuring a color scheme of black bold lettering on white with some splashes of red in between. Inserted in Cine+Mas' black, capitalized "C" is a typographical icon signifying a camera, in bright red, also familiar from some computer keyboards, thus foregrounding both the subject of the festival, cinema, as well as situating the organization in the Digital Age and thus particularly befitting its particular geographic location in proximity to Silicon Valley. All the while, for those in the know, the older paradigm, New Latin American Cinema's famous simile of the "camera as a gun" (cf. Burton 1978), may also suggest itself.

Furthermore, Cine+Mas has steered clear from ILFF's branding aesthetic, whose beautifully stylish catalogs blended a highly professional layout and an often playful, not-too-serious tone emphasizing its entertainment and commercial qualities, despite a wide programming range including many social justice themed films. One example is the ILFF mascot, a remotely indigenous American deity donning a camera. Moreover, ILFF's cover art would feature (in ways referencing Mexican vernacular art and José Guadalupe Posada's *calaveras*) a papier-mâché skeleton wearing a popcorn happily munching away on a bag of popcorn in what seems a darkened cinema auditorium (2007); or world-renowned photographer Annie Leibovitz's glamorous publicity shot of Salma Hayek as Frida Kahlo (2002). While these examples are stressing cross-over potentialities – tailored to imagined audiences with some degree of familiarity with these artistic and cultural codes – aesthetic cues such as the glossy exterior and ILFF's not-too-serious self-image, also embodied by its mascot, suggest a good time and quality entertainment also to those who lack this knowledge. In contrast, the covers of Cine Acción's catalogs were much more modest and less consistent in terms of signaling a coherent corporate image, telling of a fluctuation of associates, more limited finances and a greater disregard as to marketing considerations. A notable contrast to ILFF is for instance that of the gritty iconicity of the screaming face of *La Hora de los Hornos*, gracing the cover of Cine Acción's *¡Cine Latino! 1998* catalog, which in turn ties into the organization's chosen lineage with New Latin American Cinema and suggests a politicized imagined audience. Yet again in contrast to its two predecessors, Cine+Mas's festival promotional material (flyers and posters) usually features pared down black and white photography with some color accents in red; if portraits are included, subjects are anonymous people rather than celebrities. This minimalist aesthetic may also be owed to Cine+Mas's more limited financial means but also to a refutation of the safely middle class, glossy image of ILFF's elaborate catalogs as well as to not wanting to take too much away from the films themselves. However, there are some tendencies resonating with Cine+Mas's celebratory and commercial undertones and its ambition to appeal to the Bay in its very multifacetedness. Their visual politics attempts to build an encompassing community by suggesting an audience urbane as well as down to earth, politically conscious and hedonistic, and one such imagined festival *communitas* "united in diversity" (Cadaval 1998). Thus, 2010, SFLFF's second year, used a frontal portrait of young woman with indigenous features, her put-up hair adorned with a flower which reinforced the "native" look; both the flower and the full-lipped, seductive mouth were painted a bright red. The image was particularly effective in respect to its alienation technique of featuring only her face's right half, thus leaving it to the beholder to mentally "fill" the rest of her face. The image thus suggested the model's *pars pro toto* function vis-à-vis a more encompassing community. 2012 showed another young Latina, eyes dramatically cast down, in retro-1960s make-up and dress. Both images rendered ethnicity in ways that could be seen as celebrating their non-Caucasian beauty than making them "spectacles of the 'Other'" (Hall 2001: 223). The material

used for SFLFF 2016 was a particularly powerful example for Cine+Mas's concept of community-building, as it featured a whole line-up of twelve individual portraits. On the one hand, this suggested an aesthetic familiar from certain fashion brands as it resembled "united colors" of the Bay (with its commercial undertones of marketing ethnicity); on the other hand, the subjects were of different ethnicities and races as well as ages⁴⁵⁵ and not the usual model types, which likened the line-up to a reportage providing a cross-section of the Bay's Latino/a community.

Cine+Mas's social media usage, too, both serves to educate and hone the organization's crossover ambitions by building an extensive fan base, creating a buzz for upcoming events, or dispensing important information. The Cine+Mas Facebook presence (www.facebook.com/latinofilmfestival) with its sharing and reposting culture may be more eclectic, less original and frequently less academic compared to the newsletter formats published by Cine Acción (*Cine Acción News*) or San Antonio's GCAC (*Tonantzín*), but it features many advantages for its followers due to the increased flexibility of keeping information up to date and the possibilities to respond to individual requests via messenger.⁴⁵⁶ The page, which in October 2018 had more than 8,300 followers,⁴⁵⁷ is regularly updated. The postings, mostly in English, some bilingual, offer a wealth of information on the organization's own upcoming events, such as film teasers and background articles, and beyond. The social media presence foregrounds the organization's educational mission as well as its appeal to a wide range of followers; for reasons of space and due to the impermanence of postings, two examples must suffice here: an obituary for pioneering Latino/a Hollywood actress Lupita Tovar (Nov. 13, 2016) or, in conjunction with the 2016 presidential election, a reminder for followers to vote and make their voice heard; alerting them to registration possibilities and respective deadlines.⁴⁵⁸

3.2 Strategic relevance of Cine+Mas / SFLFF's wide net of partnerships

At the time of this writing (2018), Cine+Mas has never linked itself to just one, permanent home base institution. Instead, over the years, Cine+Mas has used this challenge to its advantage by establishing numerous links to other organizations. So far, this strategy has proven beneficial in terms of promoting both the festival and year-round venues, also considering the busy film festival scene of the Bay and its many competing cultural events. Even while the dependency on collaborations also results in the need for the organization to protect SFLFF's own identity as a festival, this also means a certain amount of freedom from dependencies on just one partnering / sponsoring organization.

I argue that Cine+Mas's and SFLFF's many associations in fact have enabled the organization to enhance its repertoire by engaging in a dialog with the respective agendas of each cooperating institution, as well as promote the organization to the respective partner's regular audiences. Finally, an additional number of commercial venues in downtown San Francisco take the films out of ethnic,

⁴⁵⁵ We are also reminded of the U.S. Census's definition according to which "'Hispanic' or 'Latino' as used in the U.S. 2010 Census" refers to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race" (Ennis et al 2010:2).

⁴⁵⁶ What is more, web-based publications have proven to be less cost intensive than traditional types of promotion, such as flyers, posters, or advertisements, even though the festival also relies on those, and they also mirror the group's flat hierarchy since page administrator rights can be shared.

⁴⁵⁷ Exact number as of October 3, 2018: 8,343 followers (www.facebook.com/latinofilmfestival).

⁴⁵⁸ "The time to build political power is NOW! Tomorrow is the very last day to register to #vote in #California. If you don't vote, politicians will never listen to your interests. Register here: www.latinos-vote.com or text LATINOS to 384-387." October 23, 2016)

academic, or artistic “specialty” niches and lower the bar for a wider range of visitors, including tourists, who form an important part of the city’s economy.

Accordingly, the following section will provide a brief diachronic overview of the way SFLFF has expanded its network of venues and partners between its first year, 2009, and its sixth anniversary, in 2014.⁴⁵⁹ SFLFF 2009 took place between November 5 and 18, 2009.⁴⁶⁰ The founding edition already featured SFLFF’s characteristic venues and partners: cultural arts organizations, a state museum and university, and commercial theaters. The program featured twenty-one mid-length to long narrative features and documentaries and a program of shorts. The presence of nine invited filmmakers at question and answer periods (five from the U.S., four from Latin America) underscored an activist orientation, namely, a dedication both to audiences and filmmakers going beyond the entertainment factor, and a mission to educate and to instigate active participation and transnational exchange. Its line-up of films – ambitious for a new festival and in keeping with a tradition of multiple festival locations upheld by the older festival organizations – included as many as seven venues. Three of these, and the majority of programs, happened in San Francisco: the Mission’s MCCLA and two commercial cinemas, Clay and Lumière Cinemas in downtown. Three more venues were located in San José: at MACLA,⁴⁶¹ San José State University (SJSU), and San José Tech Museum. One last venue was in the East Bay, Berkeley’s La Peña.

SFLFF 2010 (the first of the two editions I attended) encompassed two weeks during the second half of September. Like many of ¡Cine Latino!’s editions, SFLFF now coincided with U.S. Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 to October 15), which offered further branding advantages: On the one hand, this facilitated significant new collaborations, such as with KQED and with the annual Hispanic Heritage Month reception sponsored by CBS 5 and Viacom, which, was to become a recurring key event and quasi-opening for SFLFF. As an event with a tradition of honoring a number of outstanding Latino/a community members, the evening also bestows symbolic capital onto Cine+Mas’s mission.

On the other hand, this new date, mid-September, signaled a further emancipation from ILFF and its traditional November slot while also offering a time advantage to the new Redwood City festival. SFLFF 2010 again featured seven venues throughout the Bay: San Francisco’s Mission and Downtown; Berkeley; San José; as well as introducing San Rafael and Redwood City. 2010’s venues again included commercial cinemas (the Mission’s Roxie), educational institutions (the College of Marin⁴⁶²), community arts organizations (La Peña and MCCLA), and the Ichtus Gallery, an alternative art space in the Mission. There was also a museum and a senior citizen’s center (*SFLFF 2010*).

2012 was the second edition I attended; that year, SFLFF’s cinematic venues were further increased to nine. Four of the film showcases alone were located in the Mission; another one in downtown San

⁴⁵⁹ Even though my fieldwork did not extend to the year 2014, SFLFF’s status as a very recent festival makes a brief consideration of its 2014 cinematic venues worthwhile.

⁴⁶⁰ While the core program encompassed November 5 through 14, there were two more venues of two film screenings each on November 18 and 25.

⁴⁶¹ MACLA appears to far better funded than the other two, owing to San José’s more recent wealth as entryway to Silicon Valley.

⁴⁶² The College of Marin could also be seen as a competitive move since it was one of the founding venues of ILFF. However, it was here that the aforementioned support of ILFF’s John Petrovsky happened, who offered to act as master of ceremonies.

Francisco; two in San José, and two more in the East Bay: Oakland and Richmond. Of these, there were two commercial cinemas (San Francisco downtown's Opera Plaza Cinemas and the Mission's Victoria Theatre). The community arts centers were MCCLA, and, for the first time, the Galería de la Raza. Another venue was Artists' Television Access (ATA), renowned for its broader range of avant-garde, underground and political film. In San José, in addition to MACLA, there was also a Hispanic Heritage Month celebration together with KQED at Mexican Heritage Plaza. The remaining two venues were in the East Bay and once again attest to SFLFF's aim to target a broad range of local communities. Los Cenzotles, a cultural arts center primarily known for its own music production activities, is located in working class, less affluent Richmond-San Pedro. The EastSide Cultural Arts Center, in turn, is a small community arts organization situated in traditionally blue collar African American and today's multi-ethnic and rapidly gentrifying Oakland, in the San Antonio neighborhood ("SFLFF 2012 Basic Schedule"; sflatinofilmfestival.org).

Finally, in 2014, SFLFF saw another increase to ten cinematic venues; many venues were in or closer to San Francisco. Only one was a commercial theater, San Francisco's Opera Plaza Cinemas. It seemed that the festival had somewhat consolidated; there was a tendency to host venues at some of the prestigious and more long-standing organizations whose collaborations had elicited the most successful rapport in the past, such as MCCLA, Galería de la Raza, and ATA, the EastSide Cultural Center; and Mexican Heritage Plaza. While the new association with Brava Theater Center added to the organization's ties to local Latino/a arts communities, two more recent art spaces were likely to attract younger and more diverse audiences, whose interest in SFLFF was perhaps less defined by activism than art appreciation, Red Poppy Art House and Producer's Loft; this way, the festival capitalized on the Mission's ongoing demographic diversification in regard to income, class, and ethnicity. Two more venues at major city art institutions, the De Young Museum and the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts added further prestige. And yet the organization's ambition to reach out to different corners of the Bay persisted, as this made possible programs geographically widely accessible – San Francisco to the west, Oakland to the east, and San José to the south. The collaboration with KQED, to be discussed in more detail later, remained an important cornerstone and that year took place in San José and the Mission ("SFLFF 2014"; sflatinofilmfestival.org).

3.2.2 Partnerships: Formation of cross-audiences and the sharing of resources

For Cine+Mas, its goal of serving many different communities also poses a challenge on many levels. Much depends on commitment of the partners in question and their own resources and on the festival's careful balancing of its own interests, not least of all the aforementioned issue of preserving its festival identity, and those of the other stakeholders involved. Programming is a sensitive point: On the one hand, there is the challenge of selecting films (most of which are usually submitted) promising to fit in with partnering organizations and their respective target audiences without compromising the organization's own mission. On the other hand, this may hold in stall the risk of reinforcing existing divisions separating the different communities from one another through "playing it safe," namely, programming only films which are most likely to resonate with partners' usual clientele and political alliances. Here, too it is again a goal to curate films with crossover appeal.

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción's festivals, the International Latino

There was, for instance, the overwhelmingly positive audience rapport at the oldest enduring Latino/a arts organization in the Bay, the Galería de la Raza, for the first time on board in 2012. A great proportion of those in attendance were younger, twenty- and thirtysomethings, predominantly a college educated art crowd consistent with the Galería's artistic focus and its more recent new and younger administration (director Ani Rivera, who has been with the organization since the late 2000s). There were fewer Latinos/as present than for instance at MCCLA. The films screened included *Unfinished Spaces* (Benjamin Murray and Alisa Nahmias, USA / Cuba 2011), a documentary on Las Escuelas Nacionales de Arte (National Art Schools), the most ambitious artistic project of the young Cuban revolution and the story of some of its key personalities. The film attracted people with an interest in Cuba, history, art and architecture and, accordingly, was near-sold out, as was a program of Latin American Shorts. MCCLA, in turn, which was one of the main venues as it featured seven programs, was more of a mix in regard to age, respective educational backgrounds – and a predominance of Latinos/as, resonating with MCCLA's more comprehensive range of programs. Cine+Mas's programming at commercial venues was an important move to make the festival available to those who perhaps would not have ventured out to screenings in more Latino/a defined places; the added challenge was promoting these events without a partnering organization. Here, Opera Plaza Cinema's screening of 2012's *Homeboy*, a documentary by Los Angeles based filmmaker Dino Dinco on gay gang members sold out, its success not only owed to the ongoing interest in "urban" themes but also the massive rapport with San Francisco's traditionally big local LGBT community. Another way to create cross-audiences was by way of combining films in one programming slot, such as two films united by their shared theme of how arts could provide minorities with powerful tools for resistance. Also at Opera Plaza, SDLFF featured Asier Altuna's *Bertsolari* (Spain 2011) and *Bombing Arizona* (Richard Bracamontes, USA 2012). The first of the two is a medium-length documentary on Basque cultural identity as exemplified by tradition of competitions dedicated to the art of the *bertso*, a spontaneously composed and performed long poem in Euskarian. The film was preceded by a short documentary on the beauty and relevance of *muralismo* art by young Chicano filmmaker Richard Bracamontes. Yet another felicitous pairing were the two social / urban dramas on SFLFF 2012's opening night at The Mission's Victoria Theatre. One was *Filly Brown* (Youssef Delara and Michael D. Olmos⁴⁶³); the other, *Sin Padre* (Jay Francisco Lopez). This coveted programming slot also highlighted Cine+Mas's determination to provide an arena to U.S. Latino/a cinema – Latino/a Hollywood as well as local filmmaking.

However, for some other films, commercial venues did not work quite as well. Kimberly N. Bautista's debut feature-length documentary, *Justicia Para Mi Hermana*, was to attract a bigger audience at its MCCLA screening; not only did MCCLA provide a reception environment particularly attuned to the film's social justice content, it was also an established locale for the Mission's local Guatemalan communities, and not least of all, the MCCLA screening benefited from the joint promotion of the two partnering organizations.

⁴⁶³ *Filly Brown* premiered SFLFF 2012; as Lucho Ramirez explained to me, due to exclusivity issues, the film's official premiere was at LALIFF 2013. It starred *La Bamba*'s Lou Diamond Phillips, Gina Rodriguez, and banda-ranchera singer Jenni Rivera in her first and last film role, owing to her tragic death in a plane crash in December 2012.

3.2.2.1 Media Sponsor: KQED

For all of Cine+Mas's events, including SFLFF, media sponsorship has proven invaluable as to generating public interest in the organization's events within the highly competitive cultural events landscape of the Bay and among the region's socio-economically fractured, yet media savvy, communities. According to Ramirez, the overall sponsorship situation is not easy, also owing to the challenged economy, with single sponsorships never having amounted to more than 5.000 USD.⁴⁶⁴ Among the organization's media supporters, one end of the spectrum is occupied by mainstream media, such as the aforementioned CBS 5, whose Hispanic Heritage Moth reception usually precedes SFLFF's opening night. The other far end of is occupied by the Bay's local and independent stations and other types of media, "interested in people and the telling of stories" (L. Ramirez), such as KPFA ("Community Powered Radio"), which represents different advocacy groups championing more specific causes ranging from LGBT issues to environmentalism and occupy movements, as well as the Spanish language media which provides other useful outreach possibilities.

The middle ground is occupied by "semi mainstream" (Lucho Ramirez) media, such as local public media outlet (television, radio, and internet based) KQED, which has an education-oriented agenda tying in with the festival's interests. KQED has come on board as a supporter of Cine+Mas for a second time in 2012. In addition to the publicity thus provided, Cine+Mas was able to tap the cultural and symbolic capital associated with KQED's educated, "cultured" clientele – typical public media consumers. The relationship is reciprocally beneficial since KQED, in turn, uses the festival for "outreach activities" (Y. Martínez Interview 2012), namely, as platform for targeting minority audiences and in order to broaden its age demographic⁴⁶⁵. Here, KQED associate Yo Ann Martínez, a project supervisor in the station's External Affairs segment, has called attention to the fact that "underrepresented communities, such as Latinos and African Americans," still are not the typical public media consumers; Martínez is of Mexican-Chinese heritage herself, having grown up in Tijuana and Los Angeles. In addition to targeting non-white public media consumers, KQED's goal is also to diversify its workforce, for instance through its internship programs, since "we also need more people who [...] participate in the back row" since it is important to "get specific stories out." (Y. Martínez Interview 2012) Lucho Ramírez has estimated that KQED's year-round support in publicity matters alone equals an invoice value of USD 45.000. (L. Ramirez 2012). The year-round support encompasses the production of promotional clips and donation of airtime for festival publicity; the support of individual festival events (the films in question are submitted by KQED as part of package deals); promotion in KQED's subscribers' magazine, online, and through radio interviews (L. Ramirez Interview 2012; Y. Martínez Interview 2012).

Whereas back in 2011, KQED's first-ever involvement with Cine+Mas / SFLFF had been to sponsor one film screening, in 2012, as part of the station's celebration of its annual Latino Heritage Month Program, KQED sponsored three films screened at the festival, *Reportero* (Mexico 2012, Bernardo

⁴⁶⁴ According to Lucho Ramirez, the ideal budget for Cine+Mas would amount to 80.000 USD a year; but the reality (in 2012) was 25.000 USD, with cash sponsorship being two thirds, about 16.000 USD (L. Ramirez Interview 2012)

⁴⁶⁵ As to the station's television programs, there are two main groups: small children, who watch age-specific television programs, and a second, fifty-and-older cohort of consumers. KQED's online and radio services already tend to reach a younger age group of forty years and below (Y. Martínez Interview 2012).

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción's festivals, the International Latino

Ruiz), *Mariachi High* (USA 2012, Kim Connell & Ilana Trachtman), and *Tales of Masked Men* (USA 2012, Carlos Ávila).

After only three years of its existence, Cine+Mas / SFLFF has thus been promoted to the ranks of the up to twenty film festivals throughout the Bay⁴⁶⁶ annually sponsored by KQED with the educational intention “to start a conversation” (Y. Martínez). KQED, which, according to its mission statement, prides itself for “[a]iring more independent films than any other public broadcasting station in the country” (“KQED: About”; ww2.kqed.org), had also acted as sponsor for the two older festival organizations. Regarding the partnership with Cine+Mas, however, Martínez emphasized that establishing a base of followers from the community was a priority (the implication here is “Latino/a,” “working class”), rather than the celebrity factor. I argue that not only is this shifting focus on local, underrepresented community events rather than on bigger scale, publicity garnering ones more in line with the Bay’s activist traditions and liberal atmosphere as well as with public media’s traditional primacy on education. It also reflects the station’s acknowledgement of more recent socio-economic and political developments, from local gentrification processes and the Bay’s share of “Occupy” movements to the slow nationwide recovery from the 2008 financial crisis. Martínez underlined KQED’s strong interest in continuing its support of SFLFF, which she describes as “already so promising despite the fact that it is still growing.” She expressed her hopes as to SFLFF’s continuation of sticking to its commitment to local communities. Yet, she also hopes that the festival will hone its crossover potential by attracting Latinos/as and non-Latinos/as alike, and by becoming “more influential,” prestigious, also by means of finding better venues where to show the films. All the while, she is aware of the challenges this implies due to the Bay’s being “so segmented.” In the meantime, the relationship with KQED has become even stronger since Martínez has also joined Cine+Mas’s board of advisors.

The collaboration between Cine+Mas and KQED on their 2012 San José showcase enabled the two organizations to join forces in an effort less intent on creating cross-audiences than to establish themselves in the traditionally hermetic enclave of San José. The third largest city in the state of California features a far more numerous population than San Francisco regarding total numbers as well as in regard to Latino/a constituencies, who in turn are predominantly Mexican: Even though it is better known for its more recent role as the gate to Silicon Valley, it is due to San José’s traditional function as an agricultural center that it has always featured strong historical ties to a Mexican American *campesino* labor force.⁴⁶⁷ For the festival, the collaboration with KQED in San José reaped visibility in a city whose rivalry with the “flashier,” politically progressive and tourism driven San Francisco had also impacted former negotiations with Latino/a cultural institutions (L. Ramirez Interview 2011).⁴⁶⁸ For KQED, in turn, the collaboration, a 2012 Hispanic Heritage Month celebration, has proven to be quite successful in terms of outreach rapport due to the attendance of numerous visitors of all ages. Held at San José’s Mexican Heritage Plaza, and co-hosted by the venue’s in-house School of Arts and

⁴⁶⁶ Others include longstanding events such as the American Indian Film Festival (AIFF), the LGBT themed Frameline, and Marin County’s MVFF, as well as the Silent Film Festival.

⁴⁶⁷ According to the figures issued by the U.S. Census Bureau for July 1, 2017, the Hispanic population is more than double in size in San José compared to San Francisco (32.6 % of approx. 1,035,317 residents vs. 15.3 % of approx. 884,363). (“Quick Facts: San Francisco vs. San José, CA, 2017”; www.census.gov)

⁴⁶⁸ In fact, the audience rapport with the venues at MACLA, the local cultural arts organizations, had been considerably lower in comparison to the packed audiences at most of the other San Francisco and most East Bay venues I attended. One notable exception was the MACLA screening of Jay Francisco López’s *Sin Padre* at the 2012 festival, thanks to the loyal fan base following each Bay screening.

Culture and the city's Mexican consulate, whose consul contributed a welcome address, the event was tailored to the city's Mexican-Chicano/a community featuring a free admission family *fiesta* with food, beverages and live music. The cinematic program consisted of two documentaries attuned to the occasion's spirit of celebration and cultural affirmation as well as to the organizers' educational goals; like all films sponsored by KQED, they were approved for all audiences and thus suited for family events. With their focus on two specifically Mexican cultural phenomena, both films were particularly prone to facilitate dialog and exchange. Indeed, *Mariachi High* literally deals with the highs and lows involved for those engaged in such "performances of culture" (Cadaval 1998). The film follows "Mariachi Halcon," the local high school's all-student troupe in Zapata, Texas, in the Río Grande border region. While a statewide championship promises a unique validation of a cultural practice that unites communities on both side of the border, the film subtly draws attention to how such "culture" by and itself is also a concept that is fluid and frequently contested, for example in conjunction with the lacking language skills of some of the troupe's members. Award-winning *Tales of Masked Men*,⁴⁶⁹ in turn, deals with *lucha libre*, the immensely popular spectator sport of Mexican wrestling, which has also inspired graphic novels and a film genre of its own revolving around celebrated *luchador* Rodolfo "El Santo" Guzmán Huerta, who is also portrayed in the film (Vargas 2016, no pag.).

Finally, Cine+Mas's collaboration with KQED also points at one minor structural limitation underlining the necessity for the organization to align itself with a whole range of partners in order to attract the diverse and heterogeneous communities in the Bay. While their joint programs involve KQED's submission of films to the festival (thus, as Martínez has emphasized in our interview, "just like anyone else"), KQED's technicalities demand their proposed film/s be Latino Public Broadcasting supported productions – due to LPB's status as a minority consortium and the fact that "PBS donation dollars were given to create these films" (Y. Martínez Interview 2012). As much as the station's regulations make sense in the light of KQED's situation in the network of CPB (the Corporation of Public Broadcasting), they also provide insights into an inevitable power relationship between public media and the minority film festival circuit – a closed circle of support, since this means that a film project approved and supported by LPB also stands a better chance of admittance to the growing network of U.S. based Latino/a-themed festivals and comparable special interest festivals. A film project lacking such support, however, is likely to secure considerably less opportunities for exhibition and distribution.

3.2.2.2 Cultural organizations: Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts and Artists' Television Access

MCCLA has been one of Cine+Mas's key collaborators from the very beginning. A long-standing cultural arts organization dedicated to the Latino/a experience, MCCLA grounds and validates SFLFF in a specific activist context (symbolic capital) and makes it possible for Cine+Mas to connect to MCCLA's large and heterogeneous clientele. Founded in 1977 as a space for Latino/a arts, the organization had also been on board with the two other festival organizations. MCCLA is supported by various public local, state, and national institutions, private foundations and individual contributions and is one of the oldest and most visible of its kind not only in the Bay but also state and nationwide ("About MCCLA"; missionculturalcenter.org). Audiences are attracted to MCCLA's broad repertoire

⁴⁶⁹ The film garnered three Best Documentary Awards in 2013: at San Antonio's CineFestival; RRAFF, and Harlingen, Texas's Cine Sol festival ("Tales of Masked Men"; imdb.org).

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción's festivals, the International Latino

of activities, including events and workshops in conjunction with its graphics department, art space, *tertulias*, (terminated) videofest, dance, concerts, and more. While MCCLA has always maintained a focus on underrepresented groups, its visitors encompass constituencies of working-class Latinos/as; middle-class, college educated Latinos/as, but also non-Latinos/as.

It is shared goals that has made the cooperation with MCCLA particularly satisfying. In 2012, Jason Wallach, MCCLA's parting events manager, underlined the challenges for his field emerging from the pan-ethnic signifier "Latino/a" as a community building concept, considering the heterogeneity of local groups and their intersecting interests. Wallach's image of community is strategic, based on pragmatism and empirical evidence rather than on ideology. Accordingly, in order to create a successful "community-based" film festival, Wallach has argued in favor of programing politics with a high degree of relatability, first assessing the needs and interests of the imagined community, then looking for quality films. This made it necessary to start by "cast[ing] a wide net over a wide breadth of experiences that include the cultural and ethnic experiences of cultural minorities – Afro-Latinos, indigenous Latinos; [...] queer folks and from all sorts of other stripes of identity." (J. Wallach Interview 2012) All the while, he also pointed to how "locat[ing] films that have good production quality" sometimes posed a challenge. Wallach had overseen the partnership with Cine+Mas for the last few years and acknowledged their awareness of these challenges and their ability to build a quality program of films that would establish rapport with Latino/a identified audiences and beyond, stating that "this year [2012] was a good year" (J. Wallach Interview 2012).

Befitting MCCLA's roots in localized activism, the majority of SFLFF's venues there were social justice themed. Over the years, MCCLA has aided Cine+Mas by establishing contacts to filmmakers and co-curating a number of programs; here, again, Wallach has stressed the importance to reach out to the very diverse pockets of different Latino/a constituencies in the Bay and to create cross-audiences. In 2010, one such collaboration was the Mexican film *Corazón del Tiempo / Heart of Time* (Mexico 2009, by Alberto Cortés; also screened at La Peña, Berkeley), a social drama set in Chiapas, Mexico and dealing with the budding relationship between a young civilian woman promised to a fellow villager, and a member of the EZLN (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional / Zapatista Army of National Liberation). Its two screenings at MCCLA and La Peña, respectively, *Corazón* had been exceptionally well attended and positively received. For its Bay audiences, the film's particular symbolic capital was based on its unique production circumstances (EZLN's involvement in terms of most of the cast and as co-producer) and accolades (including an Ariel). In 2012, these co-curations encompassed *Maestra* (Cuba / USA 2012, Catherine Murphy), a documentary on revolutionary Cuba's alphabetization campaign led primarily by young women; *Niños de la Memoria / Children of Memory* by Kathryn Smith Pyle and María Teresa Rodríguez, which tells a lesser known chapter of El Salvador's Dirty War; and *Justicia Para Mi Hermana / Justice for My Sister* by Kimberly N. Bautista, centering on a woman's fight for justice in her native. In terms of cross audience building, Wallach agreed with my own assessment that a film like *Niños de la Memoria*, with its specific subject matter and social justice agenda, had appealed to a great variety of people, most of all the Bay's substantial Salvadoran communities. *Maestra*, with its educational agenda and national focus, in turn had been an audience success because of the interest both in Cuban culture and history among local, "woke" audiences. In addition to their "great production value" (Wallach), all of these films disseminated important and largely unknown stories and sometimes even impacted their communities of origin: In

the case of *Justicia*, not only did the protagonist and her family feel a degree of vindication, their rural Guatemalan community, too, was able to witness a corrective or counter-history since official media coverage of the case had been both different and limited (J. Wallach Interview 2012).

Lastly, MCCLA's relationship with Cine+Mas and its featuring of SFLFF is also critically important considering the fact the older organization had decided to terminate its own annual, juried and usually two to three day long VideoFest (2004-10, plus a one day "Best of," final edition in 2011).⁴⁷⁰ Here, Jason Wallach has shone a light on how digitization has impacted the organization's programming praxis since he argues that while "digitization has lowered the bar on production," this trend has "also lowered people's viewing standards." In other words, the task is to attract people with limited resources (money and time) likely to watch whatever they can through their portable communications devices rather than coming to a festival. From his point of view, "to convince somebody to come to an event and to pay money instead of accessing something at home for free is a challenge, especially when you work with low-income communities" (J. Wallach Interview 2012). The involvement with SFLFF thus complemented MCCLA's programming repertoire and combined their outreach activities; at the same time, for MCCLA, there was less of a financial risk involved since resources were shared.

The second cultural arts organization considered here, Mission based ATA (since 1984; ATA website) adds yet another important facet to SFLFF's programming scope and imagined communities. ATA's example helps to illustrate how SFLFF's dispersal of venues in conjunction with its partner organizations manages to build cross audiences in different ways than a big all-under-one-roof festival could while also mutually empowering both Cine+Mas and its hosting organization. While films screened at MCCLA usually focus on social justice themes and the KQED partnership favors family friendly, culturally affirming LPB productions, ATA provides the possibility to show edgier and experimental productions for a film arts crowd. Described by its program coordinator Fara Akrami as a "community space, run by volunteers and reaching out to underrepresented communities," the organization had shifted its initial focus on film and video production to exhibition of underground and independent film and video often absent from the usual art house circuit (F. Akrami Interview 2012). On the occasion of the first ever collaboration with ATA in 2012, one venue showcased the gripping and violent narrative feature, *Corações Sujos / Dirty Hearts* (Brazil 2011; Vicente Amorim). Based on historical facts, the film deals with a remote Japanese colony in Brazil refusing to give up its fascist leanings after learning about the homeland's official capitulation after the end of World War Two. The other narrative feature was a Mexican thriller, *Reacciones Adversas / Adverse Effects* (2012, David Michán), which records its modern urban protagonist's loneliness and his slow descend into madness

⁴⁷⁰ VideoFest had been founded and directed by MCCLA's in-house multimedia director, Peruvian born Adrián Arias, who had given me a brief introduction to the event upon an earlier visit to MCCLA in May 2010 (A. Arias Interview 2010). The event had been focusing on the exhibition of local, translocal and international stories of interest to Latino/a and other ethnic communities in the Bay (usually with a fifty-fifty attendance of Latinos/as and non-Latinos/as) and included also a youth category for which a cash award had been created (A. Arias Interview 2010). VideoFest featured works usually by younger, up and coming filmmakers; initially mostly local ones, later also from all around the country and abroad. Among the films presented, there were also more publicly recognized and exhibited productions such as Yolanda Cruz's *2,501 Migrants* (also screened at SDLFF 2010) and works by locally based filmmakers Theo Rigby (*Sin País*, on Guatemalan immigrants) and Gloria Morán's *Home for the Homies* (on gentrification of the Bay, also shown at RRAFF 2012). MCCLA's link to its terminated VideoFest was terminated in the course of 2018 but information can be retrieved at "Video Fest", videofest.blogspot.com, including information on all editions except the final edition in 2011.

induced by prescription antidepressants. Both films were well attended and a third venue, a LGBT short film showcase, sold out.

Also in terms of sharing resources, ATA, like Cine+Mas, depends on teaming up with other cultural organizations. For this reason, ATA frequently collaborates with selected film festivals in the Bay, smaller and social change promoting festivals such as the Immigrant Film Festival and the South Asian themed 3rd-I Festival; Fara Akrami has stressed the importance of such collaborations in this city with its busy cultural life. 2012 saw the first collaboration between SFLFF and ATA on three venues and has proven sustainable over the years, both in respect to Cine+Mas's year-round screenings and to SFLFF. ATA volunteer George Giacone told me that even though the organization is a not for profit and thus eligible for tax breaks, ATA could only count on minimal support from the city. ATA thus depends on its box office revenues while at the same time, tries to keep admission down.⁴⁷¹ Like other small, low-budget cultural organizations, ATA has been hit hard by how the influx of wealthier residents has changed the local real estate market. In September 2012, when I visited the organization, the renewal of the building's lease for the year to come was under threat; however, this fortunately could be averted. It is not least of all through its joining forces with ATA that Cine+Mas has become part of the anti-gentrification efforts operating in the Mission.

Not least of all, the partnerships both with ATA and MCCLA also throw light on the necessity for Cine+Mas to embrace different strategies as to the sharing of financial responsibilities. While Cine+Mas has avoided both overly expensive film and space rentals in those cases promising only a limited chance of regaining the financial investment via admissions, with some smaller scale partners such as ATA and MCCLA, box office revenues were split. In the case of a much bigger, state partners, such as the DeYoung Museum, Cine+Mas had taken care of the entire curation of events at the exchange of free rental of facilities. Here, admission tended not to be included in the SFLFF pass, and the revenue went to the museum (L Ramirez Interview 2012).

3.2.2.3 Academia: University of San Francisco

The relationship between Cine+Mas and USF had started as early as in 2010 when Lucho Ramírez first approached USF Professor Susana Kaiser⁴⁷². The collaboration proper took off in 2012. Even though not one of the most visible of partnerships due to its smaller, and primarily academic audiences, Cine+Mas's relationship with USF is relevant. For one, due to its reciprocal validation of each partner's educational goals and celebration of film culture's social justice and solidarity agendas; second, because it poses one more link to the legacy of Cine Acción, whose film and video archives are housed at USF. In our conversation right after SFLFF 2012, Susana Kaiser has praised the way the university and organization complement one another, emphasizing the benefits both for her students and colleagues (S. Kaiser Interview 2012). The reciprocal value of this relationship also becomes apparent in what since then has evolved as a tradition, namely, Kaiser's being able to scout films for

⁴⁷¹ As ATA's George Giacone told me in a personal conversation during my visit in 2012, while in-house curated events come up to 6 USD admission as to not to discriminate against low-income audiences, they are raised to accommodate their partners.

⁴⁷² USF was also scheduled to be hosting one of the 2010 edition's showcases; however, in practice, there was an obstacle preventing the showcase.

repeat screenings at the university, often in conjunction with her own Human Rights Film Festival, presented by "Cine Acción at USF."⁴⁷³

3.3 Resource: Tapping the Bay's atmosphere: Filmmakers and their films

To filmmakers, the festival – at present (2018) the only sizeable Latino/a themed such event serving San Francisco and the Bay – is attractive for a number of reasons. Because of its politicized local communities and its wealth of advocacy organizations it is a particularly coveted destination for filmmakers with a social justice agenda. The region's many festivals and its cinephilia make it a prestigious exhibition arena for many filmmakers from other parts of the U.S. or abroad; there is also the allure of enhancing professional networks (even though more in the sense of connecting to like-minded spirits and future collaborators than in order to find distribution). That being said, to find distribution was one of the aims for the makers of the Mexican mockumentary *Buscando a Larisa* (2012; Andrés Pardo), a film which had previously been shown at New York City's NYILFF (A. Pardo Interview 2012). The festival is thus able to capitalize on the city's prestige among filmmakers. This is complemented by the organization's commitment to making its filmmakers feel at home at the still relatively small and intimate event of the festival, which also serves to amend for the fact that a limited budget only allows for covering basic costs such as airfare and accommodation (L. Ramirez Interview 2012). Lastly, as I will show, for local and beginning filmmakers, SFLFF fulfils an important role since it provides them with visibility in a specific Latino/a themed context. Cine+Mas has made the effort of further nurturing its local filmmakers by connecting them to other organizations and by showcasing their work through later repeat screenings in its year-round program.

3.3.1 *Ebony Goddess: Queen of Ilê Aiyê* (2009). Celebrating Afro-Brazilian identities and Afro-Latina femininity

The case of Carolina Moraes-Liu is one example for the way SFLFF and Cine+Mas have provided an arena for a local filmmaker with a focus on the intersectional, feminist Afro-*latinidad* of Bahia, Brazil, which is also where she herself hails from. The longstanding and mutually rewarding relationship with Moraes-Liu also underlines Cine+Mas's attempts to establish sustainable networks to filmmakers despite the organization's limited resources. Moraes-Liu's short documentary, *Deusa do Ébano: Rainha do Ilê Aiyê / Ebony Goddess: Queen of Ilê Aiyê* (2009), was shown at SFLFF 2010, the latest of her so far three films on the Afro-Brazilian experience. Moraes-Liu, who has earned a degree in film and television studies from San Francisco State University (SFSU), had come to the U.S. in 1992 and has been moving back and forth between both countries ever since the late 1990s. (C. Moraes-Liu Interview 2010) Her own story and her cinematic subjects corresponds to SFLFF's

⁴⁷³ The would-be prelude of their cooperation was Cine+Mas's curation of a satellite event in conjunction with the 2012 LASA conference at USF, May 2012, featuring three films at San Francisco Public Library in addition to LASA's own film festival, including: Bay based, Brazilian born filmmaker Carolina Moraes-Liu's documentary, *Festive Land: Carnaval in Bahia* (2002); SFLFF 2010's successful documentary on the transculturation of Peruvian cuisine, *De Ollas y Sueños (Cooking Up Dreams)*, Ernesto Cabellos, Peru 2009); and SFLFF 2009's feature film, *Yveete* (Rogelio Almedia, USA 2008). Subsequent to SFLFF 2012, USF featured a repeat screening of *Niños de la Memoria* (El Salvador / USA 2012, K. Smith Pyle & M. T. Rodríguez), featuring a solid attendance and generating an intense dialogue ("S. Kaiser E-mail"; 11/03/2012). Other such repeat screenings usually featured human rights issue films, such as Kimberly N. Bautista's *Justicia Para Mi Hermana / Justice for My Sister* (Guatemala / USA 2012), and *Reportero* (Bernardo Ruiz, Mexico / USA 2012) at the USF Human Rights Film Festival in April 2013.

mission, and she in many ways epitomizes the goals and desires of the Bay's community of immigrant cultural workers. She belongs to a generation of professional media artists with a middle class, cosmopolitan Latin American background, and she strives to both make a difference in her country of origin and disseminate hitherto largely underrepresented knowledge on her country of birth in her adopted country ("... when you get connected to where you come from, you really feel proud of yourself," C. Moraes-Liu Interview 2010). Her biography, too, as the wife of a Taiwanese American and mother of two daughters, further suggests her non-essentializing and feminist take on *latinidad*.

With the film's plot based in Salvador, Bahia, and thus in one of the world's biggest comprehensive enclaves of the African diaspora, *Deusa do Ébano* focuses on a beauty pageant hosted by Ilê Aiyê, an all-Afro-Brazilian carnival troupe, following three contestants for the title of carnival "Queen of Ilê Aiyê." One predominant theme is the troupe's affirmative celebration of African diasporic traditions and its corresponding beauty ideals, which in turn depart from the Eurocentric dominance associated with Brazil's cultural mainstream. All the while, the troupe's strategic essentialism, which limits membership to African descent, has been a controversial issue in Brazil (C. Moraes-Liu Interview 2010). The film thus interrogates notions of identity as determined by parameters such as nation, culture, race-ethnicity, and gender; the ensuing ruptures are highlighted by its rapport with the national and international festival circuit. The award-winning film saw its world premiere at the San Diego Black Film Festival. Renowned New York based distributor Third World Newsreel (TWN, since 1967) sells the film; its online catalog entry underlines *Deusa do Ébano*'s impressive national and international showcasing history, listing twenty festival and academic screenings alone outside Brazil, at film festivals with frequently intersecting foci on African or African American culture; Latinos/as, women, diaspora, and documentary film⁴⁷⁴; its additional exhibitions at academic and community center venues.⁴⁷⁵ All the while, in our conversation at SFLFF 2010, the director expressed her deep disappointment over the film's limited exhibition in Brazil, where it was shown only once, namely, at a Bahia based Afro-Brazilian festival. (C. Moraes-Liu Interview 2010). (As her distributor's webpage reveals, the film subsequently was to be shown one more time in Brazil, at the House of Benin, an African cultural center, also in Bahia; "Ebony Goddess"; twn.org.) One is to infer that the limited rapport for *Deusa do Ébano* in its home country was also a reflection of its subject matter. In this respect, the troupe's celebration of Afro-Brazilian culture and its exclusion of non-Afro-Brazilians was bound to be regarded as a provocation against Brazil's hegemonic pan-ethnic, multi-racial community building narrative of *mestizagem* (already discussed in conjunction with New Latin American Cinema in the historical overview chapter) – meaning that for all the public celebrations of the nation's cultural and racial mix, more in-depth conversations on the continuing racist practices were and continue to remain a taboo. As Luz Ángelica Kischner (2012:10) has argued,

The rhetorical hospitality often expressed by many Latin Americans has been wrongly interpreted

⁴⁷⁴ Film festivals with a more general focus on Latinos/as included SFLFF, SDLFF, CLFF, and Austin's Cine Las Americas International Film Festival; the film also screened at two Brazilian themed festivals in Los Angeles. African (American) festivals included the Pan African Film Festival, Los Angeles; the Texas Black Film Festival; the International Black Film Festival of Nashville, San Francisco's International Women's Black Film Festival (IWBFF), and the African Diaspora International Film Festival, New York ("Ebony Goddess"; twn.org).

⁴⁷⁵ These included Boston's Berklee College of Music's Latin Music and Culture Celebration, and the African Studies Association (ASA) Annual Meeting, Washington D.C. ("Ebony Goddess"; twn.org). Of these showcases, eighteen were in the U.S., another one in Accra, Ghana, and one in Barbados (*ibid.*).

as a sign of racial tolerance, but rather it is the effect of the purported racial democracy of the region, which has rendered race and racism 'unspeakable' because 'unspoken' (Goldberg 240) despite the omnipresence of mutual racial labeling and denigrating racist stereotypes about blacks, indigenous groups, Asians, Jews, Arabs, etc. (cf. Cruz-Janzen [no pag. given]; Kirschner 151).

Obviously, the film's high demand in the U.S. specialized film festival and other related circuits should not be seen as testimony of the United States' advancement to a state of benign color-blindness. Rather, both this interest and *Deusa do Ébano*'s very positive reception at SFLFF attest to the way racism – including underrepresentation of the African experience within the larger paradigm of *latinidad* – as well as intersecting issues of sexism and not least of all discriminatory conceptions of beauty and body images all continue to be relevant issues for ethnic minorities and feminists in the U.S. They also point to a particular receptiveness of Bay audiences for this particular intersectional theme; in fact, some visitors, a group of African American women, had come from the East Bay to see the film at its Misson based venue (Isthmus Gallery). Moreover, *Deusa do Ébano*'s crossover success once again points to tendencies both in academia and the cultural market continuously discussed in my study: the consolidation and institutionalization of U.S. identity politics as a result of the pioneering achievements of social movements.

In terms of nurture, the relationship between organization and filmmaker was to develop in mutually beneficial ways, with Cine+Mas having been able to draw on its expanding network of collaborators and other professional contacts – not least of all in a way that underscores the organization's growing impact in the Bay's film festival circuit.⁴⁷⁶ As a locally based filmmaker, too, Moraes-Liu is easily available for screenings and question and answer sessions, which made her a valuable resource for Cine+Mas's year-round programs. In turn, one is to infer, Moraes-Liu has been also an important multiplier for the organization in terms of her contacts to a local film scene and to Brazilian, African (American) and women's cultural activists. These aspects, too, may have factored into Moraes-Liu's having joined Cine+Mas's organizing committee.

3.3.2 A reportage in search of outreach and validation: *Voices of Chile* (2012)

Like Moraes-Liu, Cyrus Omoonian is locally based. Unlike her, his perspective on today's Chile is that of a cultural outsider. Thus, to showcase his film in 2012 to the Bay's politically interested constituencies (his imagined audiences are academics) and at a Latino/a themed event (as was the director's intent) was crucial, also in terms of validation, for the North American premiere (C. Omoonian Interview 2012).⁴⁷⁷ A work of documentary journalism, *Voces de Chile / Voices of Chile* had been begun in 2008 and finished in 2011. Inspired by an interest in "usually long winded" democracy building processes (*Voces de Chile* Q & A 2012), the documentary has different subjects speak on a range of

⁴⁷⁶ At Bernal Heights Outdoor Cinema, *Deusa do Ébano* was shown in 2011 as part of the organization's curation of locally made short films, which also led to Moraes-Liu's connection to a filmmakers' collective and eventual screening of *Deusa do Ébano* at their Brazilian themed film festival (cf. L. Ramirez 2012 Interview). As has been mentioned earlier [Fn 89], in 2012, Cine+Mas also was to organize a screening of *Festive Land: Carnival in Bahia* (2002), a thematic precursor of *Deusa do Ébano*, for the film program in conjunction with LASA.

⁴⁷⁷ Omoonian stressed the importance of having shown *Voces de Chile* to Chilean audiences first – also as a reality check. In Chile, the film toured seven different universities, as well as a number of festivals (such as a Human Rights film festival in Valparaíso and Santiago's Cine B Film Festival). After the premiere at SFLFF, *Voces* was scheduled to be shown at other U.S. and European screenings.

challenges existing in today's Chile, some twenty years after the military dictatorship. They include the lingering impact of the dictatorship on contemporary politics; the entanglement of the educational system with politics and the church; the precarious housing situation; the indigenous Mapuche nation's dispute with the state over land ownership rights; and the disproportional influence of foreign corporations and banks – a subject which both interrogates the Chilean government's self-promotion as *the* prospering Latin American economy and the image of foreign investors, such as the Banco Santander, as savior organizations. It is with regard to this last issue that *Voces* powerfully argues in favor of the responsibility that comes with such foreign involvement.

Voces is another example for the mutual validation processes in conjunction with a screening at SFLFF. To the filmmaker, the buzz created at SFLFF, where the film screened twice and had been advertised by means of a joint radio interview together with Lucho Ramirez, was also an important promotional tool since the film was entirely self-financed.⁴⁷⁸ (C. Omoonian Interview 2012) To the festival, Omoonian's film serves as a valuable example for its mission to create "bridges of understanding" (Lucho Ramirez). Showcasing *Voces* underscored SFLFF's intention to convey vital information to its substantial Chilean constituencies as well as other interested audiences. Even though Chileans form one of the smaller enclaves among Latinos/as in the U.S., they have been particularly politically active in the area, such as their involvement in the founding of Berkeley's renowned and long-standing La Peña (since 1975; www.lapena.org). In this context, Omoonian's film has filled an important gap due to the continuing scarcity of reporting on Chile in the mainstream media, apart from online resources such as TeleSUR's English language pages. Furthermore, Omoonian, a more recently San Francisco based journalist and filmmaker hailing from a family of "media people" (Omoonian), had a unique view on the present day situation in Chile – his activism having been shaped by his experience first as a member of the Armenian minority in his native Iran, then, as immigrant to the U.S. in his teens. Both his experience with living in a totalitarian regime and the immigrant's insider-outsider experience was useful for Omoonian's work in Chile, where his immigrant background may also have engendered the trust of his subjects in a country where the memory of the 1973 U.S.-supported coup-d'état is still very much alive, a trust he reciprocates by continuing to be in touch.

3.3.3 Social justice documentaries: *Children of Memory* (2012) and *Justice for my Sister* (2012). Outreach, education, and empowerment

The festival's location in the Bay, with its substantial Central American communities and its politicized climate both have played an important role for the makers of the two following films screened at SFLFF 2012 in the pursuit of their respective agendas revolving around education, empowerment, and solidarity. *Niños de la Memoria / Children of Memory* (USA / El Salvador 2012, Kathryn Smith Pyle and María Teresa Rodríguez) was represented by Kathryn Smith Pyle, who described the film as a "search for justice, identity, and family" and whose submission to SFLFF had been motivated by "the specific composition and expected receptiveness of Bay Area audiences" (K. Smith Pyle Interview 2012). The film's subject had been brought to Smith Pyle's attention through her on-site work in El Salvador for the Inter-American Foundation, an independent U.S. government agency in situated

⁴⁷⁸ The filmmaker blamed this on a particular resistance both on his chosen subject – the criticism of outside capital – as well as his choice of narration, namely, letting the protagonists mostly speak for themselves, with little outside mediation involved. (C. Omoonian Interview 2012)

in Washington, D.C.⁴⁷⁹ *Niños* tells how, in the aftermath of numerous massacres against civilians during El Salvador's civil war (1980-92), surviving children were often sold to adoption agencies in the U.S. and Europe. The film follows three people whose lives have been affected by this tragedy: In El Salvador, a woman who works as investigator for the advocacy organization Pro-Búsqueda ("Pro-Search"), and whose own four siblings had disappeared; an elderly Salvadoran whose entire family was murdered with the exception of one daughter, whom he hopes to find among the adopted children; and a U.S. American "child of memory" returning to El Salvador in search for her surviving biological relatives. All three are united by the alignment with Pro-Búsqueda and their hopes set on forensic science.

Niños' main project is the dissemination of information, particularly among educational institutions as well as the Bay's Salvadoran communities. While Los Angeles is home to the largest U.S. based Salvadoran community, Smith Pyle has pointed to the famously pronounced political activism of local Salvadorans. A related, crucial incentive were the producers' ties to a forensic research team at UC Berkeley's Human Rights Center collaborating with Pro-Búsqueda; SFLFF's first screening of *Niños* also featured the participation of a forensic scientist involved in this project. Last but not least, the Bay's wealth of social justice advocacy groups could be counted on too, featuring the Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA) and the San Francisco chapter of Amnesty International (AI) as two organizations familiar with the situation of the Central American country and available for counseling.

As was the case with *Voices of Chile*, the filmmakers had prioritized on *Niños*'s being premiered in the country of its production.⁴⁸⁰ The screening at SFLFF 2012 was not a San Francisco premiere, and in fact, in their outreach endeavors, the filmmakers were able to build on the symbolic capital owing to a previous, successful screening at LASA, where the film had also been awarded. Cine+Mas created further visibility for the film's educational and outreach mission through three screenings at SFLFF 2012, its support of an additional screening outside the festival at a community center (the Mission's 518 Valencia), and a collaboration on a screening at USF following SFLFF.

Kathryn Smith Pyle expressed her hope for the film to serve as a "vehicle to bring communities together, to allow communication, and, perhaps, reconciliation." (K. Smith Pyle Interview 2012). The film was highly critical of the U.S.'s fatal involvement in El Salvador in the 1980s and early '90s, such as by pointing out that the military troops responsible for the massacres directed against civilians had been U.S. trained.⁴⁸¹ *Niños* had required a five year commitment and is the testimony of a dedicated

⁴⁷⁹ Since this was Smith Pyle's first film project, she enlisted the help of her co-director, María Teresa Rodríguez (K. Smith Pyle Interview 2012).

⁴⁸⁰ This was at Adelante Film Festival, San Salvador, El Salvador, in May 2012. The film's wide resonance publicly and in the national media paved the way for a two year public television broadcast (K. Smith Pyle Interview 2012).

⁴⁸¹ In its background report on El Salvador, San Francisco's Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA), cites the U.S. National Security Archives when it observes, "Asserting a hemispheric-wide national security strategy, the Reagan administration considered the Salvadoran government – its atrocities notwithstanding – a friend in the Cold War" ("El Salvador"; cja.org). However, today it is also known that the U.S. support of the Salvadoran military was not met with unequivocal approval of U.S. officials. The report cites U.S. ambassador Robert White, "an outspoken critic of the Salvadoran government and paramilitaries" who was recalled after the end of the Carter presidency (ibid.). White's time in office (1980-81) had seen, in addition to the atrocities committed against Salvadoran civilians, the murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero (March 1980), and the rape and murder of four U.S. nuns stationed in El Salvador, at the hands of military and paramilitary forces (December 1980) (cf. ibid.).

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción's festivals, the International Latino

crew to set the record straight, a goal “far above and beyond the mere making” (Smith Pyle). The filmmakers tried to involve as many Salvadorans as possible in the production, including the musical score (K. Smith Pyle Interview 2012). For them, but also for SFLFF, the showcasing of *Niños* serves to instigate solidarity among its viewers as the film educates them about Central American history while alerting those more immediately concerned to resources where to achieve some level of knowledge and guidance. The filmmakers had been able to receive support by the Independent Television Service (ITVS); by Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB); and by the Sundance Institute’s Story Lab. The fact that *Niños* was to receive an award by the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), highlights the changed, post-Cold War political diplomacy towards El Salvador.⁴⁸² Another, powerful argument in this context is today’s massive Salvadoran presence as the fourth largest Latino/a group in the U.S.,⁴⁸³ and with this fact, a growing awareness of U.S. Salvadorans’ increasing political power.

Considering these favorable production circumstances and its positive reception in the U.S., but also the limited compliance of Salvadoran authorities in all matters surrounding the civil war, it seems less likely that the film could have been made by a Salvadoran crew instead of a U.S. team, which was backed by a U.S. state agency and linked to renowned and U.S. universities.⁴⁸⁴ The circumstances of its production and exhibition thus inevitably also reflect the asymmetric power relations between the so-called First and Third worlds. At the same time, it is here that SFLFF renders an important service to its local communities in terms of education and engendering solidarity.

The documentary *Justicia Para Mi Hermana / Justice for My Sister* (2012) by Los Angeles based filmmaker Kimberly Nuvem Bautista was another film with an empowering mission and a high degree of crossover potential since it was bound to resonate with the Bay’s Guatemalan communities while also addressing the vital issue of preventing violence, particularly against women. Set in Guatemala, *Justicia* follows Rebeca, a single mother of five, and her fight to have her sister Adela’s ex-boyfriend and presumed killer convicted by a local court. Kimberly Bautista had been inspired to make the film through her violence prevention work. She had met Rebeca through the Fundación Sobrevivientes (Survivors’ Foundation), a Guatemala-based NGO which advocates the rights of female victims of violence. As Bautista states, the three year process of making *Justicia* not only empowered Rebeca but also gained momentum for the case and likely contributed to the defendant’s eventual conviction. (Ironically, the judge originally presiding over the case was eventually removed, having fallen under the suspicion of having murdered his wife.) *Justicia* is just one in a number of Bautista’s projects aiming at the prevention of violence against women in Latin America and the U.S., such as a texting project and a web series. They recognize the need for all women to hold each other accounta-

⁴⁸² Such a changed relationship – at least, during the Obama presidency – was also strongly suggested by President Obama’s March 2011 visit to El Salvador and the creation of the “U.S.-El Salvador Partnership for Growth” (2011-15; “Partnership for Growth”; www.usaid.gov).

⁴⁸³ According to the Pew Research Center, “Salvadorans are the fourth-largest population of Hispanic origin living in the United States, accounting for 3.7% of the U.S. Hispanic population in 2013. Since 1990, the Salvadoran-origin population has more than tripled, growing from 563,000 to 2 million over that period. At the same time, the foreign-born population of Salvadoran origin living in the U.S. grew 156%, up from 459,000 in 1990 to 1.2 million in 2013. In comparison, Mexicans, the nation’s largest Hispanic origin group, constituted 34.6 million, or 64.1%, of the Hispanic population in 2013” (López 2015, no pag.).

⁴⁸⁴ As the film makes clear, investigations are aggravated by the fact that Salvadoran military archives have continued to be closed to the public. However, an important turning point was reached in 2013, when exhaustive documentation on missing persons was found in a private house. (www.ninosdelamemoria.com)

ble and to behave proactively in such matters, irrespective of their individual social and racial-ethnic background.

As a U.S. American of Colombian and Irish extraction, Bautista had entered this filmmaking project as a cultural outsider. Her intersectional personal politics are determined by an identity as a woman of color, Latina, and a college educated⁴⁸⁵ – if at the time lower income – film professional and artist who defies attempts at being defined only along the lines of ethnicity or gender (K. Bautista Interview 2012). Her commitment was put to the test in the course of her own traumatic experience both of having been held hostage and raped during the production of the film in Guatemala – a crime for which the guilty party was never persecuted (K. Bautista Interview 2012; see also Puga 2013, no pag.).

Even though *Justicia* was also the first feature-length documentary for this young, beginning filmmaker, Bautista had secured impressive help for her project, which underscores her dedication to the project and her savvy in promoting it. Not only did she receive support from LPB, the Sundance Institute, and NALIP in the production process, she also received recognition as a Princess Grace Honoree (2008) and was awarded the first prize at a pitching seminar in France, which meant European wide distribution for *Justicia*. In addition, Bautista had been able to win the involvement of popular Mexican actress Kate de Castillo (starring in Patricia Riggen's *La Misma Luna* and Telemundo's narco drama *La Reina del Sur*) as the documentary's narrator. At the time the film screened at SFLFF, *Justicia* had already been locked down for two more (non-Latino/a) festivals, foreshadowing its success both in the national and international film festival circuit.⁴⁸⁶ She also used specialized merchandise (t-shirts bearing the film's logo along with a message promoting awareness of the violence against women) and wore a sponsored premiere outfit tailored by a L.A. based fashion designer.

It does not come as a surprise that Bautista's own commitment to her project had led her to entertain high expectations as to *Justicia*'s world premiere at SFLFF 2012, both as to the recognition it would garner in its own right and for the causes advanced, and connected to this, the festival's support in terms of promoting her film. She was thus crushed by the low attendance of its opening at Opera Place Cinemas, for which she blamed what she saw as SFLFF's poor promotion. All the while, a showcase at MCCLA (taking place after our interview) showed a far more satisfactory audience rapport. And in turn, the fact that Bautista had scheduled additional screenings in the Bay during the time of the festival without as much as informing Cine+Mas was not well received by the organizers, since this encroached upon the exclusivity of the festival venues. This clash of expectations points to smaller festivals' only limited possibilities of nurture; at the same time, the episode also shines a light on a younger, professional, ambitious crowd of filmmakers, who reconcile activism and their demands made upon a festival in terms of establishing what I have called earlier on – in conjunction with Moctesuma Esparza's coinage – one such “habitat” in terms of nurture, outreach, and the exclusivity of premieres. All the while, Bautista also conceded that she was still engaged in a learning process regarding audience-building, and that the example of *Niños de la Memoria* had taught her to partner up with a professional expert or a community organization.

⁴⁸⁵ MA, University of California-Santa Cruz (Social Documentation).

⁴⁸⁶ The film was scheduled to screen at AFI's renowned Film Fest and at Taiwan's Women Make Waves, the oldest all-women film festival in Asia (K. Bautista Interview 2012). At LALIFF, it won one of its eventual many awards as Best Documentary (“Awards”; justiceformysister.com).

3.3.4 Spotlight on urban Latino/a communities: *Sin Padre* (2012) and *La Vida Loca* (2012)

Also considering the great economic fragmentation of the Bay's Latino/a populace, the festival serves as an important showcase for "homegrown," local Latino/a filmmakers. The region's Latino/a defined film community has remained relatively small in comparison to Los Angeles, San Diego, or out of state creative hubs such as San Antonio, Texas. The film festival thus provides important showcasing and pitching opportunities for largely self-taught filmmakers. They often tell stories taking local communities and concerns as a point of departure; stories, however, whose relevance reaches far beyond local boundaries. In the words of Chicano filmmaker Adrián Nava, a local filmmaker who premiered his short "La Vida Loca" at SFLFF 2012, the more important it is to "own your story without being limited by it." (A. Nava Interview 2012) SFLFF 2012 saw the world premiere⁴⁸⁷ of Jay Francisco López's long narrative feature, *Sin Padre*, and allocated the urban drama a prominent slot right after the festival's opening film, Youssef Delara and Michael D. Olmos's *Filly Brown* (USA 2012; produced by Edward James Olmos).⁴⁸⁸

Sin Padre (literally, "without father") revolves around a Honduran American high school student and Mission resident, Juan, whose homework assignment – an essay on his family – leads to an investigation of his father's identity, long withheld by his mother, who was only fourteen when he was born. Eventually Juan learns that he actually had been conceived by rape. However, the plot ends on a reconciliatory note, since Juan eventually meets with his father who, as it turns out, serves a lengthy prison sentence for another crime he had committed; and the viewer is left with the hope that Juan's ability to forgive him enables the son's eventual healing. *Sin Padre* balances its heavy main theme with a second, uplifting subplot. The latter involves the friendship between the Honduran American protagonist and his Salvadoran friend, rife with insider jokes and inspired by Lopez's desire to celebrate the Bay's Central American presence, also in response to California's Mexican-Chicano/a domineering on-screen presence (J. Lopez Interview 2012).

The director, who not only had worked as an actor but also with youth at risk, was determined to tell his autobiographically inspired story, but one, he argues, that is relatable to and representative of the experiences of local urban youth as well. In our interview after the second sold-out screening, Lopez acknowledged the "love and support from the community" (J. Lopez Interview 2012). *Sin Padre* features some emotionally challenging, violent scenes, such as flashbacks of the deed itself and later retaliations of Juan's grandfather against the daughter who has darkened [sic] the family name. Lopez was aggravated by the fact that some people had walked out during one particularly violent scene and attributed these "two percent of criticism" to the fact that people "could not handle certain realities" (ibid.). His aim was to create understanding for the son's predicament even if this meant breaking the longstanding taboo of airing dirty family laundry, metaphorically and factually, in regard to the hypocrisy surrounding Juan's "illegitimate" birth and the unbridled machismo and violence directed against his mother both on behalf of Juan's biological father and maternal grandfather. Despite these

⁴⁸⁷ The film was shown three times: At the Mission's Victoria Theatre (premiere), at San Francisco Downtown's Opera Plaza Cinemas; and MACLA, San José, each time at sold out or nearly sold-out theaters.

⁴⁸⁸ *Filly Brown* premiered SFLFF 2012; as Lucho Ramirez explained to me, due to exclusivity issues, the film's official premiere was at LALIFF 2013. It starred *La Bamba*'s Lou Diamond Phillips, Gina Rodriguez, and banda-ranchera singer Jenni Rivera in her first and last film role, owing to her tragic death in a plane crash in December 2012.

intentions and the film's preponderant theme of forgiveness, Lopez's speaking on behalf of the community remains somewhat problematic. Most of all this is the case with the somewhat stereotypically named María, Juan's mother, who in the saintly, suffering and abnegating demeanor traditionally associated both with the Mother of God and the "*abnegada y sufrida*" Latina mother (Adorador, no year, qtd. in Gonzales 1979:84) had only wished to protect Juan from the self-hatred likely to be inflicted by learning the truth. As much as the film creates sympathy with Juan's right to know his father and rightfully challenges what Rosa Linda Fregoso has called the conservative Chicano/a-Latino/a "ideology of *la familia*" (2003:72) by centering on the son's right to know his origins, *Sin Padre* does not fully acknowledge María's own dilemma, which is augmented by the fact that the film is based on real facts and screened among members of her community.⁴⁸⁹ To be sure, these factors need also be weighed against the first-time director's impressive accomplishments: Getting the film made while single-handedly raising all the necessary resources and relying on a cast of amateur or beginning actors; and securing an extremely devoted fan base which followed the film around to all the different screenings, thus propelling *Sin Padre* towards its SFLFF 2012 Audience Award. The film's excellent box office rapport and its award yet again are instantiations of film festivals' possible "value-adding process" (de Valck & Loist 2009: 184), which for this film opened doors to additional screenings all around the Bay and beyond.⁴⁹⁰ Moreover, audiences were able to support a local filmmaker and interrogate its central topics in a "performance of culture" (Cadaval 1998), while SFLFF was able to make good on its self-obligation to provide visibility to local filmmakers and stories. However, the risk is that films like *Sin Padre*, with its considerable qualities but also flaws, might be taken to stand for all locally produced media production and – even more problematic – serve as a symbolic compensation for the lack of supportive structures for filmmakers who are not part of a more elite filmmaking community in the Bay – privilege determined by factors such as class-income; education, including a professional film schools training; and race-ethnicity. However, there is no way that this imbalance could be amended by Cine+Mas alone, and its dedication to local filmmaking the more is worthy of praise – given also the discontinuation of MCCLA's VideoFest in 2012. In other words, the success of *Sin Padre* should not obscure the fact that it has continued to be difficult for local low-budget and mostly self-taught filmmakers to make and attain visibility for their films. SFLFF's situation is thus one of a difficult negotiation between providing opportunities and visibility for marginalized stories and filmmakers and defining its niche and identity, as an organization, in a cultural landscape offering opportunities that are much too few and lacking sustainability.⁴⁹¹

Adrián Nava's short, *La Vida Loca: A True Story* (USA 2011), was also screened at SFLFF 2012 and is a story about resisting the powerful lure of gang life. Nava had grown up in the Bay as well and studied film at a local community college. Like *Sin Padre*, *La Vida Loca* is a first work, self-financed and starring a local, first time or amateur cast. This film, too, focuses on a Latino/a teenager. Through various flashbacks, *La Vida Loca* deals with the epiphanic impact of the gang-related killing of eighteen

⁴⁸⁹ This is a relevant point considering the fact that the film's entire inception, production, and reception all happened in Lopez's native Bay Area. All the while, at the point of our interview, Lopez had left his mother unaware of the film and of "betraying" their secret (J. Lopez Interview 2012). Not only does this move come across as inconsiderate, it is also transgressive as it continues, at an extradiegetic, real life level, the mother's objectification and victimization.

⁴⁹⁰ This included RRAFF 2013. The film's surprise hit appeal repeatedly surfaced in conversations with SFLFF's collaborators that year, such as USF's Susana Kaiser, Yo Ann Martínez (KQED) and Jason Wallach (MCCLA).

⁴⁹¹ It should be added that Lopez's next film, *Love, Ceci* (2018) premiered at SFLFF 2018, which also attests to SFLFF's dedication to nurturing its local filmmakers.

year old Humberto at the hands of Humberto's former girlfriend. The incident causes Humberto's best friend, Diablo, to renounce gang life's cycle of violence once and for all and to resist all future taunts of the instigator of the crime. One important goal for Nava that the showcasing at SFLFF could help realize was to use the film's crossover potential to enlighten different kinds of audiences. In the tradition of a long-standing criticism that first surfaced with the vogue of studio-produced "gang films" in the late 1970s, led to the formation of a so-called Gang Exploitation Committee by a group of Los Angeles students and professors, and the boycotting of *Boulevard Nights* (USA 1979, Michael Pressman; cf. Fregoso 1994: 22ff.), Nava criticizes how U.S. Latinos/as have continued to be associated one-sidedly with gangs and violence in the media and popular culture. He also finds fault with more recent, and arguably more nuanced examples of the genre, Taylor Hackford's *Blood In, Blood Out* (1993), starring Bay native Benjamin Bratt, and even Edward James Olmos' savage renunciation of gang life, *American Me* (1992), since he argues that these films, too, have served as powerful vehicles for the glamorization of gang culture among urban youth. He aspired to give the topic a different spin by looking at how its vicious circle can be broken. Again in ways reckoning with the film's crossover ambitions, on the one hand, *La Vida Loca* aims to offer cultural insiders an alternative perspective and encourages them "to embrace their individuality" (A. Nava Interview 2012); on the other hand, others less familiar with the Mexican-Chicano/a urban experience may be able to "to take away a sense of our culture" that departs from these clichés. The film's example also shows how each generation must come to terms with the gang phenomenon on their own terms.

La Vida Loca was to travel the local film festival circuit with some success.⁴⁹² In our interview in September 2012, Nava said that he has kept on submitting his film to Latino/a themed festivals, he would also like to see it at non-niche film festivals, also further confirming that opportunities for Latino/a and other minority filmmakers are still not the same as for whites.

As the two last examples in make clear, despite Cine+Mas's important service to its filmmaking constituencies, one central component that is missing from its support for filmmakers is the feature of professional enhancement events in the tradition of Cine Acción's ¡Cine Latino!, ILFF, SDLFF or RRAFF. Given its extensive network of collaborators, this does not mean that it would not be possible for the organization to organize such events sharing responsibilities with one of its local partners.⁴⁹³ In fact, Cine+Mas has several members who have a background in media making, such as founding member Jesús Contreras or more recent ones such as Carolina Moraes-Liu. Indeed, the implementation of one such component would be a valuable feature particularly as to better support local filmmakers and their stories – also in the sense of the organization's educational goals and its ambition to inspire local participation or "taking ownership."⁴⁹⁴ However, given that it is a small, still growing organization relying on volunteers except the consistent presence of Lucho Ramirez and its limited budget, there is also the danger that Cine+Mas could be spreading itself too thin. As the would-be

⁴⁹² *La Vida Loca* won Best Movie Poster Design at nearby Livermore's Las Positas Film Festival and in 2014, two more awards, Best of Festival and People's Choice Awards at 6th Aspiring Minds Film Festival, Pleasant Hill. ("La Vida Loca"; aztekstudiofilms.com)

⁴⁹³ One example is Galería de la Raza's Youth Media Project (since 2002; "Youth Media Lab"; www.galeriadelaraza.org).

⁴⁹⁴ Indeed, in a more recent exchange, Lucho Ramirez attested to the fact that the organization, for 2017, had been able to summon the help of a filmmaker and an entrepreneur [...] seem[ing] excited to put [one such event] together" – a promising step after another, earlier attempt in 2016 "did not materialize." (L. Ramirez, Facebook conversation 11/14/16).

VI. Bay Area festivals: Cine Acción's festivals, the International Latino

follow-up organization to the previous big festival organizations, Cine Acción and ILFS, Cine+Mas has had to face new challenges since it has emphasized on creating lasting partnerships with a range of organizations, but crucially, with community arts organizations.

VII. Concluding remarks

This study has looked at five Latino/a film festivals in conjunction with the way their individual activism, their promotion of *latinidad*, has balanced logics of identity, commerce and place. The three core festivals analyzed – SDLFF, RRAFF, SFLFF, the festivals I have been able to attend in person – have complemented each other in terms of their geographic dispersal in southern, middle and northern California and in terms of age, with RRAFF and SFLFF each ten and fifteen years, respectively apart from SDLFF, the oldest. I have shown that the resources available to them vary, and their situation in a particular geopolitical location and politics of place, but also personal factors, play a major part in this. All the while, all three each in their own way have tapped their cultural specificity – the “identitarian ticket” (Yúdice 2004) and a primacy on education that corresponds to a “new legitimation discourse between government, business and the third or non-profit sector” (Miller & Yúdice 2002: 63) to pursue their goals of cultural celebration and contestation, and community building, and thereby advancing the needs of their primary stakeholders. This also means that with regard to their organizational structures, they reflect three possibilities of sustenance available to a Latino/a film festival in today’s U.S. There is SDLFF, with its own, high-powered nonprofit organization MACSD and fiscal autonomy, featuring year-round programming and other resources for its clients. However, this presence also depends upon the backing organization’s steady proliferation of program initiatives and sponsoring incentives. Here, the festival, with its mix of education and star-driven entertainment, has played a crucial role in attracting audiences / clients and patrons / sponsors not only to the festival events themselves, but it has also served as a flagship event alerting these constituencies to the backing organization’s many bottom-up media competence programs, the resources made available to filmmakers, and a thriving cinematic program. As I have remarked earlier, MACSD’s lack of ethnic designation may have been a strategic move to address a wider range of sponsors and to avoid pigeonholing, which also reflects their yearning to distinguish themselves from the “identity crowd” (Ethan van Thillo). Yet, despite the wide range of constituencies that are strategically addressed by the attribute “underserved,” the organization has remained particularly committed to the region’s underprivileged communities, Latinos/as and others. Here, the, the case examples I cited, including of course the particular appeal of SDLFF’s youth showcases with their cross-generational audiences from a wide range of cultural-ethnic backgrounds and social strata, highlights the way film festivals may indeed inspire the formation of a festival *communitas* and an atmosphere of mutual respect. Indeed, both the organization’s particular commitment to lesser privileged communities and its goal to attract a wide range of audiences to serve as an arena for engendering an appreciation of Latino/a culture/s and solidarity is more urgent than ever in this day and age. This suggests itself by the way how for local San Diegans, as border residents, the results of the current (2018) U.S. administration’s white supremacist, anti-immigrant rhetoric can be viewed on their very doorstep. At the same time, SDLFF/MACSD’s business model and its attending promotion of a transnational, urbane *latinidad* as an alternative to the same-old Hollywood fare is seriously challenged by the way smaller exhibitors are taken advantage of by the international film market’s aggressive pricing policies.

Then there is RRAFF, with fiscal partners, focused on the annual festival event. While its ties to CSULA give important legitimacy to RRAFF’s educational mission, making them eligible for certain kinds of sponsorship, the festival organizers have built the three day festival event into a workshop format aimed at supporting Latino/a filmmakers as well as filmmakers telling Latino/a centered

VII. Concluding remarks

stories. This means that while students used to be the festival's primary stakeholders, the festival changed into a filmmakers' festival, a development that was underscored by its move off campus and into the cinematic sphere and eventually to a Latino/a identified cultural arts organization. Like the story of SDLFF, the story of RRAFF is thus one of emancipation from the all too confining rules and regulations that restrict campus festivals. Yet if SDLFF and MACSD's joint mission was strategically open – "changing lives through film" – and tailored to the region's encompassing and heterogeneous constituencies, RRAFF's allegiances were more complicated. Symbolically and organizationally, it depended on its ties to the educational sponsor, CSULA; it situated itself in the city's rich Chicano/a film and arts activism by means of a strategic "citation" (Butler 1993) of the culturally specific term *rasquache* for a community building project dedicated to the celebration of the "dynamic fabric of U.S. Latina/o identities – identities making up endless combinations, mixings, matchings, and upliftings of national heritage, ethnicity, race, language, gender, class, age, sexuality, and ideology" (RRAFF 2009:4). This dedication to U.S. *latinidad* and the festival's "strategic essentialism" (Spivak 1985) was founded in U.S. Latinos/as' historical struggles to carve out a place, a "habitat" for U.S. Latino/a cinema described in the Historical Overview chapter, and on the ongoing underrepresentation of U.S. Latino/a film professionals in Hollywood. Given both that particularly after 2010, RRAFF had increasingly become a filmmakers' festival and that a predominant part of the festival submissions came from filmmakers working in or with an eye on the entertainment industries – a development that was concurrent with RRAFF's career awards politics, as I have shown in the RRAFF chapter – entertainment formats dominated the festival's programming as well. This accounts for a relative scarcity of documentary and other less commercial formats, which would have further enriched the festival agenda, even though, as I have shown, the festival had continued to honor the documentary mode in its awards politics. Another critical point was the term *rasquache*'s limited capacity to elicit familiarity among non-Chicano/a filmmaking constituencies. Together with the festival's own modest resources for outreach, this further curtailed the chances for non-California based filmmakers to submit their work to the festival and thus to further enrich RRAFF's promotion of *latinidad*. That said, the festival should be remembered for its audacious eschewal of Hollywood's big names and with that, more lucrative sponsorship deals, devoting of all its energy on its educational and cultural affirming agenda instead. One is to infer that this resilience also made it immune to the upheaval that followed the 2008 financial crisis, a crisis that has also shown that the star-driven agenda can only be upheld in conjunction with a sound business plan and the willingness to make concessions to its changing environment. Indeed, in its day, the festival was in high demand for local film professionals and the center of busy activity, thanks to a vibrant program of films and quality professional enhancement programs painstakingly selected by the festival's miniscule, all-volunteer staff. In my informal polling of the 2012 audience, many voiced their gratification with the range of films shown, and productions hardly to be seen anywhere else, much less on a big screen, mirroring ongoing frustrations. It is for this dedication that RRAFF will be remembered, and hopefully it will inspire others to follow in its footsteps.

And finally there is SFLFF, collaborating with a number of smaller cultural arts organizations, often Latino/a identified, and established state institutions. While RRAFF was in search of and finally encountered a "home for the future" (its 2012 festival motto), SFLFF has been content to do without one single such festival space and instead dispersed its venues across different locations in the greater Bay Area; in fact, in the ten years of its existence, it has become a festival whose commitment to

VII. Concluding remarks

education and entertainment has been enhanced by the multi-facetedness of its many partners and hosting organizations. On the one hand, there is a great amount of freedom associated with SFLFF's organizational leanness and reliance on collaborations; from early on, the former have allowed the festival to focus their resources not so much on administrative tasks and cost-intensive mortgage in the rapidly gentrifying Bay Area which continues to take its toll on its inhabitants, including arts organizations⁴⁹⁵ but on the curation a wide spectrum of films in accordance with its own profile and the one of its hosting organization and target audiences and thus serve a broad spectrum of constituencies. While, on the one hand, the width of its programming range is somewhat similar to SDLFF, on the other hand, SFLFF's lack of one central festival arena also comes with other challenges. One is to develop an identity of its own that complements yet distinguishes itself from the one of the hosting organization; a task which, as I have argued, SFLFF and its backing organization, Cine + Mas, have balanced by means of its "piggybacking [of symbolic and factual] resources" (Fischer 2012: 43) by means of strategic partnerships with other activist partners, branding, and its ambitious program of films. Yet, the missing unifying space is less able to bring together a wide variety of audiences under one roof and make it a "contact zone" (Pratt 1991) enabling mutual understanding, solidarity and appreciation among the different constituencies in the Bay – a task, as I have argued, which has been easier to accomplish for SDLFF, owing not only to its occupation of one main festival space but also to the existence both of fewer competing events and a different sponsoring environment (and SDLFF's willingness to make concessions to the latter). On the one hand, thus, SFLFF is privileging locality by bringing the festival to different places and communities; on the other hand, it is harder to determine its identity as a festival, and the community building project is curtailed by the festival's dispersal.

That said, SFLFF has taken on the challenge to continue on the shoulders of two festival giants that were discontinued before its foundation, Cine Acción's ¡Cine Latino! (1993-2004) and ILFF (1997-2008). The most obvious parallels between ¡Cine Latino! and Cine + Mas are their shared rejection of glamor in favor of a prioritization of local activist organizations; in the case of the older festival, the commitment was tied to Cine Acción's multiple functions revolving around the nurture of U.S. Latino/a filmmaking and an appreciation of Latin American political film; as I have mentioned earlier, Cine + Mas, due to its organizational leanness, has abstained from nurture beyond the level of film exhibition.⁴⁹⁶ With the other festival organization, ILFF/ILFS, SFLFF shares a determination to bring the festival to different places in the Bay; yet, SFLFF has not been interested in the star power that was integral to ILFF's identity, instead pursuing a focus on alliances with other activist organizations in a "networ[k] for solidarity" (Torchin 2012). In its strategic usage of glamor and education, ILFF resembled SDLFF, yet, as I have shown, education and nurture have become more integral components of SDLFF and MACSD's business logic and are a particularly striking example for how, in their promotion of *latinidad*, Latino/a film festivals and their respective backing organizations have productively and creatively used what George Yúdice (2004) has called the "social imperative to perform" in ways beneficial for their local stakeholders.

¡tanTAN!

⁴⁹⁵ In this respect, the latest example is the impending eviction of veteran Latino/a cultural arts organization Galería de la Raza from a space it had inhabited for the last thirty-eight years (cf. Mojada 2018).

⁴⁹⁶ A more thorough investigation of the cross-currents between Cine Acción and its festivals and San Antonio's CineFestival, also in regard to their shared role in the emerging scholarship on Latino/a cinema would be a highly productive topic for other studies in the field of festival and media studies but could not be attempted within the scope of this study.

References

Interviews Conducted.⁴⁹⁷ Selected Q&As.

- Akrami, Fara. 20 Sep. 2012. San Francisco, CA.
- Alcaraz, Lalo. 21 Mar. 2010. San Diego, CA.*
- Alvarado, Lorena. 15 May. 2011. Los Angeles, CA.
- Angeles, Cruz. 11 Mar. 2010. San Diego, CA.
- Arias, Adrián. 12 May. 2010. San Francisco, CA.
- Attendees, Ebony Queen. 26 Sep. 2010. San Francisco, CA.
- Bautista, Kimberly N. 16 Sep. 2012. San Francisco, CA.
- Best, Christopher. 31 May. 2011. Los Angeles, CA.
- Bimbot Zombie Killers* Q & A (J. Camereno; S. Wiand). 14 May. 2011. Los Angeles, CA.
- Bracamonte, Richard. 15 Sep. 2012. San Francisco, CA.*
- Camareno, Joe. 14 May. 2011. Los Angeles, CA.
- Castillo, Kenneth. 19 May. 2012. Los Angeles, CA.
- Espinosa, Paul. 10 Apr. 2010. Santa Monica, CA.
- Franek, Lisa. 11 Mar. 2010. San Diego, CA.
- Franek, Lisa. 24 May. 2011. San Diego, CA.
- Fregoso, Rosa Linda. 13 May. 2010. San Francisco, CA.
- Fuentes, Efraín. 31 May. 2011. Burbank, CA.
- Galán, Kathryn. 28 Apr. 2010. Santa Monica, CA.
- Gonzales, Andy. 21 Mar. 2010. San Diego, CA.*
- Gonzalez, Luis. 25 May. 2011. San Diego, CA.
- Guzmán, Helen. 17 Mar. 2010. San Diego, CA.
- Hamilton, Ramón. 15 Sep. 2012. San Francisco, CA.
- Hernandez, Bel. 14 May. 2011. Pasadena, CA.
- Iacone, George (Personal Conversation). 15 Sep. 2012. San Francisco, CA.
- Iribe, Dorián. 21 Mar. 2010. San Diego, CA.
- Kaiser, Susana. 27 Sep. 2012. San Francisco, CA.
- Khurana, Mukul. 19 Mar. 2010. San Diego, CA.
- Krebs, Patricia. 29 May. 2012. Los Angeles, CA.
- La Mission* Q & A (P. Bratt, B. Bratt, A. Patel). 20 Mar. 2010. San Diego, CA.
- Lomelí, Francisco. 13 May. Santa Barbara, CA.*
- Lopez, Jay Francisco. 23 Sep. 2012. San Francisco, CA.
- López, Josefina. 19 May. 2012. Los Angeles, CA.
- López-Gutiérrez, Gloria. 25 Sep. 2010. San Francisco, CA.
- Martínez, Yo Ann. 13 Sep. 2012. San Francisco, CA.
- Maytorena Taylor, Jennifer. 27 Apr. 2010. Los Angeles, CA.
- McCarthy, Joan. 23 Sep. 2012. San Francisco, CA.
- Moraes-Liu, Carolina. 26 Sep. 2010. San Francisco, CA.
- Morales, Sylvia. 30 Oct. 2009. Los Angeles, CA.*
- Nava, Adrián. 22 Sep. 2012. San Francisco, CA.

⁴⁹⁷ All interviews marked * were background interviews which were not cited in my study.

References

- Omoonian, Cyrus. 23 Sep. 2012. San Francisco, CA.
- Ortíz Sinclair, Ángela María. 28 May. 2012. Los Angeles, CA.
- Pachinger, Deanna. 14 Nov. 2010. (Skype.)
- Perez, Patrick C. 19 May. 2012. Los Angeles, CA.
- Pardo, Andrés. 15 Sep. 2012. San Francisco, CA.
- Petrovsky, John. 11 May. 2010. San Francisco, CA.
- Portillo, Lourdes. 11 May. 2010. San Francisco, CA.
- Prado, Anayansi. 17 May. 2010. Los Angeles, CA.
- Pyle, Kathryn Smith. 13 Sep. 2012. San Francisco, CA.
- Ramirez, John. 29 Oct. 2009. Los Angeles, CA.
- Ramirez, John. 17 May. 2010. Los Angeles, CA.
- Ramirez, John. 1 Jun. 2011. Los Angeles, CA.
- Ramirez, Lucho. 3 Jun. 2011. (Telephone.)
- Ramirez, Lucho. 12 May. 2012. San Francisco, CA.
- Ramirez, Lucho, and Damián Díaz. 12 May. 2010. San Francisco, CA.
- Ramos, Alfredo. 23 May. 2011. (Telephone.)
- Ricalde, Sal. 23 Oct. 2009. Tijuana, BC.
- Rocha, Collette. 2 Jun. 2011. Los Angeles, CA.
- Rocha, Gladys. 15 Oct. 2010. (Skype.)
- Rocha, Gladys. 25 Sep. 2012. San José, CA.
- RRAFF 2012 Directors' Roundtable. 20 May. 2012. Los Angeles, CA.
- RRAFF 2012 Webisodes Q & A. 20 May. 2012. Los Angeles, CA.
- RRAFF 2012 Student Volunteers. 19 May. 2012. Los Angeles, CA.
- Santisteban, Ray. 11 Mar. 2011. (Skype.)*
- Soto-Paz, Ariel. 26 Sep. 2010. San Francisco, CA.*
- Stillman, Patric. 19 Mar. 2010. San Diego, CA.
- Sully, Morgan. 24 May. 2011. San Diego, CA.
- Torres, José. 19 May. 2012. Los Angeles, CA.
- Torrez, Tygr. 15 May. 2011. Pasadena, CA.*
- Treviño, Jesús Salvador. 17 May. 2011. Los Angeles, CA.
- Trujillo, Adriana. 23 Oct. 2009. Tijuana, BC.
- van Thillo, Ethan. 23 Oct. 2009. San Diego, CA.
- van Thillo, Ethan. 24 May. 2011. San Diego, CA.
- Varela, Laura. 21 Mar. 2010. San Diego, CA.
- Vargas, José (Pepe). 14 May. 2010. (Telephone.)
- Wallach, Jason. 28 Sep. 2012. San Francisco, CA.
- Zelaya, Carlos. 15 May. 2011. San Francisco, CA.

Audio-Visual Works: Film and Video; Television; Web Based⁴⁹⁸

- AIDS: Questions and Answers / SIDA: Preguntas y Respuestas* (Community Televisión Network), USA 1987.
- Alazraki, Gary. *Nosotros los nobles*, Mexico 2013.

⁴⁹⁸ In the case of multiple directors (television; some webisodes), creators are listed.

References

- Almada, Natalia. *El General*, Mexico 2009.
- Almedia, Rogelio. *Yveete*, USA / Mexico 2008.
- Almodovar, Pedro. *Broken Embraces / Los abrazos rotos*, Spain 2009.
- Altuna, Asier. *Bertoslari*, Spain 2011.
- Amorim, Vicente. *Dirty Hearts: Corações Sujos*, Brazil 2011.
- Angeles, Cruz. *Don't Let Me Drown*, USA 2009.
- Araú, Sergio, and Yarelí Arizmendi. *A Day Without a Mexican* (Short), USA 1996.
- Araú, Sergio, and Yarelí Arizmendi. *A Day Without A Mexican* (Mockumentary), USA 2004.
- Artenstein, Isaac. *Break of Dawn* (TV-PBS; American Playhouse), USA 1988.
- Arteta, Miguel. *Star Maps*, USA 1997.
- Arteta, Miguel. *Chuck & Buck*, USA 2000.
- Arteta, Miguel. *Good Girl*, USA 2002.
- Arteta, Miguel. *Cedar Rapids*, USA 2011.
- Arteta, Miguel. *Beatriz at Dinner*, USA 2017.
- Auer, Gabriel. *The Eyes of the Birds: Les Yeux des Oiseaux*, Switzerland / France 1981.
- Ávila, Carlos. *La Carpa* (TV-PBS; American Playhouse), USA 1993.
- Ávila, Carlos, and A. P. González. *Foto Novelas* (Assorted Shorts), USA 1994.
- Ávila, Carlos. *Tales of Masked Men*, USA 2012.
- Barboza, Alberto. *Premediation* (Short), USA 2004.
- Battlestar Galactica* (TV-NBC & B-Sky Broadcasting), USA 2004-09.
- Bautista, Kimberly Nuvem. *Justice for my Sister / Justicia para mi hermana*, USA / Guatemala 2012.
- Benjamin Murray, and Alisa Nahmias. *Unfinished Spaces*, USA / Cuba 2011.
- Bessudo, George. *Farmhouse*, USA 2008.
- Biella, Peter, and Frances Negrón Muntaner. *AIDS in the Barrio: It Can't Happen to Me / SIDA en el barrio: Eso no me pasa a mi*, USA 1989.
- Birri, Fernando. *Los inundados*, Argentina 1962.
- Blank, Les. *Chulas fronteras*, USA 1976.
- Blank, Les. *Burden of Dreams*, USA 1982.
- Boero, Patricia. *Gloria* (Short), Mexico / Australia 1984.
- Bracamontes, Richard. *Bombing Arizona* (Short), USA 2012.
- Bradbury, David. *Chile, ¿hasta cuándo?* USA / Australia 1986.
- Bratt, Peter. *La Mission*, USA 2009.
- Bravo, Estela. *Los niños desaparecidos* (Short), Cuba 1985.
- Brooks, James L. *Spanglish*, USA 2004.
- Brooks, Mel. *Young Frankenstein*, USA 1974.
- Buñuel, Luis. *The Young and the Damned / Los olvidados*, Mexico 1950.
- Buñuel, Luis. *Nazarín*, Mexico 1959.
- Cabellos, Ernesto. *Cooking Up Dreams / De Ollas y Sueños*, Brazil / Peru 2009.
- Camareno, Joe. *The Revenge of the Bimbot Zombie Killers*, USA 2011.
- Camareno, Joe. *Fixing Paco* (Web Series), USA 2012-14. <<http://www.fixingpaco.org/>>
- Canción de la Raza* (TV-KCET), USA 1968-70.
- Cardoso, Patricia. *The Air Globes* (Short), USA 1990.
- Cardoso, Patricia. *Real Women Have Curves*, USA 2002.
- Carnevale, Marcos. *Anita*, Argentina 2009.

References

- Carrera, Carlos. *The Hero / El heróe* (Short), Mexico 1994.
- Carrera, Carlos. *Backyard / El Traspatio*, Mexico 2009.
- Castillo, Kenneth: *The Misadventures of Cholo Chaplin* (Assorted Shorts), USA 2010.
- Castillo, Kenneth. *Counterpunch*. USA / Mexico, 2013.
- Chenillo, Mariana. *Nora's Will / Cinco días sin Nora*, Mexico 2009.
- ¡Chicano! *The History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement* (TV-PBS; NLCC; Exec. producer: José Luis Ruiz), USA 1996.
- Chico and the Man* (TV-NBC), USA 1974-78; creator: James Komack.
- Connell, Kim, and Ilana Trachtman. *Mariachi High*, USA 2012.
- Cortés, Alberto. *Heart of Time / Corazón del tiempo*. Mexico 2009.
- Cosby Show* (TV-NBC), USA 1984-92.
- Cruz, Yolanda. *Entre sueños* (Short), USA / Mexico 2000.
- Cruz, Yolanda. *2,501 Migrants / 2501 Migrantes*, Mexico / USA 2008.
- Cruz, Yolanda. *Echo Bear* (Short), USA 2012.
- Cruz, Yolanda. *El Reloj* (Short), Mexico / USA 2013.
- Cruz, Yolanda. *Las lecciones de Silveria* (Short), Mexico 2015.
- Day, Philip. *The Robert Rodriguez 10 Minute Film School* (First and Original), USA 1993.
- Delara, Youssef, and Michael D. Olmos. *Filly Brown*, USA 2012.
- Desanzo, Juan. *Eva Perón, la verdadera historia*, Argentina 1996.
- Dexter* (TV-Showtime) USA 2006-12; creator: James Manos, Jr.
- Diez Gracia, Lisa. *La línea invisible / The Invisible Line*, France / Mexico 2011.
- Dinco, Dino. *Homeboy*, USA 2012.
- Encounters: An Original Web Series*. Various directors. Creators: Miguel Torres; Mauricio Mendoza. USA 2011. <<http://www.theofficialencounterwebseries.com/>>
- Esparza, Moctesuma, and José Luis Ruiz. *Cinco Vidas*, USA 1973.
- Fellini, Federico. *La Dolce Vita*, Italy 1960.
- Fernández, Emilio. *María Candelaria*, Mexico 1943.
- Fernández, Emilio. *The Pearl / La Perla*, Mexico 1947.
- Fernández, Emilio: *Río Escondido*, Mexico 1948.
- Fernández, Emilio: *La Pueblerina*, Mexico 1949.
- Flaherty, Robert. *Nanook of the North*, USA / France 1922.
- Flaherty, Robert. *Moana*, USA 1926.
- Ford, John: *The Fugitive*, USA / Mexico 1947.
- Fuentes-León, Javier. *Contracorriente*, Peru / France / Colombia / Germany 2009.
- Funari, Vicky, and Jennifer Maytorena Taylor. *Paulina*, Mexico / Canada / USA 1997.
- Funari, Vicky, and Sergio de la Torre. *Maquilapolis*, Mexico / USA 2006.
- Galvadón, Roberto: *Macario*, Mexico 1959.
- Gance, Abel. *Napoléon*, France 1927; restored 1980.
- García, Andy. *Cachao: Like His Rhythm There's No Other / Cachao: Cómo su ritmo no hay dos*, USA 1993.
- García, David. *Requiem 29: Racism and Police Repression against Chicanos*, USA 1971.
- Get Smart* (TV-CBS), USA 1965-70; creator: Mel Brooks.
- Getting On* (TV-HBO), USA 2013-15; creator: Mark V. Olsenmaki.
- Girault, Roberto. *El Estudiante*, Mexico 2009.

References

- Goldgewicht, Richard. *Pablo*, USA 2013.
- Gómez, Sara. ... *Y tenemos sabor*, Cuba 1967.
- Gómez, Sara. *De cierta manera*, Cuba 1977.
- Gordon, Stewart. *The Wonderful Ice Cream Suit*, USA 1998.
- González Iñárritu, Alejandro. *Amores Perros*, Mexico 2000.
- Gosling, Maureen. *Blossoms of Fire*, Mexico / USA 2000.
- Grattan, Alejandro. *Only Once in a Lifetime*, USA / Mexico 1979.
- Grubner, Daniel. *Jasmine in Flower / De jazmín en flor* (Short), Mexico 1996.
- Guerra, Ciro. *The Wind Journeys / Los viajes del viento*, Colombia / Germany / Argentina / Netherlands 2009.
- Guerra, Ciro. *The Embrace of the Serpent / El abrazo de la serpiente*, Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina 2015.
- Guerrero, Aurora. *Mosquita y Mari*, USA 2012.
- Gutiérrez, Efraín. *Please, Don't Bury Me Alive!* USA 1976.
- Gutiérrez, Efraín. *Chicano Love Is Forever / Amor chicano es para siempre*, USA 1977.
- Gutiérrez, Efraín. *Run, Tecato, Run!* USA 1979.
- Gutiérrez, Sebastián. *Women in Trouble*, USA 2009.
- Gutiérrez Alea, Tomás. *Memories of Underdevelopment / Memorias del subdesarrollo*, Cuba 1959.
- Hackford, Taylor. *Blood In, Blood Out* (alternative title: *Bound by Honor*), USA 1993.
- Hamilton, Ramón. *Smuggled*, USA 2012.
- Hernández, Roberto and Geoffrey Smith. *Presumed Guilty / Presunto culpable*, Mexico 2008.
- Herzog, Werner. *Fitzcarraldo*, Peru / Germany 1982.
- Huston, John: *The Night of the Iguana*, USA 1964.
- Ichaso, León. *El Súper*, USA 1979.
- Ichaso, León. *Crossover Dreams*, USA 1985.
- Ichaso, León. *Piñero*, USA 2001.
- Ichaso, León. *Paraíso*, USA 2009.
- Infinity Factory* (TV-PBS), USA 1977.
- Jacobs, Alan. *Down for Life*, USA 2009.
- Jane, the Virgin* (TV-The CW); USA 2014 .Creator: Jennie Snyder Urman.
- Kaplan, Betty. *Neurosis on Wheels* (Short), USA 1981.
- Kaplan, Betty. *Bolívar* (TV Miniseries), Canada / Venezuela 1983.
- Kaplan, Betty. *Of Love and Shadows*, Argentina / USA 1994.
- Kaplan, Betty. *Doña Bárbara*, Spain / Argentina / USA 1998.
- Kaplan, Betty. *Almost a Woman* (TV-PBS), USA 2002.
- Kelly, Nancy, and Kenji Yamamoto. *TRUST: Second Acts in Young Lives*, USA 2012.
- Kobayashi, Masaki. *The Human Condition: No Greater Love / 人間の條件*, Japan 1959.
- Kurosawa, Akira. *The Seven Samurai / 七人の侍*, Japan 1954.
- Leduc, Paul. *Frida - Naturaleza Viva*, Mexico 1983.
- Leduc, Paul. *El Cobrador*, Mexico 2007.
- Legiardi Laura, Roland. *Azúl*, USA / Nicaragua 1989.
- Lopez, Jay Francisco. *Sin Padre*, USA 2012.
- Lopez, Jay Francisco, *Love, Cecy*, USA 2018.
- López-Garza, Marta. *When Will the Punishment End?* USA 2012.

References

- Luna, Diego. *Mr. Pig / Sr. Pig*, Mexico 2016.
- Maillet, Marilú. *Unfinished Diary*, Canada 1982.
- Mandoki, Luis. *Voces Inocentes*, Mexico / USA / Puerto Rico 2004.
- Marcovich, Carlos. *Who the Hell Is Juliette / ¿Quién Diablos Es Juliette?* Mexico 1997.
- Marmoullian, Ruben. *Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde*, USA 1931.
- Marin, Cheech. *Born in East L.A.*, USA 1987.
- Maytorena Taylor, Jennifer. *New Muslim Cool*, USA 2009.
- Melford, George, and Enrique Tovar Avalos. *Drácula*, USA 1931.
- Mendiola, Jim: *Pretty Vacant*, USA 1996.
- Mendiola, Jim. *Come and Take It Day*, USA 2001.
- Menéndez, Ramón. *Stand and Deliver* (Warner / American Playhouse), USA 1988.
- Miami Vice* (TV-NBC), USA 1984-90.
- Michán, David. *Adverse Effects / Reacciones Adversas*, Mexico 2012.
- Minh-Ha, Trinh T. *Surname Viet Given Name Nam*, USA 1989.
- Montes, Richard. *Los Angeles Ward* (Web Series / TV-Amazon), USA 2011.
- Montes, Richard. *Aguruphobia*, USA 2015.
- Montiel Reagan, Cheyann. *Off and Running* (Web Series), USA 2011.
- Moraes-Liu, Carolina. *Festive Land: Carnaval in Bahia*. Brazil / USA 2002.
- Moraes-Liu, Carolina. *Ebony Goddess: Queen of Ilê Aiyê / Deusa do Ébano: Rainha do Ilê Aiyê* (Short), Brazil / USA 2009.
- Morales, Jacobo. *What's Happened to Santiago / Lo que pasó a Santiago*, Puerto Rico 1989.
- Morales, Sylvia. *Chicana*, USA 1979.
- Morales, Sylvia. *Esperanza*, USA 1985.
- Morales, Sylvia. *A Crushing Love*, USA 2009.
- Morán, Gloria. *Home for the Homies*, USA 2012.
- Mosquera, Gustavo: *Moebius*, Argentina 1996.
- Nava, Adrián. *The Vida Loca. A True Story* (Short), USA 2012
- Murphy, Catherine. *Maestra*, Cuba / USA 2012.
- Nava, Gregory M. *El Norte* (PBS/American Playhouse/Channel 4 et al.), USA 1983.
- Nava, Gregory M. *My Family*, USA 1995.
- Nava, Gregory M. *Selena*, USA 1997.
- Nazario, Zydna. *The Battle of Vieques / La batalla de Vieques*, Puerto Rico 1986.
- Novaro, María. *Un Isla Rodeada de Agua*, Mexico 1986.
- Novaro, María. *Danzón*, Spain / Mexico 1991.
- Novaro, María. *Sin dejar huella*, Spain / Mexico 2000.
- Núñez, Victor. *Spoken Word*, USA 2009.
- Olmos, Edward James. *American Me*, USA 1992.
- Olmos, Edward James. *Walkout*, USA 2006.
- Omoonian, Cyrus. *Voices of Chile / Voices of Chile*, Chile / USA 2012.
- Oregel, Roberto. *Casa Libre: Freedom House*, USA 2010.
- Palomino, Ernie. *My Trip in a '52 Ford*, USA 1966.
- Parada, Brian. *In Times of War / En tiempo de guerra* (Short), USA 2011.
- Pardo, Andrés. *Buscando a Larisa*, Mexico 2012.
- Parker, Alan. *Evita*, USA 1996.

References

- Rodriguez, Paul. *A Million to Juan*, USA 1994.
- Rodriguez, Robert. *El Mariachi*, Mexico / USA 1992.
- Rodriguez, Robert. *Desperado*, USA 1995.
- Ruiz, Bernardo. *Reportero*, Mexico 2012.
- Ruiz, José Luis. *Cinco Vidas*, USA 1972.
- Ruiz, José Luis. *Guadalupe*, USA 1976.
- Salles, Walter. *Central Station: Central do Brasil*, Brazil / France 1998.
- Sánchez, Graciela I. *No Porque lo Diga Fidel Castro*, Cuba 1988.
- Sanford & Son* (TV-NBC), USA 1972-77; creator: Norman Lear.
- Sanjinés, Jorge. *Courage of the People / El coraje del pueblo*, Italy / Bolivia 1971.
- Sheedy, John. *The Tijuana Project*, Mexico / USA 2009.
- Saura, Carlos. *Flamenco, Flamenco*, Spain 2010.
- Scott, Ridley. *Blade Runner*, USA / Hong Kong 1982.
- Sayles, John. *Lone Star*, USA 1996.
- Simón, Laura Angélica. *Fear and Learning at Hoover Elementary* (TV-PBS), USA 1997.
- Six Feet Under* (TV-HBO), USA 2001-05; creator: Alan Ball.
- Sirk, Douglas. *Imitation of Life*, USA 1959.
- Smith Pyle, Kathryn, and María Teresa Rodríguez. *Children of Memory / Niños de la Memoria*, El Salvador / USA 2012.
- Solas, Humberto: *Lucía*, Cuba 1968.
- Soderbergh, Stephen. *sex, lies and videotape*, USA 1989.
- Soderbergh, Stephen. *Traffic*, USA 2000.
- Solanas, Fernando, and Octavio Getino. *The Time of the Furnaces / La Hora de los Hornos*, Argentina 1967.
- Solanas, Fernando. *Memoria del saqueo*, Switzerland / France / Argentina 2004.
- Solas, Humberto. *Honey for Ochún / Miel para Ochún*, Cuba 2002.
- Solas, Humberto. *Barrio Cuba*, Cuba 2006.
- Sonrisas* (TV-PBS), USA 1979.
- Soto, Luis. *House of Ramón Iglesia* (TV-PBS / American Playhouse), USA 1986.
- Taymor, Julie. *Frida*, USA 2002.
- Tejada-Flores, and Ray Telles. *The Fight in the Fields*, USA 1997.
- Torbjörnsson, Peter. *On the Border / På gränsen*, Sweden 1985.
- Torres, Fina: *Mecanicas Celestes*, Venezuela 1994.
- Treviño, Jesús Salvador. *América Tropical*, USA 1971.
- Treviño, Jesús Salvador. *La Raza Unida*, USA 1972.
- Treviño, Jesús Salvador. *Yo Soy Chicano*, USA 1972.
- Treviño, Jesús Salvador. *Raíces de Sangre*, Mexico 1978.
- Treviño, Jesús Salvador. *Seguín*, USA 1982.
- Treviño, Jesús Salvador. *Visions of Aztlán*, USA 2010.
- Treviño, Jesús Salvador. *Latinopia* (Video Platform). <<http://latinopia.com/>>.
- Troyano, Ela: *Your Kunst is Your Waffen*, USA 1994.
- Turnley, David C. *Shenandoah*, USA 2012.
- Ugly Betty* (TV-ABC), USA 2006-10; creators: Silvio Horta; Fernando Gaitán.
- Urrutia, Antonio. *Guts and Heart / De tripas corazón* (Short), Mexico 1996.

References

- Valdez, Kinan. *Ballad of a Soldier*, USA 2002.
- Valdez, Luis. *I am Joaquín*, USA 1969.
- Valdez, Luis. *El Corrido*, USA 1976.
- Valdez, Luis. *Zoot Suit*, USA 1981.
- Valdez, Luis. *La Bamba*, USA 1987.
- Valdez, Luis. *The Cisco Kid* (TV-TNT), USA 1994.
- Vásquez, Esperanza. *Agueda Martínez – Our People, Our Country*, USA 1977.
- Vega, Pastor. *Panama: The Fifth Frontier / La quinta frontera*, Cuba 1974.
- Villa Alegre* (TV-PBS), USA 1973-77.
- Villeneuve, Denis. *Blade Runner 2049*, USA 2018.
- Visconti, Luchino. *Rocco and his Brothers / Rocco e i suoi Fratelli*, Italy 1960.
- von Trier, Lars. *Melancholia*, Denmark / Sweden / France / Germany 2011.
- Wadleigh, Michael. *Wolfen*, USA 1981.
- Weeds* (TV-Showtime), USA 2005-12; creator: Jenji Kohan.
- Werner, Lou, and Allen Moore. *Sheepherders Homecoming*, USA 1996.
- West Wing* (TV-NBC), USA 1999-2006; creator: Aaron Sorkin.
- Wood, Andrés. *Historias de Fútbol*, Chile 1997.
- Yamasaki, Tizuka. *Gaijin: A Brazilian Odyssey / Gaijin - Os Caminhos da Liberdade*, Brazil 1980.
- Yamasaki, Tizuka. *Patriamada*, Brazil 1984.
- Young, Robert M. *¡Alambrista!* USA 1977.
- Young, Robert M. *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortéz* (TV- PBS / American Playhouse), USA 1982.
- Young, Robert M. *Triumph of the Spirit*, USA 1989.
- Youth in Video (ILFF). *Shabab Be Iadad / Jóvenes juntos / Youth Together*, USA / Argentina 2003.
- Youth in Video (ILFF). *Arrested Dreams: Sueños arrestados*, USA 2007.
- Zelaya, Carlos. *Police Chicks: Life on the Beat*. (Web series), USA 2011-12.
First episode available at <<https://vimeo.com/24000038>>
- Zurinaga, Marcos. *La gran fiesta*, Puerto Rico 1986.

Printed Works⁴⁹⁹ & Internet resources

- “24th San Diego Latino Film Festival.” *Media Arts Center San Diego*, 2017. Web. 18 Sep. 2018. <<http://2017.sdlatinofilm.com/films.%20Accessed%2002/12/2017>>.
- “2013 Sundance Film Festival Adds Four Feature Films, Including El Mariachi as ‘From the Collection’ Screening.” *Sundance Institute*, 13 Dec. 2012. Web. 26 Sep. 2018. <<https://www.sundance.org/blogs/news/2013-sundance-film-festival-adds-four-feature-films-including-el-mariachi-a>>.
- “2018 Public Media Content Fund FAQ.” *LPB (Latino Public Broadcasting)*. <http://lpbp.org>, 2018. Web. 14 Oct. 2018. <<http://lpbp.org/faq-pmcf/>>.
- “About MCCLA.” *missionculturalcenter.org*. Web. 4 Oct. 2018. <<http://missionculturalcenter.org/about-us/>>.
- “About Us: Mission – Vision – Programs.” *Media Arts Center San Diego*. Web. 18 Sep. 2018. <<http://mediaartscenter.org/about-us/>>.
- “About Us.” *Cine + Mas Presenters of the San Francisco Latino Film Festival*. Web. 3 Oct. 2018. <<https://www.sflatinofilmfestival.org/about/>>.

⁴⁹⁹ Works by the same author are featured in a chronological order. Sources neither marked “web” nor “unpublished” were issued in print.

References

- “Academy Award-Nominee Edward James Olmos Launches Largest U.S. Latino Film Festival.” *LA-LIFF*, 14 Apr. 2018. Web. 14 Oct. 2018. <<https://latinofilm.org/?p=25920>>.
- “Acknowledgements.” *jCine Latino 1997!* 44.
- “Acknowledgements.” *ILFF 1997*, 24.
- “Acknowledgements.” *The Future of Latino Independent Media: A NALIP Sourcebook*. Ed. Chon A. Noriega. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center (CSRC), 2000. vii.
- “AFI Fest.” *American Film Institute (AFI)*. 2018. Web. 11 Mar. 2018. <<http://www.afi.com/afifest>>.
- “AFI FEST 2018 Announces Key Dates and Call for Entries.” *American Film Institute (AFI)*, 1 Mar. 2018. Web. 5 Oct. 2018. <<http://blog.afi.com/afi-fest-2018-announces-key-dates-and-call-for-entries/>>.
- “AFI History.” *American Film Institute (AFI)*. Web. 7 Jul. 2013. <<http://www.afi.com/about/history.aspx>>.
- “AIFF-American Indian Film Festival.” *American Indian Film Institute*. 2018. Web. 31 Oct. 2018. <<https://www.aifisf.com/>>.
- “A Latin Wave Hits The Mainstream.” *Time*. 11 Jul. 1988: 3.
- Alcaraz, Lalo. *Not another Latino Movie* (Poster). Los Angeles, 2000.
- “Alchemy.” *English Oxford Living Dictionaries*. Web. 16 Sep. 2018. <<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/alchemy>>.
- Alinsky, Saul David. *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals*. New York: Random House, 1971.
- aluCine: Latin Film & Media Arts Festival*. Web. 11 Mar. 2018. <<http://alucinefestival.com>>.
- Alvarez, Robert. “The Border as Social System: The California Case.” *New Scholar* 9.1-2 (1984): 199-34.
- “American Playhouse (1981-94).” *IMDB*. Web. 20 Aug. 2018. <<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0176357/>>.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria E. *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute, 1987.
- Arredondo, Gabriela F., et al., eds. *Chicana Feminisms: A Critical Reader*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Artists Television Access (ATA)*. Web. <www.atasite.org>.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. “Essentialism / Strategic Essentialism.” *Postcolonial Studies: Key Concepts*. Eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin. London, New York: Routledge, 2013 (3rd edition). 96–98.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds. *Postcolonial Studies: Key Concepts*. London, New York: Routledge, 2013 (3rd edition).
- Aufderheide, Pat. “An Actor Turns Activist.” *Mother Jones* (1983): 60.
- “Awarded Projects 2002-17.” *Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB)*, 2018. Web. 14 Oct. 2018. <<http://lpbp.org/awarded-projects/?key=2017>>.
- “Awards: Justice For My Sister.” *justiceformsister.com*, 2018. Web. 4 Oct. 2018. <<http://justiceformsister.com/awards/>>.
- “Background: About Latino Public Broadcasting.” *Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB)*, 2018. Web. 17 Sep. 2018. <<http://lpbp.org/background/>>.

References

- Bajpai, Prableen. "The World's Top 20 Economies." *investopedia.com*, 16 Aug. 2018. Web. 16 Sep. 2018. <<https://www.investopedia.com/insights/worlds-top-economies/>>.
- Bakhtin, Michail. M. *Rabelais and His World*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1968.
- Baugh, Scott L. *Latino American Cinema: An Encyclopedia of Movies, Stars, Concepts, and Trends*. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press, 2012.
- Bedford, Karen Everhart. "CPB finds fault in Latino consortium spending practices" (first published May 4, 1998). *Current*, 28 Nov. 1998. Web. 28 Aug. 2018. <<https://current.org/wp-content/uploads/archive->
- Bedford, Karen Everhart. "Out of cash and under scrutiny, Latino center closes" (first. publ. March 16, 1998). *Current*, 28 Nov. 1998. Web. 28 Aug. 2018. <<https://current.org/wp-content/uploads/archive-site/cpb/cpb808n.html#earlier>>.
- Beltrán, Cristina. *The Trouble with Unity: Latino Politics and the Creation of Identity*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Beltrán, Mary C. *Latina/o Stars in U.S. Eyes: The Making and Meanings of Film and TV Stardom*. Urbana, Illinois, and Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2009.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. Ed. Hannah Arendt. New York, NY: Schocken, 1978 (1969).
- Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." *Illuminations*. Ed. Hannah Arendt. New York, NY: Schocken, 1978 (1969). 217–52.
- Berg, Charles Ramírez. *Latino Images in Film: Stereotypes, Subversion, Resistance*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2002.
- Berger, Laura. "NYFF 2016 Women Directors: Meet Natalia Almada - *Everything Else*," *Women and Hollywood*, 12 Oct. 2016. Web. 7 Sep. 2018. <<https://womenandhollywood.com/nyff-2016-women-directors-meet-natalia-almada-everything-else-19b97b416a9/>>.
- Bernstein, Paula. "How Social Media Helped a Frolsalian Old Sundance Hit Find a New Life," 24 Jun. 2014. *Indiewire*. Web. 7 Sep. 2018. <<https://www.indiewire.com/2014/06/how-social-media-helped-an-old-sundance-hit-find-a-new-life-24969/>>.
- Berube, Alan. "City and Metropolitan Income Inequality Data Reveal Ups and Downs through 2016," Monday, 5 Feb. 2018. *Brookings.edu*. Web. 5 Oct. 2018. <<https://www.brookings.edu/research/city-and-metropolitan-income-inequality-data-reveal-ups-and-downs-through-2016/>>.
- Bevk, Alex. "Chilecito, or San Francisco's Little Chile." *Curbed San Francisco*. Web. 27 Mar. 2015. <http://sf.curbed.com/archives/2012/10/15/chilecito_or_san_franciscos_little_chile.php>.
- Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London, U.K., New York, NY: Routledge, 1994.
- Biskind, Peter. *Down and Dirty Pictures: Miramax, Sundance and the Rise of Independent Film*. London, U.K.: Bloomsbury, 2004.
- Bloom, Harold. *The Anxiety of Influence*. London, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1973.
- [Board, Cine Acción]. "Bienvenidos." *Cine Latino 2001*, 2.
- Bordwell, David; Thompson, Kristin. *Film Art: An Introduction (Fifth Edition)*. New York, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997 (1979).
- "Bracero History Archive: About." *Bracero Archive*. Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media; George Mason University; Smithsonian National Museum of American History; Brown University; Institute of Oral History at University of Texas at El Paso, 2018. Web. 20 Sep. 2018 <<http://braceroarchive.org/about>>.
- "Bruno Latour: Making Things Public." *ZKM Zentrum für Kunst und Medien*, 2005. Web. 17 Sep. 2018. <<http://zkm.de/en/bruno-latour-making-things-public>>.

References

- Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Forms of Capital [1983]." *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. Ed. John G. Richardson. New York, NY: Greenwood Press, 1986. 241–58.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, and Loic Wacquant. *Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago, Illinois: Chicago University Press, 1992.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*. Palo Alto, California: Stanford University Press, 1996, 1992.
- Bowser, Javacia Harris. "A Reel Legacy. Hispanic Executive," 2011. *Hispanic Executive*. Web. 20 Aug. 2018. <<https://hispanicexecutive.com/2011/a-reel-legacy/>>.
- Bushman, Monica. "Why L.A.'s Latino International Film Festival Is Finally Back," *LAist*. 20 Jun. 2018. Web. 14 Oct. 2018. <http://www.laist.com/2018/06/20/why_the_la_latino_international_fil.php>.
- Brava! For Women in the Arts*. 2018. Web. 31 Oct. 2018. <www.brava.org>.
- Broyles(-Gonzales), Yolanda. "Chicano Film Festivals: An Examination." *Chicano Cinema: Research, Reviews, Resources*. Ed. Gary D. Keller. Tempe, AZ: Bilingual Press / Editorial Bilingüe, 1993 81 (1985). 116–20.
- Broyles-Gonzales, Yolanda. *El Teatro Campesino: Theater in the Chicano Movement*. Austin, TX: University of Texas, 1994.
- Burton, Julianne. "The Camera as 'Gun': Two Decades of Culture and Resistance in Latin America." *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 5, No. 1, *Culture in the Age of Mass Media (Winter, 5.1 (Winter) (1978): 49–76*.
- Burton, Julianne. *Cinema and Social Change in Latin America. Interviews*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1986.
- Burton, Julianne, and Tizuka Yamasaki. "Sing, the Beloved Country: An Interview with Tizuka Yamasaki on *Patriamada*." *Film Quarterly* 41.1 (1987): 2–9.
- Burton, Julianne, ed. *The Social Documentary in Latin America*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990.
- Burton-Carvajal, Julianne. "Tribute to Santiago Alvarez." *¡Cine Latino 1998!* 46–47.
- Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* New York, London: Routledge, 1993.
- Cadaval, Olivia. *Creating a Latino Identity in the Nation's Capital: The Latino Festival*. New York, London: Garland / Taylor & Francis, 1998.
- Campbell, Federico. *Tijuana: Stories on the Border*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995.
- "Carmen Zapata, A Latino Hollywood Legend, Dead at 86," 2014. *Sefijaonline.com*. Web. 4 Oct 2018. <<http://www.sefijaonline.com/carmen-zapata-queen-of-latino-hollywood-dead-at-86/>>.
- Caro, Mark. "The Secret of His Success: Robert Rodriguez Is Banking on a Third *Spy Kids* that Cost Less Than Half of Most Summer Sequels and Relies Mostly on the Talents of One Man – Himself." *Chicago Tribune*. Web. 21 May. 2013. <http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2003-07-20/news/0307200476_1_robert-rodriguez-sequels-spy-kids-3-d/4>.
- Carrasco, David, and Nicholas J. Cull, eds. *Alambrista and the U.S.-Mexican Border: Film, Music and Stories by Undocumented Immigrants*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2004.
- "Casa 0101 Mission Statement." *Casa 0101 Theatre*, 2018. Web. 22 Sep. 2018. <<http://www.casa0101.org/mission-statement>>.

References

- Casique, Francisco Díaz. *Race, Space and Contestation: Gentrification in San Francisco's Latina/o Mission District, 1998-2002*. Dissertation. Berkeley, CA, 2013. Web. 14 Oct. 2016. <<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5c84f2hc>>.
- Castells, Manuel. "Grassrooting the Space of Flows." *Urban Geography* 20.4 (1999): 294–302. *Castro Theatre*. Web. 3 Mar. 2018. <<http://castrotheatre.com>>.
- "Census: Hispanics Outnumber Blacks." *Migration News*, 2001. Web. 9 Oct. 2018. <<https://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/more.php?id=2359>>.
- "San Diego County poverty rates dropped in 2016, but inequity persists." *Center on Policy Initiatives* (CPI). Web. 12 Aug. 2018. <https://www.cpisandiego.org/sandiegocounty_poverty/>.
- "Chicago Latino Film Festival." *Chicago-Sun*. 19 Jun. 1987: 27. *Chicago Latino Film Festival (CLFF)*. Web. 16 Mar. 2018. <chicagolatinofilmfestival.org>.
- Chin, Daryl. "Festivals, Markets, Critics." *Performing Arts Journal*. 55 (1997): 61–75.
- Christon, Lawrence. "Breaking the Chains: Edward James Olmos' Anger over "Cancer" of the Gang Subculture Fuels his Film *American Me*, about Life in the Barrio - and Prison." *Los Angeles Times*, 1 Sep. 1991. Web. 3 Jul. 2017. <http://articles.latimes.com/1991-09-01/entertainment/ca-2326_1_edward-james-olmos>.
- "Cine Acción. Cine Acción, the Bay Area Center for Latino Film and Video." Earlier published at *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media*, 38 (June 1993), 80. Web. 17 Oct. 2018. <<https://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinesays/JC38folder/CineAccion.html>>.
- Cine Acción Board. "Bienvenidos." *¡Cine Latino! 2001*. 2.
- "Cine Acción Staff." *¡Cine Latino 1998!* 52. *CineFestival 1977 Catalog (2nd Annual Chicano Film Festival)*. San Antonio, TX: Oblate College. *CineFestival 1981 Catalog (6th Annual San Antonio CineFestival / International Hispanic Film Festival)*. San Antonio, TX.
- [*CineFestival 1986 Catalog*] "New Latin American Cinema: A Contemporary Series." *Tonantzín* 4 (1) 1986 (Special Issue). San Antonio, TX: Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center (GCAC).
- [*CineFestival 1993 Catalog*] "Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center presents the 17th Annual San Antonio CineFestival." *Tonantzín* 8 (5) 1993 (Special Issue). San Antonio, TX: GCAC.
- "CineFestival 1993." Flyer: "Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center presents the 17th Annual San Antonio CineFestival". San Antonio, TX: GCAC 1993.
- CineFestival 1997 Catalog*. San Antonio, TX: GCAC, 1997.
- CineFestival 1998 Catalog*. San Antonio, TX: GCAC, 1998.
- "CineFestival 2018." *Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center*, 5-8 Jul. 2018. Web. 20 Aug. 2018. <<http://www.guadalupeculturalarts.org/cinefestival/>>.
- ¡Cine Latino 1994! Cine Acción Presents the 2nd Annual Cine Latino. 09/23-25/1994*. San Francisco, CA, 1994.
- ¡Cine Latino 1997! Cine Acción Presents the 5th Annual Cine Latino. 09/18-28/1997*. San Francisco, CA, 1997
- ¡Cine Latino 1998! Cine Acción Presents the 6th Annual Cine Latino. 09/16-27/1998. San Francisco-Berkeley*. San Francisco, CA. 1998.
- ¡Cine Latino 2001! Cine Acción Presents the 9th Annual Cine Latino. 09/13-23/2001. San Francisco-Bay Area*. San Francisco, CA. 2001.
- ¡Cine Latino 2004. Cine Acción Presents 12th Annual Festival Cine Latino. Latino Lens: A Global Perspective*). 08/26-29; 09/17-19/2004.

References

- Cine + Mas. *Cine + Mas / San Francisco Latino Film Festival (Website)*. Cine + Mas. Web. <www.sflatinofilmfestival.com>.
- "Cine+Mas Organizing Committee." *Cine + Mas San Francisco*, 2018. Web. 3 Oct. 2018. <<http://www.sflatinofilmfestival.org/about/organizing-committee/>>.
- ["Cine+Mas SF / San Francisco Latino Film Festival: Community."] *Cine+Mas SF / San Francisco Latino Film Festival*, 2018. Web. 3 Oct. 2018. <www.facebook.com/latinofilmfestival>.
- Cinema Tropical*. Website. 12 Mar. 2018. <www.cinematropical.com>.
- Cinequest*. Website. 11 Mar. 2018. <<https://cinequest.org>>.
- CineSol*. Website. *CineSol Film Festival*. Web. 11 Mar. 2018. <cinesol.com>.
- Cisneros, Henry. "[Endorsal: CineFestival 1981]." *CineFestival 1981*, [7].
- Clarke, Terence. "Reel Life: Kahloifornia Dreamin': The next picture show: The latest word on Latin movies." *SFGate*: Internet. Web. 10 Mar. 2016. <<http://www.sfgate.com/opinion/article/REEL-LIFE-Kahloifornia-Dreamin-The-next-2764569.php>>.
- CLFF 1990 Catalog*. *The 6th Chicago Latino Film Festival*. 09/29-10/7, 1990. Chicago, IL, 1990.
- CNCS: *Who We Are*. *AmeriCorps & Senior Corps*. 2018. Web. 5 Oct. 2018. <<http://www.national-service.gov/about/who-we-are>>.
- Cohn, D'Vera. "Census History: Counting Hispanics." <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org>, 10 Mar. 2010. Web. 9 Oct. 2018. <<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2010/03/03/census-history-counting-hispanics-2/>>.
- Cohen, Lizabeth. "Citizens and Consumers in the United States in the Century of Mass Consumption." *The Politics of Consumption*. Eds. Martin Daunton, Matthew Hilton. Oxford, U.K., New York, NY: Berg, 2001. 203–21.
- "Collaborative Research Centre (SFB) 584: The Political as Communicative Space in History." 2000-2012. *Bielefeld University*. Web. 14 Oct. 2018. <[https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/\(en\)/geschichte/forschung/sfb584/](https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/(en)/geschichte/forschung/sfb584/)>.
- Collins, Glenn. "American Playhouse Is Moving Into Film." *The New York Times*, 29 Mar. 1994. Web. 26 Sep. 2017. <<http://www.nytimes.com/1994/03/29/movies/american-playhouse-is-moving-into-film.html?mcubz=3>>.
- "CPB Selects Organization headed by Actor Edward James Olmos to Heighten Latino Presence in Public TV Programming Nationwide (no longer available online)." 28 Sep. 1999. Web. 25 Aug. 2014. <<http://www.cpb.org/pressroom/release.php?prn=148>>.
- "CSRC: Public Health: Completed Projects." chicano.ucla.edu. (Chicano Studies Research Center, UCLA.) Web. 23 Sep. 2018. <<http://www.chicano.ucla.edu/research/public-health>>.
- Daunton, Martin, and Matthew Hilton, eds. *The Politics of Consumption*. Oxford, U.K., New York, NY: Berg, 2001.
- Dávila, Arlene M. *Latinos, Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001.
- Dávila, Arlene M. *Latino Spin: Public Image and the Whitewashing of Race*. New York, New York: New York University Press, 2008.
- Davila, Christine (Personal Blog). "The Drive." 24 Jul. 2012. Web. 21 Aug. 2018. <<https://chicanafromchicago.com/2012/07/24/laliff-the-drive/>>
- Davila, Christine (Personal Blog). "Interview with Alex Rivera – to the Infinite Sleep Dealer and Beyond." 27 Feb. 2013. Web. 7 Sep. 2018. <<https://chicanafromchicago.com/tag/alex-rivera/>>.

References

- Davis, Mike. *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the U.S. City*. London, U.K., New York, New York: Verso, 2000.
- de la Mora, Sergio. "Forging a National and Popular Art Cinema in Mexico: *María Candelaria*." *[SDLFF 1998] Cine '98*. 39–40.
- de la Mora, Sergio. "Gabriel Figueroa: Master of Light." *¡Cine Latino 1997!* 5–8.
- de la Mora, Sergio, and Rosalía Ruíz Valencia. "Notes from the Festival Directors." *¡Cine Latino 1998!* 3.
- del Olmo, Frank. "Commentary: Latino 'Decade' Moves Into '90s." *latimes.com*, 14 Dec. 1989. Web. 9 Oct. 2018. <http://articles.latimes.com/1989-12-14/news/ti-1_1_latino-community>.
- Desta, Yohana. "Tribeca Film Festival, Forged in 9/11's Wake, Moves Ahead After De Niro Bomb Scare." *vanityfair.com*, 25 Oct. 2018. Web. 31 Oct. 2018. <<https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2018/10/robert-de-niro-bomb-scare-tribeca-film-festival>>.
- de Valck, Marijke. *Film Festivals: From European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: University of Amsterdam Press, 2007.
- de Valck, Marijke, and Skadi Loist. "Film Festival Studies: An Overview of a Burgeoning Field." *Film Festival Yearbook 1: The Festival Circuit*. Eds. Dina Iordanova, Ragan Rhyne. St. Andrews, Scotland: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2009. 179–215.
- "Diversity Initiative." *Sundance.org* (Sundance Institute), 2018. Web. 26 Sep. 2018. <www.sundance.org/initiatives/diversity>.
- "DREAM Act Definition." *www.usimmigration.org*. Web. 29 Sep. 2018. <<https://www.usimmigration.org/glossary/dream-act>>.
- Đurovičová, Nataša, and Kathleen Newman, eds. *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*. AFI Film Readers. New York, London: Routledge, 2010.
- "Ebony Goddess: Queen of Ilê Aiyê." (Third World Newsreel Catalog). *twon.org*. Web. 4 Oct. 2018. <<http://twon.org/catalog/pages/cpage.aspx?rec=1256&card=price>>.
- "EdwardJamesOlmos." *IMDB*. Web. 14 Oct. 2018. <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001579/?ref_=tt_cl_t13>.
- "Elizabeth Avellán: Biography." *IMDB*. Web. 14 Oct. 2018. <<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0042882/bio>>.
- "El Museo del Barrio: Timeline [1960s-2004]." *El Museo del Barrio*, 2014. Web. 16 Aug. 2018. <<http://www.elmuseo.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Timeline.pdf>>.
- "El Salvador." *Center of Justice and Accountability* (cja.org), 2016. Web. 4 Oct. 2018. <<https://cja.org/where-we-work/el-salvador/>>.
- Elton, Zoë. "Chapter 8: 24 Hours @ FPS: A Program Director's Day." *Coming Soon to a Festival Near You: Programming Film Festivals*. Ed. Jeffrey Ruoff, 2002. 117–34.
- Ennis, Sharon R. et al. "The Hispanic Population: 2010: 2010 Census Briefs." *www.census.gov*, 05/2010. Web. 3 Oct. 2018. <<https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-04.pdf>>.
- Ervin, Jordan. "Reinventing Downtown San Diego: A Spatial and Cultural Analysis of the Gaslamp Quarter." *Journal of San Diego History* 53.4 (2007): 188–217. Web. 25 Nov. 2014. <<https://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/v53-4/pdf/Reinventing.pdf>>.
- "Escuela de Cine Leonardo Perel." *www.todossantoscinefest.com*. Web. 26 Sep. 2018. <<http://www.todossantoscinefest.com/#!/escuela>>.
- Espinosa, Paul. "The Making of *The U.S.-Mexican War*." *¡Cine Latino 1998!* 40; 42; 44.

References

- Espinoza, Ernesto. "Cine Sin Fin: Festival showcases independent film & video projects in East LA." *LatinoL.A.* 2002. Web. 7 Mar. 2013. 31 Aug 2018. <<http://latinola.com/story.php?story=479>>.
- Falassi, Alessandro, ed. *Time Out Of Time: Essays on the Festival*. Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1987.
- Falassi, Alessandro. "Festival. Definition and Morphology." *Time Out Of Time: Essays on the Festival*. Ed. Alessandro Falassi. Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1987. 1–10.
- "Facts for Features: Hispanic Heritage Month 2014: Sept. 15–Oct." *Census.gov*. Web. 9 Jul. 2018. <<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2014/cb14-ff22.html>>.
- "Festival de Cine Todos Santos y Paz 2016: 03/15-21/2016." *IMCINE*, 12 Feb. 2016. Web. 26 Sep. 2018. <<https://www.imcine.gob.mx/cine-mexicano/festivales-mercados-y-premios-mexicanos/festivales-mexicanos/festival-de-cine-todos-santos-y-paz-2016>>.
- "Festival Memories." *SDLFF 2008*. 10.
- "FIAPF accredits the LA based AFI FEST in 2006." *Filmfestivals*, 9 Jan. 2006. Web. 18 Sep. 2018. <https://www.filmfestivals.com/blog/editor/fiapf_accredits_the_la_based_afi_fest_in_2006>.
- FilmFest D.C.: Washington D.C. International Film Festival*. Website. 11 Mar 2018. <filmfestdc.org>.
- Fischer, Alex. *Sustainable Projections: Concepts in Film Festival Management*. St. Andrews, Scotland: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2013.
- Fiske, John. *Television Culture*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2005 (1978).
- Fleming, Mike, JR. "Oscar Nominated For Colombian Pic Serpent, Ciro Guerra Makes First Hollywood Deal To Direct *The Detainee*." 22 Feb. 2016. Web. 13 Sep. 2018. <<https://deadline.com/2016/02/ciro-guerra-oscar-nominated-the-serpent-first-hollywood-deal-the-detainee-1201707133/>>.
- Flores, Abe. "Promise, Pitfalls and the Boyle Heights Arts District." *KCET*, 17 Sep. 2012. Web. 22 Sep. 2018. <<https://www.kcet.org/shows/artbound/promise-pitfalls-and-the-boyle-heights-arts-district>>.
- Flores, Juan. "Latino Studies: New Contexts, New Concepts." *Critical Latin American and Latino Studies*. Ed. Juan Poblete. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. 191–205.
- Flores, William V. "New Citizens, New Rights: Undocumented Immigrants and Latino Cultural Citizenship." *Latin American Perspectives* 30.2 (2003): 87–100.
- Flores, William V., and Rina Benmayor, eds. *Latino Cultural Citizenship: Claiming Identity, Space, and Rights*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1997.
- Follows, Stephen. "How many film festivals are there in the world?" *StephenFollows (Blog)*, 19 Aug. 2013. Web. 16 Sep. 2018. <<https://stephenfollows.com/many-film-festivals-are-in-the-world/>>.
- Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces." *Diacritics* 16.1 1986 (Summer): 22–27.
- Fox, Claire F. *The Fence and the River: Culture and Politics at the U.S.-Mexico Border*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.
- Fox, David J. "Valdez's 'Frida' on Hold: Criticism from Latino Community Causes the Writer-director to Halt the Project." *Los Angeles Times*. Web. 10 Oct. 2018. <http://articles.latimes.com/1992-08-18/entertainment/ca-5985_1_luis-valdez>.
- Frameline*, 2018. Website. 31 Oct. 2018. <<https://www.frameline.org/>>.
- "Free AIDS Series / Serie gratuita sobre el SIDA." *CLFF 1990 Catalog*. Chicago, IL, 1990. [62-63].
- Fregoso, Rosa Linda. "Excerpt from *The Bronze Screen*." *CineFestival 1993*. 32-33.
- Fregoso, Rosa Linda. *The Bronze Screen: Chicana and Chicano Film Culture*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1994 (1993).

References

- Fregoso, Rosa Linda. "Interview with Lourdes Portillo (1998)." *Lourdes Portillo: The Devil Never Sleeps and Other films*. Ed. Rosa Linda Fregoso. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001. 27–39.
- Fregoso, Rosa Linda, ed. *Lourdes Portillo: The Devil Never Sleeps and Other films*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001.
- Fregoso, Rosa Linda. *MeXicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities on the Borderlands*. Berkeley, CA, Los Angeles, CA, London, United Kingdom: University of California Press, 2003.
- "Frida Kahlo: Making Her Self Up" (Exhibition, 06/16-11/04, 2018). *The Victoria and Albert Museum*, 2018. Web. 13 Oct. 2018. <<https://www.vam.ac.uk/>>.
- Fröhlich, Gerhard, and Boike Rehbein, eds. *Bourdieu Handbuch: Leben - Werk - Wirkung*. E-Book. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2009.
- "From Here, From This Side: A Film by Gloria Ribe." *Women Make Movies* (Catalog), 2005. Web. 12 Dec. 2016. <<http://www.wmm.com/filmcatalog/pages/c95.shtml>>.
- Galería de la Raza* (Website). Web. 3 Mar. 2018. <<http://www.galeriadelaraza.org/>>.
- García, Fred. "Retrospective: Run, Chicano, Run... the Cinema of Efraín Gutiérrez." *¡Cine Latino 1998!* 24.
- García, Guy. "A Tale of Two Cities." *Premier*. April 1992: 38–42.
- García Canclini, Nestor. *Culturas Híbridas: Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad*. México D.F., Mexico: Grijalbo, 1990.
- García Canclini, Néstor, and Patricia Safa. *Tijuana: La casa de todo la gente*. México, D.F.: ENAH-UAM Programa de la gente, 1989.
- García Canclini, Néstor. "Cultural reconversion." *On Edge: The Crisis of Contemporary Latin American Culture*. Eds. George Yúdice, Jean Franco, Juan Flores. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992. 29–43.
- García Espinosa, Julio. "For an Imperfect Cinema" (1969; trans. Julianne Burton 1979). *www.ejumpcut.org*, 2005. Web. 20 May. 2013. <<http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC20folder/ImperfectCinema.html>>.
- Getino, Octavio, and Fernando Solanas. "Toward a Third Cinema." *Tricontinental*. 14 (October) (1969): 107–32.
- Getino, Octavio. "The Hour of the Furnaces: Thirty Years Later." *¡Cine Latino 1998!* 34; 36; 38.
- Gloria* (Patricia Boero, Mexico 1984). Uploaded by NFSA Films 07 Mar 2013. Web. 30 Oct. 2016. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDpMAdRICYc>>.
- "Gloria Award." *Chicago Latino Film Festival*, 2018. Web. 20 Aug. 2018. <<https://chicagolatinofilm-festival.org/programs/gloria-award/>>.
- Goldberg, David Theo. *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2009.
- Gold Coast Film Festival (GCFF)*. Website. <<https://www.gcfilmfestival.com>>.
- Goldman, Ilene. "Jewish Latino Film Showcase: A Celebration of Jewish Latino Filmmakers & /or Films About the Jewish Latino Experience!" *SDLFF 2011*. 17.
- Gómez-Quíñones, Juan. *Chicano Politics: Reality and Promise, 1940-1990*. 1st ed. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1990.
- Gómez-Peña, Guillermo, and Philip Brookman, eds. *Made in Aztlán*. San Diego, CA: Tolteca, 1986.
- Gonzales, Sylvia Alicia. "The Chicana Perspective: A Design for Self-Awareness." *The Chicanos: As We See Ourselves*. Ed. Arnulfo D. Trejo. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1979. 81–100.

References

- González, Ana Luisa. "Latina Filmmaker Patricia Cardoso Was Almost Hired to Direct a Feature 7 Times." *LA Weekly*, 20 Oct. 2015. Web. 9 Sep. 2018. <<http://www.laweekly.com/arts/latina-filmmaker-patricia-cardoso-was-almost-hired-to-direct-a-feature-7-times-6187905>>.
- González, Rita. "Experimental Texts: Other Authors, Other Forms." *¡Cine Latino 1997!* 25–26.
- González, Rita, Jesse Lerner, and Isabelle Marmasse. *Mexperimental Cinema*. Culver City, CA: Smart Art Press, 1998.
- Graça Lima, José Alfredo. "Cinema Brasileiro: A Celebration of Recent Brazilian Cinema." *SDLFF 2011*. 27.
- "Gracias por su apoyo..." *¡Cine Latino 1994!* 10.
- Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center San Antonio (Website). *Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center San Antonio*. Web. <www.guadalupeculturalarts.org>.
- Guevara, Alfredo. "Discurso de clausura: Palabras de clausura pronunciadas por el companero Alfredo Guevara, presidente del festival." *Cine Cubano*. 97 (1980): 9.
- "Guest Director: Luis Mandoki." *SDLFF 2005*. 11.
- "Guillermo Navarro." *IMDB*. Web. 21 Aug. 2018. <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0622897/?ref_=nv_sr_1>.
- Guzman López, Adolfo. "Interview with Jorge Cervera Jr." [*SDLFF 1998*] *Cine '98*. 35.
- Hall, Stuart. "Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?" *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Eds. Stuart Hall, Paul Du Gay. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996. 1–17.
- Hall, Stuart, and Paul Du Gay, eds. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996.
- Hall, Stuart, ed. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: SAGE, 2001, 1997.
- Hall, Stuart. "The Spectacle of the 'Other'." *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Ed. Stuart Hall. London: SAGE, 2001, 1997. 223–90.
- Halter, Marilyn. *Shopping For Identity: The Marketing of Ethnicity*. New York, NY: Schocken, 2000.
- Hamill, Pete. "Soul on 'Vice': As Lieutenant Castillo, Edward James Olmos is the moral center for Crockett and Tubbs." *New York Magazine*. 29 Sep. 1986. 52–54.
- Haney-López, Ian. *Racism on Trial: The Chicano Fight for Justice*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, U.K.: Belknap, 2004.
- Harbord, Janet. *Film Cultures*. London: SAGE, 2002.
- Harbord, Janet. "Film Festivals-Time-Event." *Film Festival Yearbook 1: The Festival Circuit*. Eds. Dina Iordanova, Ragan Rhyne. St. Andrews, Scotland: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2009. 40–46.
- Hayes-Bautista, David E. *La Nueva California: Latinos in the Golden State*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004.
- Higgins, Charlotte. "Lars von Trier provokes Cannes with 'I'm a Nazi' comments." *The Guardian*, 18 Sep. 2011. Web. 02 Sep 2018. <<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2011/may/18/lars-von-trier-cannes-2011-nazi-comments>>.
- Highsted, Tim. "London and San Francisco Film Festival: How to make a Festival a 'Festival' rather than just a Series of Screenings." *Creating Film Festivals: Everything You Wanted to Know but Didn't Know Who to Ask*. Ed. Lauri Rose Tanner. Oakland, CA: Lauri Rose Tanner, 2009. 37–50.
- "Hispanic Heritage Month." *U.S. Census Bureau*, 2017. Web. 6 Oct. 2017. <https://www.census.gov/eo/special_emphasis_programs/hispanic_heritage.html (discontinued as of 10/2018)>.

References

- “Hispanic Population and Origin in Select U.S. Metropolitan Areas, 2014.” *Pew Research Center*, 06 Sep. 2016. Web. 20 Aug. 2018. <<http://www.pewhispanic.org/interactives/hispanic-population-in-select-u-s-metropolitan-areas/>>.
- Hola Mexico* [Film Festival]. Website. 10 Oct. 2018. <<https://www.holamexicoff.com/>>.
- “Hollywood Connect.” *LALIFF 2009*. 14-15.
- hooks, bell. *feminist theory: from margin to center*. Brooklyn, New York: South End Press, 1984.
- hooks, bell. “Narratives of Struggle.” *Critical Fictions: The Politics of Imaginative Writing*. Ed. Philomena Mariani. Seattle, Washington: Bay Press, 1991. 53–61.
- Hukill, Traci. “The Grips of McGrath: In 1942, Alice McGrath embarked on a path of activism that hasn't reach its end yet.” *Metro Santa Cruz*, 10 Oct. 1996. Web. 27 Aug. 2018. <<http://www.metroactive.com/papers/cruz/10.10.96/mcgrath-9641.html>>.
- Iglesias, Norma, and Rosa Linda Fregoso, eds. *Miradas de Mujer: Encuentro de Cineastas y Videoastas Mexicanas y Chicanas*. Tijuana, B.C., Mexico, Davis, CA: Colegio de la Frontera-Norte (COLEF); Chicana-Latina Research Center at UC Davis (CLRC), 1998.
- ILFF 1997 Catalog (First Annual Latino Film Festival of Marin)*. San Rafael, CA. 7-9 Nov. 1997. [ILFF 1997 Steering Committee.] “Mission Statement.” *ILFF 1997*, 2.
- ILFF 2002 Catalog (6th Annual Latino Film Festival San Francisco Bay Area)*. 1-21 Nov. 2002.
- ILFF 2003 Catalog (7th International Latino Film Festival San Francisco Bay Area)*. San Rafael, CA, 6-16 Nov. 2003.
- ILFF 2006 Catalog (International Latino Film Festival San Francisco Bay Area)*. San Rafael, CA, 3-19 Nov. 2006.
- ILFF 2007 Catalog (11th International Latino Film Festival San Francisco Bay Area)*. San Rafael, CA. 2-18 Nov. 2007.
- “ILFF 2008.” Web. www.latinofilmsociety.org. Page invalid since 2014.
- “In letter to Mexico, Trump Urges Quick NAFTA Renegotiation.” *CBS News*, 25 Jul. 2018. Web. 18 Sep. 2018. <<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/in-letter-to-mexico-trump-urges-quick-nafta-renegotiation/>>.
- “InterAmerican Research Group E Pluribus Unum? Ethnic Identities in Transnational Integration Processes in the Americas.” Bielefeld University / Center for Interdisciplinary Research-ZiF. www.uni-bielefeld.de. Web. 14 Oct. 2018. <[http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/\(cen%25252520en,en\)/ZiF/FG/2008Pluribus/](http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/(cen%25252520en,en)/ZiF/FG/2008Pluribus/)>.
- International Latino Cultural Center of Chicago. *ILCC: Who We Are: Our History. International Latino Cultural Center of Chicago*, 2018. Web. 20 Aug. 2018. <<http://latinoculturalcenter.org/about/>>.
- “IUC Interview: Alex Rivera, Director of Sleep Dealer.” Latino Film Festival at Indiana University Cinema, Bloomington, IN. Posted 30 Sep. 2012. Web. 9 Sep. 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dtbBG48m_Eo>.
- Iordanova, Dina. “Film Festivals and Dissent: Can Film Change the World?” *Film Festival Yearbook 4: Film Festivals and Activism*. Ed. Iordanova, Dina, and Leshu Torchin. St. Andrews, Scotland: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2012. 13–30.
- Iordanova, Dina, and Ragan Rhyne, eds. *Film Festival Yearbook 1: The Festival Circuit*. St. Andrews, Scotland: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2009.
- Iordanova, Dina and Ruby Cheung, ed. *Film Festival Yearbook 2: Film Festivals and Imagined Communities*. St. Andrews, Scotland: St Andrews Film Studies, 2010.

References

- Iordanova, Dina, and Leshu Torchin, ed. *Film Festival Yearbook 4: Film Festivals and Activism*. St. Andrews, Scotland: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2012.
- Jacobsen, Wolfgang. *50 Years Berlinale: Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin 1951-2000*. Berlin, Germany: Filmmuseum Berlin / Deutsche Kinemathek, 2000.
- Jacobus, Lee A., ed. *The Bedford Introduction to Drama Bedford/St. Martin's*. New York, NY: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2009.
- Jiménez, Lillian. "Moving from the Margin to the Center: Puerto Rican Cinema in New York." *The Ethnic Eye: Latino Media Arts*. Eds. Chon A. Noriega, Ana López. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1996. 22–37.
- "Joe Camereno." *IMDB*. Web. 23 Sep. 2018. <<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0131220/bio>>.
- Johansen, Jason. "Notes on Chicano Cinema." *Chicanos and Film: Representation and Resistance*. Ed. Chon A. Noriega. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001 (1979). 303–07.
- Johnson, Reed, and Julie Makinen. *Fundraising Shortfall Forces LA Latino International Film Festival Suspension: (Archived by NALIP; originally published by LA Times Article 07/09/2012)*. *www.nalip.org* (NALIP), 2014. Web. 14 Oct. 2018. <<https://www.nalip.org/announcement.php?id=242>>.
- Kaiser, Susana. "Susana Kaiser E-mail Correspondence." Message to Annette Rukwied. 3 Nov. 2012. E-Mail.
- Karp, Ivan and Steven D. Lavine, ed. *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Washington, D.C., London: Smithsonian Books, 1991.
- Keller, Craig. "Praising Pepe Vargas: Over the Past 20 Years, Pepe Vargas Has Single-Handedly Transformed the Chicago Latino Film Festival into the Biggest and Best of its Kind in the Nation." *Chicago Time Out*. Web. 12 May. 2010. <<http://chicago.timeout.com/articles/features/13109/praising-pepe-vargas>>.
- Keller, Gary D. *Hispanics and United States Film: An Overview and Handbook*. Tempe, Arizona: Bilingual Press / Editorial Bilingüe, 1994.
- Keller, Gary D., ed. *Chicano Cinema: Research, Reviews, Resources*. Tempe, Arizona: Bilingual Press / Editorial Bilingüe, 1993.
- Kelley, Seth. *Robert Rodriguez Recalls His Entree to Hollywood With Student Film 'El Mariachi'*. *Variety*, 31 Jul. 2015. Web. 9 Sep. 2018. <<https://variety.com/2015/film/features/robert-rodriguez-on-el-mariachi-1201553791/>>.
- Kendall, Marisa. "Income Inequality in the Bay Area is among Nation's Highest." *Mercury News*. 15 Feb. 2018. Web. 25 Jul. 2018. <<https://www.mercurynews.com/2018/02/15/income-inequality-in-the-bay-area-is-among-nations-highest/>>.
- Khurana, Mukul. "Change is in the Air at the San Diego Latino Film Festival 2015." *sandiegofreepress.org*. 19 Mar. 2015. Web. 18 Sep. 2018. <<https://sandiegofreepress.org/2015/03/change-is-in-the-air-at-the-san-diego-latino-film-festival-2015/>>.
- King, Geoff. *Indiewood, USA: Where Hollywood Meets Independent Cinema*. London, U.K.; New York, NY: Tauris, 2009.
- Kirschner, Luz Angélica, ed. *Expanding Latinidad: An Inter-American Perspective*. Trier, Germany / Tempe, Arizona: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier / Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingüe, 2012.
- Kirschner, Luz Angélica. "Expanding Latinidad: An Introduction." *Expanding Latinidad: An Inter-American Perspective*. Ed. Luz Angélica Kirschner. Trier / Tempe, Arizona: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier / Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingüe, 2012. 1–56.

References

- Knight, Christopher. *A Collective Effort: 'East of the River' in Santa Monica assembles privately held Chicano art, but it doesn't get past hurdles*. *Los Angeles Times*, 2000. Web. 11 Oct. 2018. <<http://articles.latimes.com/2000/sep/21/entertainment/ca-24268>>.
- Koehler, Robert. "Cinephilia and Film Festivals." *dekalog: On film festivals*. Ed. Richard Porton. London, New York: Wallflower, 2009. 81–97.
- Kotz, Liz, and Luz Castillo. "Note from the Directors." *Women of the Americas Film and Video Festival*. 1988, 2.
- "KQED: About." *KQED*, 2018. Web. 3 Oct. 2018. <<https://ww2.kqed.org/about/>>.
- "La Bamba." *IMDB*. Web. 21 Aug. 2018. <<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0093378/>>.
- "LA Film Festival: Venues and Parking." *Film Independent*, 2018. Web. 01 Sep 2018. <<https://www.film-independent.org/la-film-festival/venues-parking/>>.
- LALIFF 1997 Catalog (Edward James Olmos Presents: The First Annual Los Angeles International Latino Film Festival)*. 8-12 Oct. 1997.
- LALIFF 2009 Catalog (13th Annual Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival)*. 11-16 Oct. 2009.
- "LALIFF 2013" (Festival Events Calendar). Available as jpg. Originally published at www.latinofilm.org. Page no longer available.
- Lampel, Joseph, and Meyer, Alan D. et al. "Special Issue Call for Papers: Field Configuring Events as Structuring Mechanisms: How Conferences, Ceremonies and Trade Shows Constitute New Technologies, Industries and Markets." *Journal of Management Studies* 42.5 (2005): 1099–100.
- "LALIFF." Web. 11 Oct. 2018 <<https://latinofilm.org/>>. (New webpage, since 2018.)
- "LALIFF [Fanpage]: About," 2008. 14 Oct. 2018. <https://www.facebook.com/pg/laliff/about/?ref=page_internal_06/05/2018>.
- LALIFF 2018: About. *latinofilm.org* (LALIFF), 2018. Web. 14 Oct. 2108. <https://latinofilm.org/?page_id=2123>.
- "*La Ofrenda*." *CLFF 1990 Catalog*. Chicago, IL, 1990. [57].
- La Peña*. (Website.) 03 Mar. 2018. <<https://lapena.org>>.
- Latin American Cinemateca of Los Angeles* (Website). Web. 7 Mar. 2013. <<http://lacla.org/home/about-us/history/>>.
- "Latino Film Festivals around the United States." *El Boletín de Cine Acción* 3.6 September 1993, 1.
- "Latino International Film Institute and Festival." Web. <<http://latinofilm.org/>>. (Old webpage, overhauled with the reintroduction of LALIFF in 2018.)
- Latino Public Broadcasting. *Latino Public Broadcasting*, 2008. Web. 11 Oct. 2018. <<http://www.lpbp.org/>>.
- "Latino Public Broadcasting Announces Recipients of the 2017 Public Media Content Fund." *LpBp.org* (LPB), 27 Nov. 2017. Web. 28 Aug. 2018. <<http://lpbp.org/latino-public-broadcasting-announces-recipients-of-the-2017-public-media-content-fund/>>.
- Lauzen, Martha. "Cine Mujer." *SDLFF 2010*. 41.
- Leclerc, Gustavo, Raúl Villa, and Michael J. Dear, eds. *Urban Latino Cultures. La Vida Latina en L.A.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 1999.
- Lee, Martyn J. *Consumer Culture Reborn: The Cultural Politics of Consumption*. Abingdon, U.K. and New York, New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Levine, Sydney. "Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival." 20 Aug. 2010. Web. 21 Aug. 2018. <<http://www.indiewire.com/2010/08/los-angeles-latino-international-film-festival-236657/>>.

References

- Loeffler, Jill. *San Francisco Film Festivals 2016. SF Tourism Tips*, 2016. Web. 8 Aug. 2016. <www.sftourismtips.com/san-francisco-film-festivals.html>.
- Loist, Skadi, and Ger Zielinski. „On the Development of Queer Film Festivals and their Media Activism." *Film Festival Yearbook 4: Film Festivals and Activism*. Ed. Iordanova, Dina, and Leshu Torchin. St. Andrews, Scotland: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2012. 49-62.
- López, Gustavo. “Hispanics of Salvadoran Origin in the United States, 2013: Statistical Profile.” *Pew Research Center*, 15 Sep. 2015. 4 Oct. 2018. <<http://www.pewhispanic.org/2015/09/15/hispanics-of-salvadoran-origin-in-the-united-states-2013/>>.
- López, Josefina. *Hungry Woman in Paris*. New York, NY, Boston, MA: Grand Central, 2009.
- López, Josefina. *Real Women Have Curves & Other Plays*. Carlsbad, CA: WPR Publishing, 2011.
- Lorde, Audre. “The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House.” *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color*. Eds. Cherrie Moraga, Gloria E. Anzaldúa. New York, NY: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1983. 98–101.
- Lourdes Portillo (Website), 2018. Web. 13 Oct. 2018. <lourdesportillo.com>.
- “Lourdes Portillo: La Cineasta Inquisitiva.” *moma.org*, 22 Jun. 2018. Web. 22 Sep. 2017. <www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/1256>.
- “Lourdes Portillo.” *Sundance Institute* (sundance.org). Web. 14 Oct. 2018. <<http://history.sundance.org/people/30>>.
- Lovell, Glenn. “Hispanic Film's Brutality Stirs Praise, Outrage.” 29 Feb. 1992, 1+.
- [“Lupita Tovar Obituary.”] *Cine + Mas SF / San Francisco Latino Film Festival*, 13 Nov. 2016. Web. 17 Feb. 2017. <<https://www.facebook.com/latinofilmfestival>>.
- Marin, Cheech. “Bienvenidos from Cheech.” *ILFF 2002*, 2.
- Marks, Scott. “Latino Film Festival finds a New Home in Fashion Valley.” *San Diego Reader*, 11 Dec. 2014. Web. 18 Sep. 2018. <<https://www.sandiegoreader.com/news/2014/dec/11/screen-latino-film-festival-moves-fashion-valley/#>>.
- “Marta Rodríguez.” *Women Make Movies* (Catalog), 2005. Web. <<http://www.wmm.com/filmcatalog/makers/fm312.shtml>>.
- Martin, Michael T., ed. *New Latin American Cinema. Theories, Practices, and Transcontinental Articulations, Vol. I*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1997.
- Martin, Michael T., ed. *New Latin American Cinema. Theories, Practices, and Transcontinental Articulations, Vol. II*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1997.
- Massaro, Rachel. *2018 Silicon Valley Index*. San José, CA, 2018. Web. 02 Sep 2018. <<https://joint-venture.org/images/stories/pdf/index2018.pdf>>.
- Maxey, Warren Axa. *At Risk / En el peligro*, USA 1989.
- McBane, Barbara. “Pinning Down the Bad-Luck Butterfly: Photography and Identity in the Films of Lourdes Portillo.” *Lourdes Portillo: The Devil Never Sleeps and Other films*. Ed. Rosa Linda Fregoso. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001. 160–90.
- McCall, Leslie. “The Complexity of Intersectionality.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30.3 (2005): 1771–800.
- McHugh, Kathleen. “Crucero - the Border Is You.” [*SDLFF 1998*] *Cine '98*. 36.
- McKenna, Teresa. “Collecting against Forgetting: East of the River: Chicano Art Collectors Anonymous.” *Representing the Passions: Histories, Bodies, Visions*. Ed. Richard Evan Meyer. Los Angeles, CA: Getty Publications, 2003. 249–68.

References

- Medina, Jennifer. "Los Angeles Neighborhood Tries to Change, but Avoid the Pitfalls." *The New York Times* (Online), 17 Aug. 2013. Web. 2 Mar. 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/18/us/los-angeles-neighborhood-tries-to-change-but-avoid-the-pitfalls.html?_r=0>.
- Medina, Monica. "The Fire Fueling the Latino Film Festival: Ethan van Thillo Empowers a Community through Film." *San Diego Uptown News*. 28 Feb. 2014. Web. 17 Oct. 2018. <<http://sduptownnews.com/the-fire-fueling-the-latino-film-festival/>>.
- Medrano, Adán. "Bienvenida." *CineFestival 1977*, [7].
- Medrano, Adán. *Blog: Adán Medrano on Food and Culture: About the Author*, 2015. Web. 17 Aug. 2018. <<https://adanmedrano.com/cookbook-author-adan-medrano/>>.
- Mejias-Rentas, Antonio. "Latino film a hit, but other releases fade in U.S." *Variety*, 14 Aug. 2008. Web. 12 Feb. 2015. <<http://Variety/2008/film/news/la-misma-luna-box-office-sparkles-1117990578/>>.
- Mendiola, Jim, and Cruz Angeles, eds. *Latino Screenwriting Project*, 2018. Web. 17 Sep. 2018. <www.latinoscreenwritingproject.com>.
- Mendonça, Maria Luisa. "Brazilliance. Community video making: Brazilian popular movements tell their stories." *¡Cine Latino 1994!* 9.
- Mesa-Bains, Amalia. "Domesticana: The Sensibility of Chicana Rasquachismo." *Chicana Feminisms: A Critical Reader*. Eds. Gabriela F. Arredondo, et al. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003. 298–315.
- Meyer, Gary. "Interview (by Lauri Rose Tanner)." *Creating Film Festivals: Everything You Wanted to Know but Didn't Know Who to Ask*. Ed. Lauri Rose Tanner. Oakland, CA: Lauri Rose Tanner, 2009. 71–77.
- "Mexican Love Stories." *¡Cine Latino 1997!* 1997.
- Miami International Film Festival (MIFF)*. Webpage. Web. 11 Mar. 2018. <<https://2018.miamifilmfestival.com>>.
- Mignolo, Walter. *The Idea of Latin America*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005.
- Miguel Arteta*. *IMDB*. Web. 14 Oct. 2018. <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0037708/?ref_=fn_al_nm_1>.
- "Miguel Arteta's *Star Maps* Celebrates 20th Anniversary at Cine Arte Screening." *Latin Heat*, 17 Apr. 2017. Web. 7 Sep. 2018. <<http://www.latinheat.com/events/miguel-artetas-star-maps-celebrates-20th-anniversary-at-cine-arte-screening/>>.
- Miller, Toby. "National Cinema Abroad: The New International Division of Cultural Labor, from Production to Viewing." *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*. (AFI Film Readers.) Eds. Nataša Đurovičová, Kathleen Newman. New York, London: Routledge, 2010. 137–59.
- Miller, Toby and George Yúdice. *Cultural Policy*. London, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2002.
- Noriega, Chon A. *Shot in America: Television, the State, and the Rise of Chicano Cinema*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.
- Minh-ha, Trinh T. *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989.
- Mission Cultural Center for the Latino Arts (MCCLA)*. Web. 11 Oct. 2018. <www.missioncultural-center.org/>.
- Mojadad, Ilja. "Galería de la Raza Faces Imminent Eviction after Failed Negotiations: Supporters of the Nonprofit Latinx Gallery like Supervisor Hillary Ronen Are Campaigning for "Fair and Reasonable Lease" in Hopes that the Landlord Will Come Back to the Table." *SF Weekly*, 29 Oct. 2018. Web.

References

- 30 Oct. 2018. <<http://www.sfweekly.com/news/galeria-de-la-raza-faces-imminent-eviction-after-failed-negotiations/>>.
- Montgomery, David. "Alex Rivera's Lost Cult Hit Sleep Dealer about Immigration and Drones is Back." *Washington Post*, 14 Jul. 2014. Web. 8 Sep. 2018. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2014/07/07/alex-riveras-lost-cult-hit-sleep-dealer-about-immigration-and-drones-is-back/?utm_term=.8b2822fddf64>.
- Moraga, Cherrie, and Gloria E. Anzaldúa, eds. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color*. New York, NY: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1983.
- "More than USD 1.9 Million to Nonfiction Storytellers: Sundance Institute Announces Documentary Fund Grants Across Nonfiction Formats." *Sundance Institute*, 26 Sep. 2017. Web. 28 Aug. 2018. <<https://www.sundance.org/blogs/news/2017-documentary-fund-grantees-announced>>.
- Munoz, Lorena. "Perhaps, Finally, a Frida Kahlo Film." *Los Angeles Times*, 20 Aug. 2000. Web. 20 Sep. 2017. <<http://articles.latimes.com/2000/aug/30/entertainment/ca-12191/2>>.
- Nancy, Jean-Luc. *The Inoperative Community*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.
- Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Die undarstellbare Gemeinschaft*. Stuttgart: Edition Schwarz, 1988.
- Negrón-Muntaner, Frances. "In Praise of the Spitfire: Celebrating the Life and Career of Rita Moreno." *¡Cine Latino 1998!* 5-6; 8-9.
- Negrón-Muntaner, Frances. *Puerto Rican Jam*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- Negrón-Muntaner, Frances, and Chelsea Abbas. *The Latino Disconnect: Latinos in the Age of Media Mergers*. New York, NY, 2017. Web. 26 Aug. 2018. <http://media.wix.com/ugd/73fa65_76876cf755864193a610131c0954daa1.pdf>.
- Newark Black Film Festival/NBFF. 2018. Festival Website. 31 Oct. 2018. <<https://www.newarkmuseum.org/nbff>>.
- Newman, Kathleen. "Latino Sacrifice in the Discourse of Citizenship: Acting against the 'Mainstream,' 1985-88." *Chicanos and Film: Representation and Resistance*. Ed. Chon A. Noriega. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2001. 59-73.
- Newman, Kathleen, and B. Ruby Rich. "Interview with Lourdes Portillo (1990)." *Lourdes Portillo: The Devil Never Sleeps and Other films*. Ed. Rosa Linda Fregoso. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001. 48-74.
- "NHA History." *Neighborhood House Association (NHA)*, 2018. Web. 19 Aug. 2018. <<http://www.neighborhoodhouse.org/about-us/neighborhood-house-association-history/#sthash.10UYYL1W.dpbs>>.
- Nichols, Bill. *Introduction to Documentary*. Indiana University Press: Bloomington; Indianapolis, IN, 2001.
- Niños de la Memoria*. Web. 11 Nov. 2013. <www.ninosdelamemoria.com>.
- Noriega, Chon A. "This is not a Border." *Spectator* 13.1 (1992): 4-11.
- Noriega, Chon A. "Potential Citizens and Imagined Borders. Latino Media in the 1990s." *CineFestival 1993*. 34-35.
- Noriega, Chon A. "A Political Generation Goes to Film School." *[SDLFF 1998] Cine '98*. 32.
- Noriega, Chon A., ed. *The Future of Latino Independent Media: A NALIP Sourcebook*. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center (CSRC), 2000.

References

- Noriega, Chon A., ed. *Chicanos and Film: Representation and Resistance*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.
- Noriega, Chon A. *The Academy's Conundrum: Lupe Ontiveros*, 1 Mar. 2013. Web. 12 Apr. 2018. <https://www.huffingtonpost.com/chon-a-noriega/the-academys-conundrum-lu_b_2784802.html>.
- Noriega, Chon A., and Ana López, eds. *The Ethnic Eye: Latino Media Arts*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.
- Odenwald, Dan. *Extreme Audit Outcomes: 3 Guilty Pleas in Court*. *Current*, 16 Jan. 2013. Web. 06 Sep. 2018. <<https://current.org/wp-content/uploads/archive-site/cpb/cpb0301fraud.html>>.
- Ollman, Leah. *Celebrating Survival: For 25 years, San Diego's Centro Cultural de la Raza has honored the Chicano experience. Can it continue?* *Los Angeles Times*, 24 Sep. 1995. Web. 27 May 2015. <http://articles.latimes.com/1995-09-24/entertainment/ca-49340_1_san-diego-s-centro-cultural/3>.
- Olmos, Edward James. "Dear Friends." *LALIFF 1997*, 8.
- Olmos, Edward James. "A Letter from Edward James Olmos." *ILFF 1997*, 4.
- Ortiz Sinclair, Ángela María. "Kenneth Castillo: Absolutely Independent: *¡Se Fija!* has a private encounter with a busy and brilliant young writer/director/producer." *Se Fija*, 2013. Web. 22 Sep. 2018. <<http://www.sefijaonline.com/kenneth-castillo-absolutely-independent/>>.
- Ortiz Sinclair, Ángela María. "Personal Communication." Facebook Message to Annette Rukwied. 2 Feb. 2018.
- "Parking Tickets? Work Them Off at Cine Acción." *Cine Acción News* 9.3 (1992): 7.
- "Partnership for Growth." *U.S. Aid*, 2018. Web. 4 Oct. 2018. <<https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/fact-sheets/partnership-growth>>.
- "Past Festivals: 2013: USF Human Rights Film Festival." *University of San Francisco*, 2018. Web. 4 Oct. 2018. <<https://www.usfca.edu/arts-sciences/about/human-rights-film-festival/past-festivals>>.
- Pastor, Robert A., and Jorge Castañeda. *Limits to Friendship: United States and Mexico*. New York: Vintage, 1989.
- Payan, Victor. "Interview with Moctesuma Esparza." [*SDLFF 1998*] *Cine '98*. 18–19.
- Paz, Octavio. *The Labyrinth of Solitude*. New York, NY: Grove, 1961, 1950.
- Pedersen, Erik. "ALMA Awards Revived & Reimagined As Fuse Media Inks Media Partnership with UnidosUS." *Deadline Hollywood*, 27 Aug. 2018. Web. 18 Sep. 2018. <<https://deadline.com/2018/08/alma-awards-revived-reimagined-as-fuse-media-inks-media-partnership-with-unidosus-1202452786/>>.
- Peña Sarmiento, Sandra. "Pocha Manifesto # 1." *CineFestival 1993*. 36-37
- Peranson, Mark. "First You Get the Power, Then You Get the Money: Two Models of Film Festivals." *dekalog: On film festivals*. Ed. Richard Porton. London, New York: Wallflower, 2009. 23–37.
- Perel, Sylvia. "A Note from the Executive Director." *ILFF 1997*, 5.
- Perel, Sylvia. "Welcome to the 6th Annual Latino Film Festival - San Francisco Bay Area." *ILFF 2002*, 2.
- Perel, Sylvia, and Jonathan Perel. "Feliz Cumpleaños." *ILFF 2006*, 4.
- Perel, Sylvia. "Re: Request: Information and Contact re San Francisco Latino FF (for PhD Project)." Message to Annette Rukwied. 19 Apr. 2010. E-mail.
- Perren, Alisa. *Indie, Inc.: Miramax and the Transformation of Hollywood in the 1990s*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2012.
- Phelan, Shane. *Getting Specific: Postmodern Lesbian Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

References

- Pick, Zuzana. *The New Latin American Cinema: A Continental Project*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1992.
- Pisarz-Ramírez, Gabriele. *MexAmerica: Genealogien und Analysen postnationaler Diskurse in der kulturellen Produktion von Chicanos/as*. Heidelberg: Winter, 2005.
- Poblete, Juan, ed. *Critical Latin American and Latino Studies*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
- Ponce, Ron. "Latino Lens. Global Perspective." *¡Cine Latino! 2004*, 2.
- Portillo, Lourdes, and Ellen M. Harrington, eds. *From Latin America to Hollywood: Latino Film Culture in Los Angeles 1967-2017*. Beverly Hills, CA: Academy Imprints, 2017. E-Book. (Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA).
- Porton, Richard, ed. *dekalog: On Film Festivals*. London, New York: Wallflower, 2009.
- Porton, Richard. "Introduction: On Film festivals." *dekalog: On film festivals*. Ed. Richard Porton. London, New York: Wallflower, 2009. 1–11.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. "Arts of the Contact Zone." *Profession* (1991): 33–40.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1992.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. "'Yo Soy La Malinche': Chicana Writers and the Poetics of Ethnonationalism." *Callaloo* 16.4 (1993): 859–73.
- Providence Latin American Film Festival*. 2018. Web. 16 Mar. 2018. <<http://www.plaff.org>>.
- Puente, Henry. *The Promotion of U.S. Latino Film: Dissertation*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas, 2004.
- "Quick Facts: San Francisco vs. San José, CA, 2017." *U.S. Census Bureau*, 2018. Web. 3 Oct. 2018. <<https://quickfacts/fact/table/sanjosecitycalifornia,US/PST045217>>.
- Quiñones, Juan Gómez. *Chicano Politics: Reality and Promise, 1940-1990*. University of New Mexico Press: Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1990, 1992.
- Quintín (Antín, Eduardo). "The Festival Galaxy." *dekalog: On film festivals*. Ed. Richard Porton. London, New York: Wallflower, 2009. 38–52.
- Ramirez, Lu(cho). "Personal Communication." Facebook Message to Annette Rukwied. 11/14/16.
- Ramirez, John. [FB Posting, 02/26/2015.] *Facebook*, 26 Feb. 2015. Web. 21 Sep. 2018. <www.facebook.com/ReelRasquache>.
- Reft, Ryan. "The Shifting Cultures of Multiracial Boyle Heights." *kcet.org*, 9 Aug. 2013. Web. 22 Sep. 2018. <<https://www.kcet.org/history-society/the-shifting-cultures-of-multiracial-boyle-heights>>.
- Rehbein, Boike, and Gernot Saalman. "Kapital." *Bourdieu Handbuch: Leben - Werk - Wirkung*. E-Book. Eds. Gerhard Fröhlich, Boike Rehbein. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2009. 134–40.
- Richardson, John G., ed. *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1986.
- Rivera, Alex. "Why Cybraceros?" (Alex Rivera: Projects). *AlexRivera.com*, 2018. Web. 9 Sep. 2018. <<http://alexrivera.com/project/why-cybraceros/>>.
- Rivera, Tomás. ... *Y No Se Lo Tragó La Tierra / ... and the Earth Did Not Devour Him*. Trans. Evangelina Vigil-Piñón. Houston, Texas: Arte Público Press, 1987, 1971.
- Rodríguez, Clara R., ed. *Latin Looks: Images of Latinas and Latinos in the Media*. Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 1997.

References

- Rosaldo, Renato. *Cultural Citizenship Concept Paper*. Stanford University (MS, IUP Latino Studies Working Group), 1987.
- Rosaldo, Renato. *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1993.
- Rosaldo, Renato, ed. *Cultural Citizenship in Island Southeast Asia: Nation and Belonging in the Hinterlands*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003.
- Rosaldo, Renato, and William V. Flores. *Identity, Conflict, and Evolving Latino Communities: Cultural Citizenship in San Jose, California*. Washington, D.C., 2003.
- Rosaldo, Renato. "The Borders of Belonging: Nation and Belonging." *Cultural Citizenship in Island Southeast Asia: Nation and Belonging in the Hinterlands*. Ed. Renato Rosaldo. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003. 1–15.
- Rodriguez, Robert. *Rebel Without a Crew: Or How a 23-Year-Old Filmmaker With \$7,000 Became a Hollywood Player*: Plume, 1996.
- Rosen, David. "Crossover: Hispanic Specialty Films in the U.S. Movie Marketplace." *The Ethnic Eye: Latino Media Arts*. Eds. Chon A. Noriega, Ana López. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996. 241–60.
- Ross, Loretta. "Voices of Feminism Oral History Project: Graciela Sánchez." smith.edu (Smith College). 22 Feb. 2005. Web. 25 Aug. 2018. <<https://www.smith.edu/libraries/libs/ssc/vof/transcripts/Sanchez.pdf>>.
- Rowe, John Carlos, and Vivian Schelling. *Memory and Modernity: Popular Culture in Latin America*. London: Verso, 1991.
- RRAFF 2004 Catalog (*Luckman U.S. Latino Film Video Festival: Reel Rasquache*). 17-18 Apr. 2004.
- RRAFF 2005 Catalog (*Festival of the U.S. Latino Experience in Film and Art*). 29 Apr. – 1 May. 2005.
- RRAFF 2006 Catalog (*Raices. Reel Rasquache. Festival of the U.S. Latino Experience in Film and Art*). 5-7 May. 2005.
- RRAFF 2007 Catalog (*Reel Rasquache. Festival of the U.S. Latino Experience in Film and Art*). 18-20 May. 2007.
- RRAFF 2008 Catalog (*Historias. The 5th Annual Reel Rasquache: Festival of U.S. Latino Experience in Film and Art*). 30 May-1 Jun. 2008.
- RRAFF 2009 Catalog (*Reel Visions. 6th Annual Reel Rasquache. Festival of the U.S. Latino Experience in Film and Art*). 15-17 May. 2009.
- RRAFF 2010 Catalog (*Latino Next: 7th Reel Rasquache Art & Film Festival*). 4-6 Jun. 2010.
- RRAFF 2011 Catalog (*Harnessing the Vision. 8th Reel Rasquache Art and Film Festival*). 13-15 May. 2011.
- RRAFF 2012 Catalog (*Casa 0101 Presents: Home for the Future. 9th Reel Rasquache Art and Film Festival*). 18-20 May. 2012.
- [RRAFF 2013 Program and Awardees]: FB posting 05/13/2013. www.facebook.com/ReelRasquache, 13 May. 2013. Web. 23 Sep. 2018.
- [RRAFF 2014 Awardees]: FB Posting 04/26/2014. www.facebook.com/ReelRasquache, 26 Apr. 2014. Web. 23 Sep. 2018.
- [RRAFF 2014 Team & Awardees]: Photo: courtesy of D. Spain. www.facebook.com/ReelRasquache, 15 Dec. 2014. Web. 23 Sep. 2018.

References

- Rüling, Charles-Clemens. "Festivals as Field-Configuring Events: The Annecy International Animated Film Festival and Market." *Film Festival Yearbook 1: The Festival Circuit*. Eds. Dina Iordanova, Ragan Rhyne. St. Andrews, Scotland: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2009. 49–66.
- Ruoff, Jeffrey, ed. *Coming Soon to a Festival Near You: Programming Film Festivals*, 2002.
- Rukwied, Annette. "Audience Survey: RRAFF 2012." 99 Contestants. Conducted 18-20 May 2012. Los Angeles, CA, 2012.
- Rukwied, Annette. "Transnational Vistas: Filmmaker Yolanda Cruz (Oaxaca/Los Angeles) on Identity, Cultural Activism, and 2501 Migrants' Journey Through the Festival Circuit." 2013. Forthcoming Interview, ed. Josef Raab, [N.N.], Trier, Germany; Tempe, AZ: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier / Bilingual Press.
- "RMWFF-Rocky Mountain Women's Film Festival." 2018. *Rocky Mountain Women Film Institute*. 31 Oct. 2018. <<https://rmwfilmstitute.org/about-us>>.
- San Diego International Film Festival*. 2018. SDLFF Website. 17 Sep. 2018. <<https://sdfilmfest.com/>>.
- Saldívar, José David. *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997.
- Sánchez, George J. *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Sanchez, Leonel. "Centro Cultural de la Raza Turns 30, but Feud Taints Celebration." Repr. from: *San Diego Union Tribune* (Centrowatch), 28 May. 2000. Web. 27 May. 2015. <<http://www.flyingserpent.net/centrowatch/uniontribune.html>>.
- Sanmiguel, Dario. "Watcha Raza." *Cine Acción News* 9.3 (1992): 4.
- Sanmiguel, Dario. "Welcome to Cine Acción's Ninth Festival ¡Cine Latino!" *Cine Latino* 2001. 2. *Santa Barbara International Film Festival (SBIFF)*. Website. *Santa Barbara International Film Festival (SBIFF)*. Web. <sbiff.org>.
- Sarris, Andrew. *The American Cinema*. New York, NY: Dutton, 1968.
- Sarris, Andrew. "The Last Word on Cannes." *American Film* VII.7 1982 (May): 26; 29-30.
- Schneider, Ira, and Beryl Korot, eds. *Video Art: An Anthology*. New York, NY, London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976.
- [SDLFF 1998] *Cine '98. San Diego-Baja California Latino Film Festival. 03/03-07/1998*. San Diego, CA, 3 Mar. 1998.
- SDLFF 2005. *12th Annual San Diego Latino Film Festival. 03/10-20/2005: Presented by the Media Arts Center San Diego*. San Diego, CA. 2005.
- SDLFF 2008. *15th Anniversary Latino Film Festival. 03/06-16/2008: Presented by Media Arts Center San Diego*. San Diego, CA. 2008.
- SDLFF 2009. *16th Annual San Diego Latino Film Festival. 03/12-22/2009: Presented by Media Arts Center San Diego*. 2009.
- SDLFF 2010. *17th Annual San Diego Latino Film Festival. 03/11-21/2010: Presented by Media Arts Center San Diego*. San Diego. 2010.
- SDLFF 2011. *18th Annual San Diego Latino Film Festival. 03/10-20/2011: Presented by the Media Arts Center San Diego*. San Diego, CA. 2011.
- Serna, Laura Isabel. "Film Festivals: Puntos de Encuentro / Points of Encounter." *From Latin America to Hollywood: Latino Film Culture in Los Angeles 1967-2017*. E-Book. Eds. Lourdes Portillo,

References

- Ellen M. Harrington. Beverly Hills, CA: Academy Imprints, 2017. 110–25. E-Book. Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA.
- “sex, lies and videotape: Awards.” *IMDB*. Web. 16 Sep. 2018. <<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0098724/awards>>.
- SFLFF 2010. Screening Information: SF Latino Film Festival 2010*. (Fanfold.) 16-26 Sep. 2010. San Francisco-Berkeley-San José. Presented by Cine + Mas. San Francisco, CA, 2010.
- “SFLFF 2012. Basic Schedule.” Text file available through sflatinofilmfestival.org; no longer available online. San Francisco, CA, 20 Aug. 2012.
- “SFLFF 2014.” Text file available through sflatinofilmfestival.org; no longer available online. San Francisco, CA, 2014.
- Sharp, Richard. *Long Live Latino: ChicagoFilm.com talks with Pepe Vargas, Festival Director*. *ChicagoFilm.com*, 2003. Web. Online address no longer valid. <http://www.chicagofilm.com/chicago_original/chicago_latino/chicago_latino3.asp>.
- “*Shenandoah*. Documentary Screening & Conversation.” *Cine+Mas San Francisco*, 29 Apr. 2013. 3 Oct. 2018. <<http://www.sflatinofilmfestival.org/2013/04/shenandoah-documentary-screening-conversation-april-29/>>.
- Sherwood, Ben. “For Pete Wilson, his political ambition is never blind.” *Los Angeles Times*. 23 Jul. 1995.
- “Sleep Dealer.” *IMDB*. Web. 9 Sep. 2018. <<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0804529/>>.
- “Sleep Dealer (2008 Re-Release!): 08/01-07, 2014.” *Downtown Independent Theater*, 2014. Web. 9 Sep. 2018. <<http://www.downtownindependent.com/events/sleep-dealer-2008-re-release>>.
- Slide, Anthony. “Filmex.” *The New Historical Dictionary of the American Film Industry*. Abingdon, U.K. and New York, New York: Routledge, 2013. 72.
- Slide, Anthony. *The New Historical Dictionary of the American Film Industry*. Abingdon, U.K. and New York, NY: Routledge, 2013.
- “Smuggled: Awards.” *IMDB*. Web. 23 Sep. 2018. <<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2151811/mediaviewer/rm2690175488>>.
- Solnit, Rebecca, and Schwartzberg, Susan. *Hollow City: The Siege of San Francisco and the Crisis of American Urbanism*. London: Verso, 2002.
- South by Southwest Festival*. Web. 11 Mar. 2018. <<https://www.sxsw.com>>.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. “Criticism, feminism, and the Institution (Interview with Elizabeth Gross).” *Thesis Eleven*. 10 / 11 (1984/85): 175–87.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. ““Can the Subaltern Speak?”: Speculations on Widow Sacrifice.” *Wedge* 7.8 (1985): 120–30.
- “Sponsors.” *¡Cine Latino 1997!* 4.
- Stacey, Judith. *In the Name of the Family*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1996.
- “Stakes up at the Sundance Film Festival,” 1990. Web. 8 Feb. 2010. <<http://www.signonsandiego.com>>.⁵⁰⁰
- Stam, Robert. *Film Theory: An Introduction*. New York: Blackwell, 2000.
- Stavans, Ilan. *The Hispanic Condition: Reflections on Culture and Identity in America*. New York, London: Harper Perennial, 2001, 1995.

⁵⁰⁰ This source (San Diego Union-Tribune; sandiegouniontribune.com) was quoted in Perren 2012: 37 but could not be checked on as a result of its current lack of availability in most European countries for legal issues.

References

- Steinmetz, Willibald, et al. *Collaborative Research Centre (SFB) 584: The Political as Communicative Space in History: Research Programme*. Bielefeld, July 2008.
- Stillman, Patric. "Cine Gay." *SDLFF 2009*. 27.
- Sundance Institute. Web. 12 Oct. 2018. <www.sundance.org>.
- Tafolla, Carmen. *Sonnets and Salsa*. San Antonio, Texas: Wings Press, 2001.
- Tanner, Lauri Rose, ed. *Creating Film Festivals: Everything You Wanted to Know but Didn't Know Who to Ask*. Oakland, CA: Lauri Rose Tanner, 2009.
- "Tales of Masked Men." *IMDB*. Web. 3 Oct. 2018. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2405754/?ref_=nv_sr_1>.
- "Team: Dr. John Ramirez and the Reel Rasquache Art & Film Festival. *reelrasquache.org*, 2013. Web. 23 Sep. 2018. <<http://reelrasquache.org/about/>>.
- The Calling*. Web. 23 Sep. 2018. <<http://thecallingdocumentary.com/>>.
- "The Digital Consumer." *nielsen.com*, 2014 (February). Web. 17 Sep. 2018. <<https://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/corporate/us/en/reports-downloads/2014%20Reports/the-digital-consumer-report-feb-2014.pdf>>.
- "The leading presenters of Latin American cinema in the U.S." *Cine Tropical*. 2018. Web. 18 Sep. 2018. <<https://www.cinematropical.com/about>>.
- ["The time to build political power is NOW!"] *Cine + Mas SF / San Francisco Latino Film Festival*, 23 Oct. 2016, 10 p.m. 4 Oct 2018. <<https://www.facebook.com/latinofilmfestival/>>
- Thouard, Sylvie. "Performances of *The Devil Never Sleeps / El diablo nunca duerme*." *Lourdes Portillo: The Devil Never Sleeps and Other films*. Ed. Rosa Linda Fregoso. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2001. 119–43.
- "Tizuka Yamasaki." *IMDB*. Web. 13 Nov. 2016. <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0945592/?ref_=nmbio_bio_nm>.
- "Tizuka Yamasaki." *En.wikipedia.org*. 5 May 2018. Web. 06 Oct. 2018. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tizuka_Yamasaki>.
- Torchin, Leshu. "Networked for Advocacy: Film Festivals and Activism." *Film Festival Yearbook 4: Film Festivals and Activism*. Ed. Iordanova, Dina, and Leshu Torchin. St. Andrews, Scotland: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2012. 1–12.
- Trejo, Arnulfo D., ed. *The Chicanos: As We See Ourselves*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1979.
- "Tree of Califas, 2000." *Metro* (Los Angeles). Web. 22 Sep. 2018. <<https://www.metro.net/about/art/artworks/untitled-garcia/>>.
- Treviño, Jesús Salvador. *Eyewitness: A Filmmaker's Memoir of the Chicano Movement (Hispanic Civil Rights)*. Houston, Texas: Arte Público Press, 2001.
- Todos Santos Cinefest*. Website. 2018. <<http://www.todossantoscinefest.com/>>.
- Toushin, Abbi. "Oleander, Frida to open Mill Valley." *Variety (Online)*. Web. 4 Nov. 2014. <<http://variety.com/2002/film/news/oleander-frida-to-open-mill-valley-1117872941/>>.
- TRUST: Second Acts in Young Lives*. 2018. Web. 23 Sep. 2018. <<http://trustdocumentary.org/>>.
- Turan, Kenneth. "Sundance to Sarajevo: Film Festivals and the World They Made." (2002).
- Turner, Victor. *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Society*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1964.
- Valdez, Luis. *Early Works: Actos, Bernabé and Pensamiento Serpentino*. Houston, Texas: Arte Público Press, 1990.

References

- Valdez, Luis. "Zoot Suit." *The Bedford Introduction to Drama Bedford/St. Martin's*. Ed. Lee A. Jacobus. New York, NY: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2009. 1256–88. .
- Vargas, José (Pepe). "Dear Friends." *CLFF 1990 Catalog. The 6th Chicago Latino Film Festival*. 09/29-10/7, 1990. Chicago, IL, 1990. [3].
- Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF)*. Web. 12 Dec. 2015. <www.viff.org>.
- van Thillo, Ethan. "A Guide to Understanding Chicano Cinema and Organizing a Chicano Film Festival." Senior Thesis. UCSC, Latin American Studies. Santa Cruz, CA, 1992.
- van Thillo, Ethan. "[SDLFF 2010:] Bienvenidos." 3.
- van Thillo, Ethan. "[SDLFF 2011:] Bienvenidos." *SDLFF 2011*. 3.
- van Thillo, Ethan. "Welcome!" *[SDLFF 1998] Cine '98*. 3.
- van Thillo, Ethan. "Welcome to the 12th Annual San Diego Latino Film Festival." *SDLFF 2005*. 1.
- Varela, Jesse. "Luis Valdez - The Frida Fracaso." *Cine Acción News*. San Francisco, CA, 09/1992. 1–9.
- Varela, Willie. "Super 8 mm: Personal Filmmaking." *CineFestival 1981*, [7].
- Vargas, Andrew S. "Help Save Sundance Award Winner Sleep Dealer From Film Death." *Indiewire*, 12 May. 2014. Web. 7 Sep. 2018. <<https://www.indiewire.com/2014/05/latinobuzz-help-save-sundance-award-winner-sleep-dealer-from-film-death-168651/>>.
- Vargas, Andrew S. "5 Films That Prove El Santo Was the Patron Saint of Mexican B-Movies." *Remezcla*, 23 Sep. 2016. Web. 3 Oct. 2018. <<http://remezcla.com/lists/film/5-iconic-films-mexican-luchador-el-santo/>>.
- Victoria Theatre*. Web. 3 Mar. 2018. <<http://www.victoriatheatre.org>>.
- VideoFest (MCCLA VideoFest 2004-2010; Archive)*. 2018. Web. 4 Oct. 2018. <<http://videofest.blogspot.com/>>.
- Villa, Raúl Homero. *Barrio-Logos: Space and Place in Urban Chicano Literature and Culture*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2000.
- Villalobos, Edward A. "Grand Jury Discrimination and the Mexican Americans: (Comment)." *5 Loyola University of Los Angeles Law Review* 87 (1972): 109–10.
- Wiegand, Ingrid. "The Surreality of Videotape." *Video Art: An Anthology*. Eds. Ira Schneider, Beryl Korot. New York, NY, London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976. 280-82.
- Willman, Chris. "Chris Weitz: *A Better Life* Gardener Not So Different from My *Twilight* Vampires." *The Wrap*, 18 Nov. 2011. Web. 22 Sep. 2018. <[ps://www.thewrap.com/chris-weitz-explores-better-life-beyond-west-la-wrap-screening-32913/](http://www.thewrap.com/chris-weitz-explores-better-life-beyond-west-la-wrap-screening-32913/)>.
- Women of the Americas Film and Video Festival*. Presented by Cine Acción. San Francisco, Berkeley. 09/19-23/1988. (Festival Catalog.) San Francisco, CA 1988.
- Ybarra-Frausto, Tomás. "The Chicano Movement / The Movement of Chicano Art." *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Ed. Ivan and Steven D. Lavine Karp. Washington, D.C., London: Smithsonian Books, 1991. 128–50.
- Ybarra-Frausto, Tomás, and Michael J. Dear. "Tomás Ybarra-Frausto in Conversation with Michael Dear: *El movimiento: The Chicano Cultural Project Since the 1960s*." 23-34." *Urban Latino Cultures. La Vida Latina en L.A.* Eds. Gustavo Leclerc, Raúl Villa, Michael J. Dear. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 1999. 23–34.
- "Youth Visions." *SDLFF 2008*. 37.
- "[Yolanda Cruz:] Films." *Petate Productions*, 2018. Web. 14 Oct. 2018. <<http://www.petate.com/films/>>.

References

- Yúdice, George, Jean Franco, and Juan Flores, eds. *On Edge: The Crisis of Contemporary Latin American Culture*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.
- Yúdice, George. *The Expediency of Culture: Uses of Culture in the Global Era*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2004.
- “Zoot Suit.” *IMDB*. Web. <<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0083365/>>.
- Zimmerman, Patricia R. “Humanist and Poetic Activism: The Robert Flaherty Film Seminar in the 1950s.” *Film Festival Yearbook 4: Film Festivals and Activism*. Ed. Iordanova, Dina, and Leshu Torchin. St. Andrews, Scotland: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2012. 175–92.

Index: Selected associations, organizations, and institutions

AFI	American Film Institute
AFI Fest	American Film Institute Fest (organized by AFI and emerged from FILMEX. Los Angeles, CA)
AIAFF	Festival International du Film d'Animation d'Annecy (Annecy, France)
AIFF	American Indian Film Festival (San Francisco, CA)
All Roads	National Geographic All Roads Film Festival; focuses on Indigenous film worldwide (Washington, D.C.)
ALMA(s)	American Latino Media Arts Award(s); organized by NCLR; Fuse (since 2018)
aluCine	aluCine Latin and Media Arts Festival (Toronto, Ontario, Canada)
ATA	Artists Television Access (San Francisco, CA)
BAFICI	Buenos Aires Festival Internacional de Cine Independiente; Buenos Aires International Festival of Independent Cinema (Buenos Aires, Argentina)
Berlin	Int. Filmfestspiele Berlin (Berlinale); Berlin International Film Festival (Berlin)
BHLIFE	Boyle Heights Latina International Film Extravaganza (organized by CASA 0101; Los Angeles, CA)
BLFF	Boston Latino Film Festival
BIFF	Busan International Film Festival (Busan, Korea)
CAAMFest	Center for Asian American Film and Media Film Fest (San Francisco, CA)
Cannes	Festival de Cannes; Cannes Film Festival (Cannes, France)
CASA 0101	Casa 0101 Theatre (Los Angeles, California)
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System; media network
C-CAL	Comité de Cineastas de América Latina; Latin American Filmmakers Committee
CCC	Chicano Cinema Coalition (Los Angeles, CA)
Centro, El	Centro Cultural de la Raza (San Diego, CA)
Cenzotles, Los	Los Cenzotles Cultural Arts Academy, band / nonprofit / Latino/a community center (Sab Pablo, CA)
Chicago	Chicago International Film Festival (Chicago, IL)
CHIFF	Chicano International Film Festival; a.k.a. Cine Sin Fin (Los Angeles, CA)
Cine Acción	Film board; organizer of “Women of the Americas” and ¡Cine Latino! Festivals (San Francisco, CA)
Cine Estudiantil; Cine `98	Older designations (1994-97 and 1998, respectively) of SDLFF
CineFestival	San Antonio CineFestival (organized by GCAC; San Antonio, TX)
¡Cine Latino!	Film festival organized by Cine Acción (San Francisco-Bay Area, CA)
Cine + Mas	Film club (organizes SFLFF; San Francisco, CA)
Cinema Tropical	Film festival and media arts organization focusing on Latin American film (New York, NY)
CineQuest	Cinequest Film Festival (San José, CA)
Cine Sin Fin	Annual East L.A. Chicana/o Film Festival-Cine Sin Fin
CineSol	CineSol (Harlingen, TX)
CLAIFF	Cine Las Americas International Film Festival (Austin, TX)
CLFF	Chicago Latino Film Festival (organized by ILCC; Chicago, IL)
COLEF	Colegio de la Frontera Norte (Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico)
CPB	Corporation of Public Broadcasting
CSRC	Chicano Studies Research Center at UCLA
CSULA	California State University-Los Angeles
CSUN	California State University-Northridge

Index: Selected associations, organizations, and institutions

ELAFF	East Los Angeles Film Festival (student film festival organized by TELA SOFA)
ELC	El Teatro Campesino (San Juan Bautista, CA)
EZLN	Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional; Zapatista Army of National Liberation, based in the state of Chiapas, Mexico
FAF	Film Arts Foundation (San Francisco, CA)
FCTS-LP	Festival de Cine Todos Santos-La Paz (Todos Los Santos & La Paz, Baja California, Mexico)
FIAPF	Fédération Internationale des Associations de Producteurs de Films; International Federation of Film Producers Associations (Brussels, Belgium)
FICG	Festival Internacional de Cine en Guadalajara; Guadalajara International Film Festival
FICM	Festival Internacional de Cine en Morelia; Morelia International Film Festival
FICViña	Festival Internacional de Cine de Viña del Mar; Viña de Mar International Film Festival (Viña de Mar, Chile)
Fiesta DC	Latino Festival Washington, D.C. (multi-genre)
FilmFest DC	FilmFest (Washington, D.C.)
FILMEX	Los Angeles Film Exposition (forerunner of AFI Film Fest; Los Angeles, CA)
Flaherty Film Seminar	Organized by the eponymous non-profit media arts institution (multiple locations)
FNCL	Fundación del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano; Foundation of New Latin American Cinema
Frameline	LGBT Film Festival (San Francisco, CA)
Galería de la Raza	Galería de la Raza: Interdisciplinary Chicano/Latino Space for Arts, Thought and Activism (San Francisco, CA)
GCAC	Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center (San Antonio, TX; organizes CineFestival)
GCOFF	Gold Coast Film Festival (Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia)
GIFF	Festival Internacional de Cine Guanajuato; Guanajuato International Film Festival
Havana	Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano de La Habana; International Festival of New Latin American Cinema of Havana
Hola Mexico	Hola Mexico Film Festival. The largest Mexican Film Festival outside of Mexico (Los Angeles, CA &tc.)
HBO	Home Box Office; entertainment provider (streaming, video on demand, etc.)
ICAIC	Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos; Cuban Institute of Arts and Cinematographic Industries (organizes Havana)
ILCC	International Latino Center of Chicago (organizes CLFF)
ILFF	International Latino Film Festival San Francisco-Bay Area (organized by ILFS)
ILFS	International Latino Film Society (organized ILFF)
IMCINE	Instituto Mexicano de Cinematografía; Mexican Institute of Cinematography; part of the Mexican Federal Ministry of Culture (México D.F.)
ITVS	Independent Television Service (supports production and broadcast of documentaries on public television)
KCET	Public media network, Los Angeles
KQED	Public media network, Bay Area / Northern California
LACLA	Latin American Cinemateca of Los Angeles (organizes LACLA Student Film Festival)
LALIFF	Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival (organized by LIFI)
LC	Latino Consortium (1974-89; would-be precursor of NLCC)
LIFI	Latino International Film Institute (organizes LALIFF); since 2018: LFI
LPB (LpBp)	Latino Public Broadcasting (original name: Latino Public Broadcasting Project)
LULAC	League of United Latin American Citizens

Index: Selected associations, organizations, and institutions

MACLA	Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana (San José, CA)
MACSD	Media Arts Center San Diego (organizes SDLFF)
MALDEF	Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
Mar del Plata	Festival Internacional de Cine de Mar del Plata; Mar del Plata International Film Festival (Mar del Plata, Argentina)
MCCLA	Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts (San Francisco, CA)
MECha	Movimiento Estudiantil Chicax de Aztlán (student organization)
MIFF	Miami International Film Festival (Miami, FL)
Museo, El	El Museo del Barrio (New York, NY)
NALIP	National Association of Independent Latino Producers (Santa Monica, CA)
NBFF	Newark Black Film Festival (Newark, NJ)
NLMC	National Latino Media Coalition
NEA	National Endowment for the Arts
Netflix	Entertainment provider (streaming, video on demand, etc.)
NLCC	National Latino Communications Center
NCLR	National Council de la Raza; today known as UNIDOS-US
NHMC	National Hispanic Media Association
Nosotros	National Latino arts advocacy organization
NYILFF	New York International Latino Film Festival
NYFF	New York Film Festival
Peña, La	La Peña Cultural Center (Berkeley, CA)
PBS	Public Broadcasting Services
RRAFF	Reel Rasquache Arts and Film Festival (Los Angeles, CA)
SBIFF	Santa Barbara International Film Festival
SFBFF	San Francisco Black Film Festival
SDFF	San Diego International Film Festival
SDJFF	San Diego Jewish Film Festival
SDLFF	San Diego Latino Film Festival (organized by MCSO; San Diego, CA and other locations)
SDSU	San Diego State University
SFIFF	San Francisco International Film Festival (San Francisco, CA)
SFLFF	San Francisco Latino International Film Festival (organized by Cine + Mas; Bay Area)
SJFF	San Francisco Jewish Film Festival
SXSW	South by Southwest Festival; multi genre festival, including film (Austin, TX)
Stanford	Leland Stanford Junior University (Stanford, California)
Sundance	Sundance Film Festival (organized by Sundance Institute; Park City, UT and other venues)
Sundance Institute	Organizes Sundance; Park City, UT
TELA SOFA	The East Los Angeles Society of Film and Arts (organizes ELAF)
Telluride	Telluride Film Festival (Telluride, CO)
TIFF	Toronto International Film Festival (Toronto, ON, Canada)
UCLA	University of California-Los Angeles
UCSB	University of California-Santa Barbara
UCSD	University of California-San Diego
UCSC	University of California-Santa Cruz
USF	University of San Francisco

Index: Selected associations, organizations, and institutions

UNIDOS-US	Latino/a civil rights advocacy organization; formerly known as NCLR – National Council de la Raza
YIV	Youth in Video (ILFF showcase)
VIFF	Vancouver International Film Festival (Vancouver, BC, Canada)
Venice	Mostra internazionale d’arte cinematografica di Venezia; Venice International Film Festival
Women of the Americas	“Women of the Americas in Film and Video” (one-time festival event organized in 1988 by Cine Acción; San Francisco & Berkeley, CA)
YBCA	Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

Eigenständigkeitserklärung

Hiermit bestätige ich, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbständig verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Hilfsmittel benutzt habe. Die Stellen der Arbeit, die dem Wortlaut oder dem Sinn nach anderen Werken (dazu zählen auch Internetquellen) entnommen sind, wurden unter Angabe der Quelle kenntlich gemacht.

Mir ist bekannt, dass die Arbeit in digitalisierter Form daraufhin überprüft werden kann, ob unerlaubte Hilfsmittel verwendet wurden und ob es sich – insgesamt oder in Teilen – um ein Plagiat handelt. Zum Vergleich meiner Arbeit mit existierenden Quellen darf sie in eine Datenbank eingestellt werden und nach der Überprüfung zum Vergleich mit künftig eingehenden Arbeiten dort verbleiben. Weitere Vervielfältigungs- und Verwertungsrechte werden dadurch nicht eingeräumt.

Die Arbeit wurde weder einer anderen Prüfungsbehörde vorgelegt noch veröffentlicht.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Annette L. Rukwied". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and a decorative flourish at the end.

Annette L. Rukwied, M.A.

Bielefeld, 28.11.2018