

immigrants' rights focuses exclusively on the position of undocumented immigrants and provides an excellent opportunity to examine the increasing role of state-level government in the face of a settled jurisprudence that gives primacy to federal law and authority. While *Plyer v. Doe* is the most recognizable case in this group, undergraduate students will be particularly interested in *Martinez v. Regents of the University of California*, wherein the California Supreme Court upheld legislation conferring eligibility on undocumented students for in-state tuition at public colleges and universities. And two cases, one emanating from the U.S. Supreme Court and the other from a state appellate court, demonstrate opposing attitudes towards the rights of undocumented workers. Given the position of the current presidential administration and the make-up of the Supreme Court, it is a near certainty that those states adopting a more benevolent position towards undocumented residents will continue to push up against federal sovereignty and thus immigrant rights will remain a topic of immediate interest in history, politics, and policy courses for some time to come.

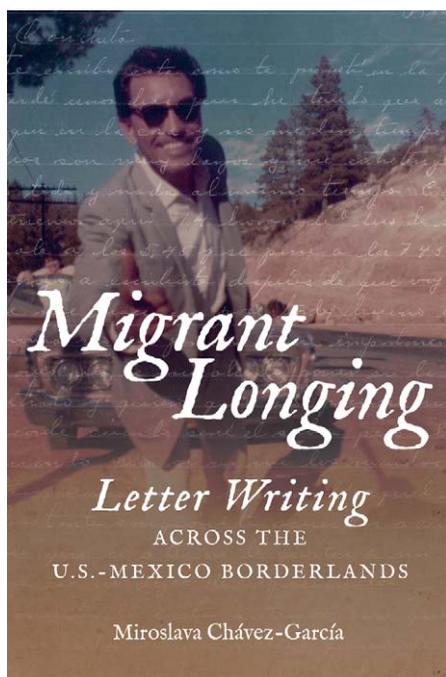
If this casebook follows the pattern of others, we can expect updated editions every few years as issues evolve and new cases are handed down from both federal and state courts. In this vein, I would urge Reich to expand both the contextual essays that begin each chapter and the discussion questions that follow with an eye towards growing the audience and making the casebook even more accessible to students of history, public policy, politics, and ethnic studies. The text is invaluable and should not go unnoticed by instructors in those fields.

Donna Scheule is an Adjunct Professor of Political Science at Cal Poly Pomona where she teaches courses in constitutional law, courts and judging, and gender and politics. She is currently writing a book about the life and career of Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

MIGRANT LONGING: *Letter Writing Across the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*. By Miroslava Chávez-García (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018, 278 pp., \$27.95 paper). Reviewed by Leisy J. Abrego.

Through the analysis of epistolary practices and relationships, *Migrant Longing* offers a uniquely intimate look into the lives and aspirations of early 1960s migrants and their families and friends in Mexico. Based on a unique data set consisting of over 300 letters in the author's and her relatives' personal archives, the book is both intriguing and revealing. In each chapter, Chávez-García takes readers through the highs and lows of relationships—between romantic partners, parents and adult children, and migrants and friends—to underscore that migration entails joy and anguish, satisfaction and regret, and loneliness and longing for home on both sides of the border, even when people relocate willingly and with the protection of legal status.

Methodologically, this is a pathbreaking book. Chávez-García notes that while she initiated the project mainly as a way to get to know her parents through their letters of courtship after both died during a tragic car accident when she was only twelve years old, she also thought frequently about her subjectivity as a researcher.



To her credit, she openly discusses the challenges of being at once the relative who wants to honor her loved ones' memories and the scholar who aims to contextualize these people's trajectories. Thoughtfully, she decided what to highlight "by weighing the available evidence against the larger impact of disclosing that information" (29). For example, she did not disclose damaging information unless she also had newspaper or other verifiable sources to confirm it. By openly and frequently grappling with her subjectivity, Chávez-García was able to simultaneously honor her family and achieve the "scholarly distance" (4) necessary to tell a broader story about 1960s Mexico and the gendered motivations and longings of rural migrants.

The letters are not the sole focus of analysis in the book. Indeed, the letters

best come to life when complemented with oral histories conducted with living letter writers and their friends, and within the in-depth context Chávez-García provides about the music, films, newspapers, material cultures, and government records of the time (192). I was particularly enthralled with the Introduction chapter titled "An Archive of Intimacy," as it covers much ground to set the stage for the necessary discussion about the author's subjectivity, but also provides a compelling history of Mexican politics and economy since the Mexican Revolution. Chávez-García details how the economic success of the "Mexican Miracle" era elided rural communities. To control the population and keep them from rebelling in times of deep poverty, the Mexican state, with funding from international investors, intentionally subsidized the film industry to create characters and story lines that made even rural and impoverished cinema-goers proud and docile Mexican patriots.

Because the book is written mostly in English while the letters are mostly written in Spanish—with English sprinkled in every now and then to show off migrants' new post-migration skills—language, too, is an important factor in the book. Though Chávez-García mentions the translations only briefly in a note before the main text, language is a central element relaying the humanity and agency of the letter writers. Interestingly, the author opts mostly to translate the letters. Many of the excerpts include a word or phrase in Spanish—sometimes without the English translation. As a Spanish speaker (from a different country and era), I loved learning the slang of people from Calvillo, Aguascalientes, Mexico in the 1960s and was intrigued by the fact that we used some (though not all) of the same slang in El Salvador. It made me wonder how much of the same cinema and music that Chávez-García highlights in the book also tied people together

throughout the region, even when they lived in rural areas. The letter writers' original words humanized them more fully, as they revealed more of their playfulness and creativity, even while relaying complex, sometimes challenging emotions.

Migrant Longing is at its best when the author weaves in information at the micro, intimate level with a meso-level analysis of rural Aguascalientes as well as with a macro national and international level of analysis of the social, political, economic, and legal gendered practices of 1960s Mexico. Those various levels of contexts facilitate an appreciation for the rural migrants' "audacity and agency as historical actors" (4). Chávez-García aims to do this in each chapter as she organizes the text based on epistolary relationships.

Chapter 1, "Oye Shelly: Migrant Longing, Courtship, and Gendered Identity," is based on analysis of 80 personal letters between the author's parents during their entire multi-year courtship. It tells the story from the perspective of José Chávez Esparza, the author's father (and the subject of the photograph on the book cover). The author provides the necessary racial, legal, political, and gendered context to understand why José had to migrate and why he felt such longing for María Concepción "Conchita" Alvarado—the author's mother and the central focus of Chapter 2, "Tu Peor es Nada: Gender, Courtship, and Marriage." This second chapter highlights the painful and labor-intensive ways that gender intersects with poverty in rural Aguascalientes in the 1960s. It provides the context to understand why young women at the time had every reason to protect themselves from heartbreak, even when the films they watched created new expectations for romantic love.

Chapter 3, "Contesta Pronto: Migration, Return Migration, and Paternal Authority," documents the gendered expectations and challenges of the patriarchy of the Chávez family (the author's paternal grandfather), José Chávez Torres. It offers unique insights into the lives of a former and aging migrant who used letters to try to instill filial responsibility into his adult migrant children. Chapter 4, "A Dios: Migration, Miscommunication, and Heartbreak," is based on the long-term but ultimately unsuccessful romantic long-distance relationship between Paco Chávez and Asunción "Chonita" Alvarado. It reveals the ways that letters were often insufficient in maintaining close ties between couples, particularly when faced with unrelenting small-town gossip. Based on analysis of letters sent to Paco Chávez (the author's uncle) from a number of male friends, Chapter 5, "A Toda Madre (ATM): Migrant Dreams and Nightmares in El Norte," captures the gendered heterosexual male expectations of migration as a process to achieve economic success and sexual adventures. Finally, the author concludes with a brief reflection titled "On the Significance of Letter Writing and Letters" that underscores the various forms of analysis and information made available through such missives.

Leisy J. Abrego is Associate Professor in Chicano Studies/Chicana at UCLA. Her research and teaching interests include Central American immigration, Latina/o families, and the production of "illegality" through U.S. immigration laws. Her first book is Sacrificing Families: Navigating Laws, Labor, and Love Across Borders (Stanford University Press, 2014).