

IMMIGRANT DEPORTABILITY AND EMOTIVE ARCHIVE CREATION:

The Emotional Honesty and Urgency of Mexican Immigrant Families

By Ana Elizabeth Rosas

ABSTRACT: Advocating the perspective of emotive history, this article looks at two examples of emotive archiving—the assembly of artifacts, photographs, oral interviews, and documents that record the feelings of Mexican immigrants as an inspiration for family members. The commitment and creativity of the archivist (usually a woman) is a feminist act of empowerment and an expression of love and honor to the subject of the archive, while the innermost feelings of the memorialized individual, often repressed from fear of apprehension and deportation, are expressed openly, forming a model for younger family members.

Keywords: emotive history; emotive archives; Latinx immigrant history; Mexican immigrant history

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In February 2019, twenty-six-year-old Daisy Bautista created an intergenerational and transnational emotive archive of her father, José Luís Bautista, and his emotional honesty and labor as an informed response to the U.S. government's treatment of Mexican immigrants and Mexican immigration in the United States.¹ The November 9, 2016, election of President Donald J. Trump in the U.S. and his administration's criminalization of undocumented immigrants, combined with the personal circumstances of Mexican immigrant families, have inspired their U.S. resident relatives to invest themselves emotionally in creating a record of their families' feelings and meaningful experiences—an emotive archive. Daisy is among the Mexican American family relatives who have created an emotive archive. Hers enables her son and extended immigrant family to derive a sense of empowerment and wisdom from this source of emotional family knowledge. After all, Daisy's archive encapsulates her father's emotional honesty in the meaningful revelation of his feelings concerning his deportability, belonging, and Mexican immigrant family life in Southern California.²

Emotive archive creation is an intergenerational and oftentimes feminist and transnational endeavor for Mexican immigrant women such as Daisy because it entails collaborating with generations of their families and initiating, managing, organizing, and bringing to completion an accessible collection of family artifacts, documents, and photographs to form a record of the family or a member of the family and the feelings they experienced, expressed, hid, inspired, documented, and/or conserved. Women's emotional boldness in creating and preserving these emotive archives in prominent places in their homes reflects a commitment to instilling the generative emotional honesty of their Mexican immigrant family relative(s) among younger family generations, most especially their children.³ By the term "emotional honesty" I mean the emotional investment of their Mexican immigrant relative(s) to remain true to their feelings when living their lives,

1. Daisy Bautista, interview with author, Los Angeles, California, February 20, 2019.
2. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Fiscal Year 2019 ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations Report. Department of Homeland Security, Washington, DC. Accessed January 10, 2020. <https://www.ice.gov/statistics>.
3. For the purpose of this journal article, the term "generative" is defined as having the power to inspire Mexican immigrant family relatives to feel and act as emotionally knowledgeable and empowered children, women, and men within and beyond U.S. society.

expressing their feelings, and sharing them with the people in their lives. Making a record of this emotional honesty as their Mexican immigrant relatives struggled to belong in Southern California resonates as a humane and empowering approach toward supporting their own children and their extended families. Daisy is confident that her emotive archive of her fifty-four-year-old father, José Luís, has the potential to fuel her son's determination to follow in his footsteps and belong in Southern California in emotionally honest and meaningful ways and without becoming undone by the ever-expanding reach of the U.S. government's deportation policies threatening undocumented Mexican immigrants, U.S. legal residents of Mexican descent, and/or U.S. citizen relatives.

Daisy's creation of her father's emotive archive was catalyzed by her concern for the emotional wellbeing of her eight-year-old son. Her fear for her son's future was intensified by news of President Trump publicly casting Mexican immigrants as foreign, unassimilable, and criminal people. Under his administration, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents arrested approximately 143,000 undocumented immigrants and deported approximately 267,000 undocumented immigrants in the fiscal year 2019 alone.⁴ She worried that the U.S. government's penchant for casting Mexican immigrants as deportable would devastate her Mexican American son and prevent him from developing an emotionally meaningful and empowering sense of belonging in Southern California. Archiving her father's emotional honesty resonated as a humane and productive project, because he had committed himself to raising her and her siblings, José and Vanessa, while pursuing his musical aspirations openly but guardedly. Throughout his late twentieth-century Mexican immigrant experience and his family's history, José Luís did not allow public attacks on Mexican immigration, public doubt and silence concerning his desire to be a Mexican immigrant male musical performer, or his vulnerability to deportation deter him from pursuing his musical creativity and talents. None of these obstacles diminished his determination to raise his children in full awareness of and respect for his emotional investment in musical performance and writing. José Luís struggled so that his children, like his audiences,

4. Stacy Torres, "Hiding from ICE, Hispanic Americans Are Strangers in Our Own Land," *Washington Post*, July 21, 2019.

could enjoy his live performances of Mexican *rancheras* (traditional Mexican mariachi songs) and *corridos* (popular narrative songs and poetry that center on socially relevant topics). The emotional honesty or courage with which José Luís lived, wrote and performed songs, connected with music audiences, and raised his family was intimate family knowledge that Daisy wanted her son to be able to access as he came of age in American society.⁵

In Daisy's estimation, providing her son with an emotive archive of his grandfather would introduce him to his emotional and creative potential as an intellectual and emotional departure from public dehumanization of Mexican immigrants and their families, as well as to fill in the silences framing such families' lives. These families are not automatically receptive or encouraged to archive their immigrant relatives' feelings or emotional labor, most especially that of their male relatives, out of fear of exposing them to deportation or of invading their privacy because Mexican cultural traditions expect men to keep their emotions to themselves and, to some extent, undervalue artistic talents. In prioritizing the archiving of her father's feelings and artistry, Daisy was determined that her son not underestimate the weight and value of Mexican immigrant men's emotions and their expression. Providing an emotive archive was her way of parenting her son, teaching him to recognize and learn emotionally restorative dimensions of their family's immigration history.

Reflecting upon my previous research on the revealing emotional labor undertaken by Mexican immigrant children and women shouldering the emotional weight of the Bracero Program's separation of their Mexican immigrant families across the U.S.-Mexico border in the mid-twentieth century,⁶ in this journal article I focus on two examples from the thirty oral history interviews I have conducted with Mexican immigrant families involved in archive creation in Southern California: the work of Daisy Bautista and Mariana Ramirez Medina.⁷ Like the earlier Mexican immigrant children and women who seized upon undervalued family letters, portraits, and artifacts to convey invaluable emotional knowledge to their absent

5. Daisy Bautista, interview with author, Los Angeles, California, February 20, 2019.

6. Ana Elizabeth Rosas, *Abrazando El Espíritu: Bracero Families Confront the U.S.-Mexico Border* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

7. Mariana Ramirez Medina, interview with author, Lakewood, California, July 17, 2019.

bracero relatives confronting the Bracero Program's conditions and terms, Daisy and Mariana's creation of emotive archives reveals the depth of immigrant families' meaningful and robust knowledge production and dissemination as an intellectual, intergenerational, transnational, humane, and resourceful response to the exigencies of their times. I was drawn to the feminist and intergenerationally inclusive qualities of Daisy and Mariana's approach, specifically that of not being discouraged by the feelings this endeavor evokes or by unreceptive family relatives when pursuing this rigorous emotional and intellectual labor via family conversations that centered on their immigrant families' recollections of their aspirations, sacrifices, and feelings. Daisy and Mariana exemplify the many women I have interviewed who have prioritized bringing to fruition emotive archives as an intergenerational and transnational family act that will protect the emotional wellbeing of their children and younger family generations and fuel the morale of their receptive and older immigrant family relatives. This is especially true among older immigrant male relatives. Women family relatives collaborating with these men to preserve and share their feelings, interests, and talents beyond the scope of their athletic, financial, and professional achievements elevated the value of an emotive archive about their feelings and for the sake of future generations of their families. Participating in emotive archive creation moved them to appreciate this archive as an opportunity to resist the public underestimation and invisibility of their personally meaningful decisions, moments, and talents and to assert the value of learning from them and their feelings. Daisy was among the women who explained that their Mexican immigrant relatives' emotional investment was decisive to making their archival creation possible.

As a Mexican American daughter, Daisy's Mexican immigrant father's receptiveness to her archival project paved the way for her to create a collection that captures his emotional honesty as he navigated his deportability, musical creativity and performances, and fatherhood. As a U.S. legal resident, Mariana's extended family's contributions made viable her creation of an emotive archive that enabled her to mourn the loss and to assess the intergenerational impact of her beloved sister's transnational emotional honesty and labor. Both women's relatives welcomed their emotive archive creation as a generative approach to belonging and coming of age in

Southern California despite U.S. officials' inhumane attitude towards Mexican immigrants, immigration, and immigration history.

Daisy Bautista and Mariana Ramirez Medina are two examples of Mexican American and Mexican immigrant women with the legal right to live, labor, and raise families in the United States while their family ties stretch across the U.S.-Mexico border. They are investing in emotive archive creation in Southern California as an emotionally daring response to current immigration policies and practices. These women do not underestimate the intellectual and emotional toll on their families of the U.S. government's patterns of detecting, detaining, and deporting Mexican immigrant children, women, and men in publicly inhumane ways. Instead, they are taking the lead in acknowledging the generative potential of archiving the feelings of family members' immigrant experience, deportability, and family history. In doing so, women are being true to their feminist commitment to act at their discretion, to collect, archive, and maintain archives comprised of intimate and intergenerational family knowledge as a valuable resource for future generations of their families to access and learn from as they come of age in U.S. society and/or stretched across the U.S-Mexico border. I also argue that even as Mexican American and Mexican immigrant women are creating archives out of their concern for their families' emotional well-being, they are able to do so in large part because of the willingness of their immigrant relatives to open up with honesty about their aspirations, fears, hopes, and disappointments, and to recognize the value of doing so as a means from which others can learn.

EMOTIVE HISTORY CONTEXT

In our contemporary moment, members of Mexican immigrant families with and without U.S. citizenship or legal immigration status oppose the U.S. government's public criminalization and mistreatment of Mexican immigrants. They consider it an inhumane move against all immigrants and against immigrant family life in the United States. For many Mexican immigrant families feelings of anxiety and opposition are not new. Ana Raquel Minian and Abigail Rosas's scholarship on late twentieth-century Mexican immigration and settlement demonstrate that during the 1970s and 1980s, Mexican immigrant men, and eventually women, were forced by economic and

personal hardships in Mexico to leave their hometowns and settle in U.S. cities such as Los Angeles as undocumented immigrants.⁸ According to Minian, “from 1970 to 1976, unemployment rose and consumer prices doubled in the Mexican states of Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán, and Zacatecas, making it hard for many people to afford basic goods.”⁹ In the late 1980s, many of these Mexican immigrant families were able to legalize their U.S. immigration status via the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA). Nonetheless, for Mexican immigrant families ineligible to participate in IRCA between 1986 and 1993 and before the U.S. government’s participation in the North American Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico [NAFTA], the U.S. economy’s demand for exploitable undocumented Mexican immigrant laborers had not spared many undocumented immigrants of this generation from being violently and indefinitely detained and deported as criminals from within the United States. Hence, Mexican immigrant families with a diversity of immigration statuses throughout Southern California are creating emotive archives to resist the sustained historical erasure and emotional toll of being publicly treated as deportable immigrant people in the United States.

As a historian of the Mexican immigrant experience, I also understand these archival projects as a generative response to the everyday turmoil of U.S. border enforcement policies. Deborah Boehm and Kelly Lytle Hernandez’s in-depth consideration of the government’s criminalization of Mexican immigrants demonstrates the forceful grip of deportation on the everyday lives of these immigrants’ families.¹⁰ These scholars insist that Mexican immigrant families, irrespective of whether they are legal or undocumented U.S. residents, are burdened with the fear of feeling deportable. According to Boehm, our current criminalization of deportable immigrants has resulted in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s “expedited removal that bypasses legal proceedings typically associated with

8. Ana Raquel Minian, *Undocumented Lives: The Untold Story of Mexican Migration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018); Abigail Rosas, *South Central Is Home: Race and the Power of Community Investment in Los Angeles* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019).

9. Minian, *Undocumented Lives*, 80–81.

10. Deborah A. Boehm, *Returned: Coming and Going in the Age of Deportation* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016); Kelly Lytle Hernandez, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771–1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

deportation, deportation from the country's interior or at the border, deportation after or without detention, returns labeled as 'voluntary,' and mass deportation" as commonly taking place today.¹¹ The careful consideration of the emotional honesty with which Mexican immigrant families face their fear concerning deportation and deportability in Southern California enriches these scholars' discussion of the bruising resonance of deportation and deportability among Mexican immigrant families. It fleshes out how Mexican immigrant families led by Mexican American and Mexican immigrant women have pursued intergenerational, transnational, and emotive archive creation to avoid becoming devastated emotionally by the U.S. government's policies of criminalization and removal of undocumented immigrants that potentially increase prejudice against all Mexican immigrant families and their relatives.

Identifying the emotional underpinnings of Mexican immigrant families' emotive archive creation in Southern California supports Natalia Molina and Patrisia Macías-Rojas's characterization of the transformative impact of U.S. immigration regimes on the public perception and self-identity of Mexican immigrants in the United States. Macías-Rojas specifically argues that the U.S. government, in pursuit of safety, security, and crime control in the United States, criminalizes undocumented Mexican immigrants.¹² She demonstrates that it stirs complex feelings of non-belonging among Mexican Americans who are citizens and legal U.S. permanent residents, with or without family ties to Mexican immigrants, on the basis of their appearance. She explains that Mexican immigrants with a diversity of U.S. immigration statuses do not find it "easy to name and confront shame, mistreatment, and fear produced by border policing activities."¹³ Immigrant families' determination to acknowledge the emotional gravity of being publicly cast as criminal and deportable immigrants captures their willingness to pursue creative possibilities in defense of their sense of belonging and invaluable family history.

11. *Ibid.*, 5.

12. Natalia Molina, *How Race Is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013); Patrisia Macías-Rojas, *From Deportation to Prison: The Politics of Immigration Enforcement in Post-Civil Rights America* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

13. Macías-Rojas, *From Deportation to Prison*, Kindle edition, locations: 3125–3127.

They gain a restorative sense of belonging by working together to create emotive archives.

An appreciation of the emotional honesty orienting Mexican immigrant families' emotive archive creation expands our understanding of the historical and intimate value of a diversity of family documents. These families' vision of using their collection of memories and artifacts to instill an emotionally empowering sense of belonging in succeeding generations, most especially in their children, based on the family documents that they have collected to share with them, points to the distinctly intimate qualities of this knowledge production. Mexican immigrant families exercise a strong curatorial hand in the creation of these emotive archives. They are carefully preparing their children emotionally to face what Leisy J. Abrego and Roberto G. Gonzalez describe as the uncertainty and vulnerability of living in the United States as members of publicly criminalized immigrant families.¹⁴ Mexican immigrant families are committed to creating and sharing these emotive archives with their children when they deem them ready to experience and learn from the emotional honesty of their Mexican immigrant family members.

Immigrant women's initiative in creating these emotive archives builds on Karen R. Roybal's argument that women of Mexican American and Mexican immigrant descent assert multiple subjectivities "to contribute to an ongoing archive" that enables them and their families to "(re)imagine the impacts" of social forces like the criminalization and deportability of Mexican immigration and Mexican immigrants in Southern California.¹⁵ As these women come of age or raise families of their own against the backdrop of the emotional turmoil of deportation and deportability, they exert what Lilia Soto conceptualizes as their "active imagination and self-active sense of agency" in support of their and their families' emotional well-being.¹⁶ Their U.S. citizenship and permanent U.S. resident status, coupled with their pursuit of sharing the emotional labor and

14. Leisy J. Abrego, *Sacrificing Families: Navigating Laws, Labor, and Love across Borders* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014); Roberto G. Gonzalez, *Lives in Limbo: Undocumented and Coming of Age in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015).

15. Karen R. Roybal, *Archives of Dispossession: Recovering the Testimonios of Mexican American Herederos, 1848–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 19.

16. Lilia Soto, *Girlhood on the Borderlands: Mexican Teens Caught in the Crossroads of Migration* (New York: New York University Press, 2018), Kindle Edition, Kindle Location: 203.

qualities of their archive creation with their families, makes them less fearful of undertaking this creation and preservation of emotive archives energetically and at their discretion, with the support of their Mexican immigrant families.

Influenced by the groundbreaking oral history scholarship of Vicki Ruiz and Emma Pérez, Alicia Schmidt Camacho, and Miroslava Chávez-García's feminist intergenerational and transnational inclusivity when historicizing the emotional range of Mexican immigrant families' struggles, this consideration of Mexican immigrant family emotive archive creation builds on their intellectual investment in recovering the humanity at the heart of Mexican immigrant family histories.¹⁷ My thirty oral histories with Mexican American and Mexican immigrant women who are selectively archiving the emotional inspiration, labor, and depth of their families' immigrant history advance our understanding of the empowering qualities of emotive archive creation as a simultaneously intimate and gendered investment for these women and their immigrant families.¹⁸ They enable us to understand how the interviewing and collection of artifacts can liberate immigrant men from repressing their feelings, express their women relatives' love for them, and ensure their family understands them as people with revealing feelings. Women leading and implementing such archive creation derive empowerment from the creative act and from possessing the collections as a means of sharing emotional wisdom with their Mexican immigrant families

Finally, investigating emotional honesty as a historical pathway into Mexican immigrant families' archive creation has also been inspired by Gloria Anzaldúa's perspective on the struggle to belong in the Borderlands/La Frontera. She urges scholars to consider that this struggle

17. Vicki L. Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930–1950* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992); Emma Pérez, *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); Alicia Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries: Latino Cultural Politics in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (New York: New York University Press, 2008); Miroslava Chávez-García, *Migrant Longing: Letter Writing across the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

18. Ana Elizabeth Rosas, *Archiving Emotional Diversity and Power: The Intergenerational Imaginaries, Feelings, and Investments of Mexican Immigrant Families across the US-Mexico Borderlands* (In Progress).

has always been inner, and is played out in the outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the “real” world unless it first happens in the images in our heads.¹⁹

This intellectual insight has also informed my decision to cast the collections of Mexican immigrant families at the center of this journal article as emotive archives. When interviewing Mexican immigrant families throughout Southern California, I have come to recognize emotive archives as depositories housing evidence of the emotional depth, range, diversity, and resonance of Mexican immigrant families across diverse U.S. immigration statuses. Mexican immigrant families’ determination to create emotive archives that will help them instill a restorative understanding and appreciation for their immigrant family history illuminates the uniquely emotional incentives orienting their archive creation. Archive creation based on Mexican immigrants’ emotional honesty about the experience of living under the threat of deportation and deportability enables their family members to appreciate their struggles. Empathetic archives inspire families to recognize and assert their humanity and rights. They enrich our understanding of their generative potential to make accessible the emotional commitment and solidarity underpinning their Mexican immigrant families’ resilience and history.

ARCHIVING AN EMOTIONALLY HONEST AND CREATIVE MEXICAN IMMIGRANT FATHER

Daisy Bautista began her emotive archive of her father with a music record he had performed and produced, titled *Regreso a Mi Pueblo* (I Return to My Hometown). In the early 1980s, shortly before he migrated from his Mexican hometown of Zicuirán, Michoacán, and settled in Los Angeles, California, José Luís recorded and produced a music record. This object held special emotional value for him. It featured Mexican *ranchera* songs of longing that he had written himself and it was the first record he had made. For five months, he wrote songs, perfected his singing of each song, and saved his wages from harvesting crops to be able to record this disk in his Mexican hometown. Having undertaken this record production process before migrating and without the support of his family had been emotionally

19. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (California: aunt lute, 2012), 109.

formative for him. It had inspired him to believe in and commit emotionally to his song writing, performance, and recording of this music to pursue what music scholar Alejandro L. Madrid describes as the desire to use music and musical performance as a “loudspeaker” that “discloses the hidden, most personal feelings and hopes” he had for his personal life.²⁰ The songs on this record expressed his deepest yearnings for love, family, homeland, and fulfillment as a Mexican musical recording artist. In large part his decisions to migrate to reunite and settle with his Mexican immigrant father in Los Angeles had been informed by his desire to earn money quickly to live, record, and distribute countless music records that would share his appreciation for his ties to Mexico and longing for a successful future in Mexico and the United States.²¹

Daisy used this music record to archive José Luís’s emotional honesty and its relationship to their family’s immigration history because it marked the beginning of her father’s emotional commitment to not abandon his creative identity, musical talents, or eventually, his own family as a Mexican immigrant man, musical performer and song writer, and parent. By preserving this musical record as early evidence of her father’s personal commitment to do everything within his reach to be both true to his creative spirit and to his family, she was confident that she was making José Luís’s emotional confidence, daring, intuition, and labor accessible to his grandchildren, most especially her son. For them, this record would encapsulate late twentieth-century, multi-dimensional Mexican immigrant male identity formation and creativity. Daisy deemed the preservation of this music record and its emotional meaning as a formative step towards empowering her son, as a Mexican American male in Southern California, to pursue creative desires and endeavors without being discouraged by a likely biased public underestimation of his creative and expressive abilities. She was confident that providing her son with this emotive archive would inspire him to not become deterred by gender expectations that often cast Mexican American boys and men investing in their creative interests and talents as a reckless and frivolous approach to coming of age in U.S. society.

20. Alejandro L. Madrid, “Dancing with Desire: Cultural Embodiment in Tijuana’s Nor-tec Music and Dance,” *Popular Music* 25, no. 3, (October 2006) (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press), 384.

21. Daisy Bautista, interview with author, Los Angeles, California, February 20, 2019. This oral history provided the experiences and materials of José Luís Bautista.

In the early 1980s, and throughout José Luís's transition into Los Angeles, *Regreso a Mi Pueblo* grew in emotional value for him. He carried a copy of this music record with him wherever he went. Whenever self-doubt would set in over migrating, reuniting, and settling with his father in Los Angeles as a creatively ambitious undocumented Mexican immigrant man, José Luís would listen to and enjoy his recorded music. Using this record as a symbol of his creative spirit and a reminder of the rigors of recording and producing it made it possible for him to remain true to his creative spirit. José Luís attributed much of his emotional well-being to having kept a copy of this musical record with him at all times, along with his father's advice and support.

By the mid-1980s, José Luís had not allowed himself to emotionally invest wholeheartedly in the pursuit of his musical aspirations. His undocumented U.S. immigration status, failure to land a musical recording artist contract with Luna Records, and a stint singing in Los Angeles downtown night clubs had exposed him to the financial and personal risks to pursuing his musical creativity as a career. Neither the record company nor the Los Angeles nightclub circuit had provided José Luís with fair contractual conditions and terms. Instead, he found himself performing Mexican *ranchera* music for hardly any financial compensation and in fear of being deported when performing in the night clubs. Throughout the early 1980s, the U.S. government's Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) conducted raids to detect, detain, and deport undocumented immigrants in poor, working-class Los Angeles neighborhoods. Throughout Southern California and on the heels of IRCA, INS would target employment sites and public recreation venues such as nightclubs where large Mexican immigrant populations could be easily detected and detained. José Luís did not ignore his anxiety over deportation nor his father's advice that he limit his public interactions and visibility to avoid INS detection. Additionally, his failure to earn much money as a performer of Mexican *ranchera* music also inspired him to embrace his emotional honesty and take a break from auditioning and performing out of concern for his emotional well-being and deportability.

By the late 1980s, remaining steadfast in his emotional honesty, José Luís did not become discouraged, but remained hopeful about eventually returning to his emotional commitment to perform music in Los Angeles nightclub venues. Instead, and as Daisy noted in her collection of material demonstrating his emotional honesty, he opted

for a patient and practical approach to his musical aspirations and emotional well-being. Deportability was a real source of emotional stress for him and his father. So much so that his father labored long hours in factories to help Jose Luis weather the financial hardships of limited public and social interactions and their IRCA application process. Out of respect for his father's commitment to his future, José Luís restricted his social interactions to everyday errands he undertook at the local grocery store and laundromat and his commute to and from their one-bedroom apartment in their Los Angeles neighborhood. Over time he began to perform Mexican *ranchera* music again for Mexican immigrant families he met when undertaking everyday errands or in their neighborhood to help his father make ends meet. José Luís would accept being contracted to sing for one to three hours during their family celebrations of baptisms, birthdays, weddings, and wedding anniversaries.

Daisy used photographs of José Luís wearing his mariachi suit or a dark dress shirt and pants when performing a Mexican *ranchera* song list live for Mexican immigrant families to archive his emotionally honest approach to remaining optimistic, responsible, and committed to his desire to sing live music for a receptive audience (Figure 1). José Luís would enter into agreements to entertain Mexican immigrant families' guests while observing the limitations of his U.S. immigration status and the advice of his father. Working-class and working-poor Mexican immigrant families hosted their family celebrations in their home backyards, and requested that he bring his own microphone and speakers to sing Mexican *ranchera* songs for their guests. Performing in the privacy of these backyards minimized his exposure to INS authorities, and being paid after his performance anywhere from \$25.00 to \$30.00 for every hour he performed resonated as a sound approach to not abandoning his musical creativity and desires altogether. Mexican immigrant families would often invite him to sing songs that he had written, making these musical performances an opportunity to showcase his musical creativity. José Luís was emotionally honest about it being his responsibility to himself to derive as much hope and peace of mind from performing Mexican music in a venue that did not render him automatically visible and vulnerable to INS detection and with a fair payment agreement in place. Being realistic about his limitations and maximizing these limited opportunities with enthusiasm made it possible for

him to nurture his emotional confidence when performing. Preserving and instilling in her son the restorative soundness of her father's emotional honesty inspired Daisy to archive José Luís's approach to upholding his creative desires while recognizing his legal vulnerability and the value of his father's advice and sacrifice.



FIG. 1. José Luís Bautista, in a publicity photo, dressed for performances of Mexican *ranchera* songs for Mexican immigrant families. Undated. *Courtesy of Daisy Bautista.*

By 1988, José Luís had married Daisy's mother, Ofelia Ceja, and legalized his U.S. immigration status as part of IRCA. Marrying Ofelia and raising three children together—son José and daughters Daisy and Vanessa—inspired José Luís to start a family home of his own. Although he no longer lived with his father, their family relationship remained strong and a source of constant emotional support. As he assumed the role of parent, husband, and U.S. legal resident, his outlook on his musical aspirations also changed. Emotionally and financially accountable for his own children's upbringing, he worked as a waiter, with most of his income allocated for the payment of their apartment rent, utilities, transportation, food, and

clothing expenses. He became more methodical in his music entrepreneurship because their family expenses made earnings from his musical performance bookings indispensable. His emotional honesty concerning the importance of this source of much-needed income inspired José Luís to wait tables full time at Mexican-themed, family-style restaurants that would facilitate opportunities for performing and promoting his musical performance of *ranchera* music as professionally as possible. He did not feel as vulnerable to deportation as he had prior to the legalization of his U.S. immigration status. This made it safer for him to document and promote his musical talents, booking performances in Mexican-themed, family-style restaurants throughout Southern California. With IRCA, Mexican immigrant families who had legalized their U.S. immigration status were less afraid to enjoy meals and music at these restaurants. The growth in clientele made these restaurants appealing public venues for José Luís's performances, and more lucrative.



FIG. 2. To advertise his musical performance, José Luís invested in publicity photographs to showcase his professionalism and to distribute to booking agents for local Mexican-themed restaurants. Undated. *Courtesy of Daisy Bautista.*

Daisy archived her father's emotional honesty concerning his new opportunities as a legal U.S. immigrant combined with the urgent financial rationale to his pursuit of multiple roles as a creative Mexican immigrant man, singer, songwriter, and father in Los Angeles by incorporating his professionally taken headshots to her emotive archive (Figures 1 and 2). José Luís had convinced Ofelia that it was important to invest in these publicity photographs to showcase his musical performance among local restaurant entertainment booking agents. He explained that it was important for them to see evidence of his professionalism and the care with which he undertook his Mexican musical performance work. José Luís either wore his mariachi suit or a cowboy hat, crisply ironed white dress shirt, and tie when posing for these photos. He provided booking agents with the publicity photographs to demonstrate how he would appear when singing for their clientele, to advertise his musical performance, and to convince them to employ him. He did not want his waiting tables to dissuade booking agents from employing him as a serious and talented musical performer. José Luís's photographs and successful live auditions were decisive to his being employed to sing at *El Mercadito* Restaurant in East Los Angeles, *El Chamizal* Restaurant in Huntington Park, and *El Mariachi* Restaurant in San Clemente. Throughout the 1990s, he would wait tables full time and perform *ranchera* music during the lunch or dinner meal service hours at Spiders Restaurant in Los Angeles and perform *ranchera* music showcases at the aforementioned Mexican-themed restaurants on his evenings or days off. He would earn at least \$60.00 per show, depending on tips. His musical showcase performances would begin at 5:00 p.m. on Fridays, Saturdays, or Sundays. José Luís derived immense joy from singing Mexican *ranchera* music for restaurant audiences. He enjoyed what anthropologist Olga Najera-Ramirez describes as being "a subject of great attention" when performing Mexican *ranchera* songs before demanding restaurant audiences.²² His ability to perform *ranchera* songs in ways that engaged Mexican immigrant and non-Mexican immigrant audiences alike depended on what Najera-Ramirez conceptualizes as "the ability to invoke a broad range of emotions in a single song."²³ The

22. Olga Najera-Ramirez, "The Politics of Passion: Poetics and Performance of La Canción Ranchera," in *Mexicans in California: Transformations and Challenges*, eds. Ramon A. Gutierrez and Patricia Zavella (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 171.

23. Ibid.

adrenaline rush of singing *ranchera* songs to engage discerning Mexican immigrant audiences desirous of enjoying Mexican music and culture together and publicly inspired him to feel as if he finally belonged in Southern California. His emotional confidence grew and propelled him to take pride in his performance work. Daisy envisioned using her archive of José Luís's publicity photographs to instill in her son an appreciation for his grandfather's professionalism and emotional commitment to achieve a personally satisfying sense of belonging without having become bitter or discouraged by years of limited social and public interactions or laboring waiting tables to gain access to the management and booking networks of Mexican-themed and family-style restaurants in Southern California. She believed it important to raise her son to understand and learn from the tough yet restorative qualities of pursuing one's talents in an emotionally committed and professional fashion when navigating the decline and regrowth of deportability in Southern California.

By the early 2000s and even as their family benefited from his musical performance earnings, José Luís did not underestimate the toll of his busy work life on his family. His marriage to Ofelia suffered as a result of his laboring during the day waiting tables and spending his evenings preparing for an upcoming musical performance showcase, writing songs, and performing at Mexican restaurants on his days off. They did not spend much time together. Ofelia dedicated herself to raising their children and managing their family household. The labor-intensive pace of their day-to-day lives coupled with José Luís's waiting tables and transitioning into writing and performing Mexican *rancheras* and *corridos* that required more of his time performing this genre of Mexican music made it challenging for them to navigate the demands of a busy family and work schedule together. To archive José Luís's emotional honesty concerning his part in their ultimate separation and divorce, Daisy incorporated copies of compact discs that her older brother, José, had helped their father produce and duplicate.

When facing this emotionally difficult family transition, José Luís wrote and recorded songs with Daisy, José, and Vanessa by his side. They would spend afternoons and evenings with him when he was not working in restaurants, and they tried to understand and help him with his creative process, rehearsal of *ranchera* and *corridos* he had written, and recording the songs that resonated most with his

audiences, while they worked on their homework assignments. José Luís did not give up on his musical creativity or his parental role when he no longer lived with his children. He conveyed to them that he could not create or perform music with heart if he was not meeting his emotional responsibility as their father.

Opting for emotional honesty at every turn, José Luís Bautista worked to be as transparent as possible when transitioning into the *corrido* musical genre and scene while parenting Daisy, José, and Vanessa from a distance. By the late-2000s, he no longer lived with them, had remarried, and taken on the stage name Chelis Lombardo, *El Diablo del Corrido* (The Devil of the Corrido). His musical performance of *corridos* and *ranchera* music often meant working longer evenings. *Corrido* musical showcases were more demanding than *rancheras*. These showcases began at 9:00 p.m. and could be a bit long and dangerous. There were instances in which *corrido* showcase audiences would engage in hostile arguments, fist fights, or other types of disorderly behavior without much provocation. Such changes in his personal, creative, and work life inspired him to be as open as possible about his schedule, most especially his work hours and restaurant work locations. He would share with Daisy and her siblings his musical performance schedule weeks in advance, with an emphasis on the restaurant locations and phone numbers and insist that his cell phone would always be on and in his pants pocket. This was his way of reassuring them that he was accessible to them at a moment's notice. When viable, he would share a meal with them at these restaurants and introduce them to the band members and restaurant managers. This way, José Luís felt that he was doing his best to share as much of his everyday life and world with them as possible. He worked hard to remain emotionally connected to his children.

Daisy archived a photograph of her father wearing his *banda* (band) suit to document the emotional honesty with which he had reinvented himself creatively and parented them through divorce and this creative transition (Figure 3). She credited José Luís for not taking his children for granted and for not keeping his everyday life a mystery. The emotional confidence and transparency with which her father had remained connected to them as a creative force and parent resonated as a quality worth preserving. Via this emotive archive, she hopes to instill her father's qualities in her son. José Luís's dedication to being emotionally honest about his responsibilities to his children



FIG. 3. As his performance gigs in Mexican-style restaurants increased, José Luís's ability to reach the emotions of his audience with his *ranchera* songs and *corridos* gave him great joy, confidence, and a sense of belonging. His norteño costume in this photograph, with its flame design, expressed his emotional commitment to his music. By the late 2000s he had taken the stage name Chelis Lombardo, *El Diablo del Corrido*. Undated. Courtesy of Daisy Bautista.

had enabled Daisy to weather her parents' divorce without resenting either parent. She anticipated this photograph in her family's emotive archive as a means of teaching her son to recognize the importance of



FIG. 4. José Luís Bautista, performing with a band at El Mercadito restaurant in East Los Angeles under a Mexican flag. Undated. *Courtesy of Daisy Bautista.*

maintaining constant and open lines of communication between loved ones; even when changes in family relationships and life were not easy, this was not impossible.

José Luís would continue to thrive as part of the mariachi and banda scene of Southern California until the early 2010s. At the age of forty-five, he found it too exhausting and stressful to labor waiting restaurant tables in Orange County and then commute to Los Angeles or the Inland Empire region of California to perform in musical showcases in the evenings. With three more children from his second marriage to parent, and the physical wear and tear of laboring six to seven days a week for over a decade, he transitioned into songwriting full time and recording music videos for the songs he most enjoyed writing. He did not abandon his musical creativity, but dedicated his creative talents to songwriting that asserted his Mexican immigrant ethnic culture and pride. Irrespective of how tired he felt after a hard day's work, he would share with Daisy and her siblings how much he treasured the creativity of writing songs. When archiving her father's unwavering emotional honesty concerning his proud celebration of his Mexican ethnicity and cultural background, Daisy archived photographs of her father singing Mexican *ranchera* music with heart (Figure 4). As she came of age and throughout the years, she remains most inspired by her father's steadfast expression of his appreciation for his Mexican ethnic background, culture, and immigration history via his live musical performances, song writing, and music videos.

To punctuate her collection, Daisy archived songs he has written throughout the years. She values them as evidence of his enduring musical creativity and emotional honesty, his persistence and unwavering faith in his creative potential, and his embrace of his transnational family background. As a child and still today she has been moved and impressed by her father's emotional dedication to musical creativity and performances that vocalize an unending transnational longing for Mexican family relatives, love, households, landscapes, celebrations, and hometowns. As in his 2018 song, "*Los Rincones de Mi Tierra*" ("The Far Corners of My Homeland"), José Luís recognized the power of his timeless emotional and transnational connection to his Mexican birthplace to uplift his morale and that of audiences who feel a similar transnational connection to their Mexican birthplace. In this song, he describes his birthplace as

*"Mi terruño querido
En donde viví de niño
En donde quedó la piedra
Con mi cachito de hombligo*

(My beloved earthly nest
Where I lived as a child
Where the rock was left
With my bit of umbilical cord)."²⁴

Such lyrics convey his love for Lombardia, the Mexican rural town in which he was born. Even decades after his having left this location, it still holds a special place in his heart and even holds an intimate piece of him. In our contemporary moment with the U.S. government's escalation of the deportation of Mexican immigrant populations and deportability as part of our social reality, Daisy considers this song as most revealing of José Luís's resolute emotional honesty in his song-writing—claiming his solid sense of belonging in Southern California and, at the same time, professing his emotional sense of also belonging in Mexico. By archiving José Luís's transnational conceptualization of belonging as an intimate emotional connection to Mexico, personal choice, and an important part of their family's history in the U.S., Daisy anticipates inspiring her son to value and exert emotional honesty. She envisions their emotive archive

24. José Luís Bautista, "*Los Rincones de Mi Tierra*," 2018.

encouraging him to pursue his own emotionally honest approach to place, people, and their family's history.

Learning from Daisy's emotive archive of her father's emotional honesty demonstrates that members of Mexican immigrant families in Southern California of diverse immigration statuses and generations are working to engage in invaluable emotional labor to create archives to honor immigrant family members and to instill empowering intergenerational and transnational family knowledge about belonging in their families. Daisy is among the Mexican American women who are emotionally honest about their anxiety concerning parenting Mexican American children as they face increasingly harsh government deportation policies and rising fears of the erasure of their Mexican immigrant parents' generation from the historical record of U.S. history and the historical imaginaries of younger generations of their families. She does not underestimate the reality that if she did not create this emotive archive, then most likely nobody else would, making this knowledge production about her father's emotions, emotional labor, and immigrant generation and history that much more urgent and personally meaningful for her and for her son and family's emotional well-being and future. In her efforts to preserve and instill her father's emotional honesty and labor in her son with care, Daisy maintains this emotive archive in well-organized photo albums and boxes inside her family home in San Clemente, California. Deeply personal circumstances and feelings concerning their Mexican immigrant family situations, gender expectations, and their future are incentivizing Mexican immigrant men like Daisy's father to participate in and support emotive archive creation proactively. Prior to this, expressing their feelings and displaying their talents had not been widely undertaken by them or with their families. Even as their relatives were to varying degrees familiar with their feelings and creative interests and talents, these men were rarely, if at all, encouraged or invited to document, preserve, or share such emotions and experiences as part of family discussions, history, or priorities. Such emotional labor and creativity did not conform neatly into gender expectations concerning Mexican immigrant men's achievements, talents, and struggles. Hence, coming together with their female family relatives to participate in emotive archive creation contributed to these men's feeling and belonging in their families as valued, visible, and documented family members.

ARCHIVING AN EMOTIONALLY HONEST AND TRANSNATIONAL
SISTERHOOD

On September 14, 2018, twenty-eight-year-old Mariana Ramirez Medina was inspired to undertake an intergenerational and transnational archive of the emotional honesty and labor of her beloved sister, María Alejandra Ramírez Medina.²⁵ On that day and at forty years of age, María Alejandra had succumbed to her year-long battle with cancer, and Mariana was stunned into creating an emotive archive for her family that would preserve María Alejandra's emotional commitment to her family's emotional wellbeing. Born on July 13, 1978, in San Martín de Hidalgo, Jalisco, Mexico, María Alejandra was the oldest of Mariana's three siblings, and she had been an invaluable source of emotional support and solidarity for their family. In the late 2000s, Mariana had married her U.S. citizen husband and migrated from San Martín de Hidalgo to Long Beach, California. A few years into their marriage, Mariana and her husband were well-settled into Long Beach and had two children, José and Dulce. In 2018, the death in Mexico of María Alejandra, and the U.S. government's intensification of U.S. border enforcement measures that centered on U.S. domestic detention and deportation of Mexican immigrant families had cemented Mariana's commitment to constructing an emotive archive.

Over the years, as Mariana, in Long Beach, and María Alejandra, still in San Martín de Hidalgo, had cemented an emotionally honest and transnational sisterhood, one in which María Alejandra served as a supportive ally for Mariana. Throughout her social and everyday interactions, Mariana was among the Mexican immigrant mothers who, irrespective of their U.S. immigration status, found it stressful to complete everyday errands, tasks, and transactions with U.S. presidential rhetoric casting them as criminals and calling for their deportation. Having María Alejandra to confide in about her feelings concerning the emotional impact of such public discourse, and transitioning into marriage and raising a family of her own with the geographic distance separating her from their extended family and friends in San Martín de Hidalgo had helped Mariana navigate the emotional isolation and toll of these everyday realities. Hence,

25. Mariana Ramirez Medina, interview with author, Lakewood, California, July 17, 2019. This oral history provided the experiences and materials of María Alejandra Ramírez Medina.

creating this emotive archive as an intellectual and emotional tribute recognizing María Alejandra's emotional labor and solidarity and its importance to their transnational extended family's emotional well-being resonated as a productive approach to mourning and preserving their family's history.

Mariana's emotive archive focused on María Alejandra's sincerity, good will, inclusivity, and solidarity. On September 25, 2018, Mariana began her archive creation in San Martín de Hidalgo. Shortly after María Alejandra's funeral and days of prayer circles in observation of her passing, three generations of their extended family relatives provided Mariana with material culture items and photographs that would help her archive María Alejandra's emotional honesty and labor. Like Mariana, their extended family relatives valued María Alejandra for her willingness to listen to them and care for them at a moment's notice when navigating difficult family situations and transitions. Mariana was dedicated to collaborating with them to collect evidence that reflected the intergenerational diversity of their transnational extended family history as well as María Alejandra's influence and relationship to the emotional inner-workings and well-being of generations of their extended family. With the archive, Mariana sought to also instill in her children an appreciation for the ways María Alejandra and other distant relatives formed a connected and caring family.

Mariana's children, José and Dulce, had been born and raised in Long Beach and were seven and four years of age respectively at the time of María Alejandra's death. Their interactions with their aunt were cut short by her death, denying them the opportunity to get to know her better. Mariana's emotional honesty concerning their family's loss alerted her to the urgency of creating an emotive archive as a memorial and guide. It had the potential to be the only accessible and desirable pathway into mourning and parenting her children into identifying with and learning more about María Alejandra, her humanity, and their connection to her.

This does not mean that creating an emotive archive was easy for Mariana. For two consecutive weeks and with each item that she collected from relatives, her understanding of María Alejandra's significance as a well-intentioned and inclusive emotional ally to any family member who sought her support became painfully obvious. Documenting her sister's emotional impact stirred and magnified

transnational emotional realities for Mariana. From various relatives Mariana gathered photographs that captured María Alejandra's enthusiasm for documenting family members' birthdays, wedding anniversaries, religious rites of passage, and public processions celebrating San Martín de Hidalgo's annual town festivities. Upon providing Mariana with a photograph each relative would share with her that this photograph "would not have been possible or exist had it not been for María Alejandra's insistence that they take the family photograph with good will and out of love for absent family relatives."²⁶

Beginning in the late 1990s and leading up to her battle with cancer, María Alejandra was emotionally honest about the intimate and desirable qualities of family photographs. When encouraging relatives to take photographs together, she explained that they should do so because these photographs were opportunities to boost the morale of absent migrant family members in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, and immigrant relatives like Mariana in Southern California. María Alejandra had not allowed her enjoyment and hosting responsibilities of family gatherings to distract her from taking photographs that included as many event details and attendees as possible. She had not underestimated absent family relatives' emotional longing to have taken part in these family moments. María Alejandra's photographs, shared with absent relatives, served to cement family bonds and expressed a transnational sense of solidarity.

To archive the reach and sincerity of María Alejandra's transnational emotional honesty, Mariana incorporated a 2017 family photograph of María Alejandra holding her youngest child, Pedro Antonio Rubio Ramírez (Figure 5), as their family celebrated his Catholic baptism. This was among the last family photographs that María Alejandra took. When sharing it with Mariana, María Alejandra had not underestimated how her seeing it for the first time would stir a series of emotions. Hence, in 2017 upon Mariana returning to visit their family in San Martín de Hidalgo, María Alejandra had gifted her a copy of this photograph and several other family photographs for her to enjoy on her own. After a few days, María Alejandra met with her to describe in depth the family moments featured in these photographs. She answered Mariana's questions and expressed how much Mariana had been missed during Pedro's baptism and the

26. Mariana Ramirez Medina, interview with author, Lakewood, California, July 17, 2019.



FIG. 5. A 2017 family photograph of María Alejandra holding her youngest infant, Pedro Antonio Rubio Ramírez on the occasion of his baptism stirred Mariana's emotions when her sister gave it to her. She included it in the archive she was creating. *Courtesy of Mariana Ramirez Medina.*

other events. This approach to disseminating family photographs with her and other absent family relatives was María Alejandra's way of sharing memorable extended family moments and milestones with emotional honesty. Her use of family photographs to achieve family inclusivity and solidarity transformed María Alejandra into a highly valued emotional ally for and among their extended family.

In late October 2018, after having concluded her collection of family photographs for her emotive archive, Mariana returned to Long Beach and set about building the emotive archive. It centered on how María Alejandra had supported Mariana emotionally when parenting her children away from their extended family. In the late 2000s, María Alejandra reassured her that she welcomed sharing phone conversations that would help her cope emotionally with being a first-time mother. At that time, María Alejandra was in her early thirties, married, and with four children of her own. She reassured Mariana that "*con todo su corazón iba ha permanecer al tanto de la salud de ella, nuestros padres y el resto de la familia*" (with all of her heart she would remain vigilant over my health, that of our parents, and the rest of the family).²⁷ María Alejandra promised Mariana that she would care for their parents and other members of their family, so that they too, could cope in the best of spirits with Mariana's absence even though they were unable to be there for her physically during

27. *Ibid.*



FIG. 6. A photo of Mariana with her son Alejandro in San Martín de Hidalgo as they celebrated his college graduation in 2016 was also included in the emotive archive Mariana established. *Courtesy of Mariana Ramirez Medina.*

her transition into motherhood. With every transnational family decision and turn of events, María Alejandra continued to undertake the emotional labor of supporting Mariana emotionally from across the U.S.-Mexico border. Maria Alejandra did not want Mariana to live in silence or anxiety as she transitioned into marriage, parenting, and a member of a transnational extended family.

When working to archive the generative expanse and depth of María Alejandra's emotional honesty and its relationship to the sisterhood they shared, Mariana incorporated a 2016 family photograph in which María Alejandra is posing with her son Alejandro in San Martín de Hidalgo (Figure 6) as they marked the celebration of his college graduation. Mariana archived the photograph of this family milestone as testimony to the importance of not giving up on identifying opportunities to learn and venture in anticipation of growing emotionally confident and connected to supportive communities. Upon revisiting the emotional honesty that anchored the sisterly bonds and solidarity she had shared with María Alejandra,

Mariana recollected automatically María Alejandra's advice when she confessed to feelings of homesickness or anxiety concerning the U.S. government's escalation of domestic border enforcement measures. At those times, María Alejandra advised Mariana not to underestimate the hard-earned peace of mind that comes with the legal right to reside and grow alongside her husband and two children without the fear of automatic deportation from the United States. María Alejandra urged Mariana to seek out knowledge, skills, and personally empowering opportunities and relationships optimistically and as priorities. She invited Mariana to consider following in her footsteps for the sake of her children's future and her own. María Alejandra had been most involved and supportive of her son Alejandro's travels in pursuit of a college education at a reputable college in Guadalajara. She stressed to Mariana that knowledge, opportunities, connections, and confidence rarely just arrive at your doorstep.

In her role as a trusted emotional ally, María Alejandra shared such advice with Mariana so that she could consider it as she parented her children into emotionally rich and purposeful lives. She also stressed the empowering qualities of emotionally investing in developing and participating in social networks that would allow Mariana to feel connected to local Long Beach residents with similar goals in personally meaningful ways. María Alejandra advised her to consider that this emotional labor coupled with her marriage and parenting of her children could help transform Long Beach into a supportive and personally meaningful home and community. To archive María Alejandra's advice to lead a life that prioritized her emotional responsibilities to her children, marriage, and herself, Mariana incorporated into the archive a photograph of the Day of the Dead altar that the Catholic nuns who administered the local San Martín de Hidalgo elementary school campus of *El Colegio Heroes Mexicano* had created to celebrate María Alejandra's life as part of the town-wide celebration of Day of the Dead (Figure 7).

The annual town Day of the Dead festivities were held to celebrate the lives of town residents who had died. Every year these festivities took place on November 2nd, and consisted of town residents creating and visiting altars that honored the lives of the deceased. The personal keepsakes and belongings, family photographs, and favorite food items of the deceased and abundant bunches of cempasuchitl flowers are used to create these altars. The



FIG. 7. One of the photographs included in the emotive archive honoring María Alejandra, following her death at age 40 in September 2018, was this one of the altar celebrating her life and activist contributions to education in the town of San Martín de Hidalgo on the Day of the Dead, November 2, 2018. *Courtesy Mariana Ramirez Medina.*

elementary school's administrators had been inspired to create this altar to celebrate María Alejandra's contributions to their elementary school. Her family provided her favorite jacket, dress, family portrait, and Starbucks coffee beverage cup, and took photographs of this altar to share with Mariana. Their family believed that the public celebration of María Alejandra's feminist and purposeful support of the town's girls would be personally meaningful to Mariana, and that she would record it in her archive. María Alejandra had contributed to raising funds for the purchase of school uniforms and supplies to raise the emotional confidence of young town girls from working poor family backgrounds. She had been personally invested in making sure that the girls' family financial situations would not distract them from developing a healthy self-esteem and focusing on their coursework. As a concerned town woman and parent, María Alejandra had supported local girls' pursuit of an education as a personally

meaningful cause. Acting on the sincerity of her commitment to this cause, she had implemented her business management talents to contribute to the quality of girls' educational experiences. This work had enriched her everyday life.

Mariana used this photograph of the Day of the Dead altar to complete her emotive archive of María Alejandra's emotional honesty and labor. She thought it most productive to end with a document that captured the public resonance of María Alejandra's confidence, sense of purpose, and solidarity when acting as a supportive and resourceful emotional ally and town resident. Preserving this photograph in this emotive archive reminded Mariana not to give up on making it a priority to venture outside of her household to connect and collaborate with fellow parents and neighbors in Long Beach to host after-school activities that enriched the self-esteem and education of their children. The emboldening qualities of having created this emotive archive on María Alejandra transformed this archive into a valuable emotional resource for Mariana. The process of having created it, as well as having it in place for her to turn to whenever she longed to connect with María Alejandra or to navigate the emotional weight of anti-Mexican immigrant rhetoric had provided Mariana with much-needed emotional comfort. It had also made it possible for her to honor the feminist inspiration behind this archive creation, as she not only led and collaborated with her family to create this archive in an inclusive intergenerational and transnational fashion and for the emotional sake of the children, women, and men in their family, but she keeps this archive in a carefully stored box in her Long Beach home. This way, her children and future generations of their family can access this archive and learn from María Alejandra's emotional honesty directly and as precious guidance to their sense of belonging and coming of age.

* * *

It is important to note that this journal article could not accommodate a thorough discussion of all of the family photographs and other items comprising Mariana and Daisy's emotive archives. Instead, it describes only a few examples from each to un-pack the emotional honesty and labor that these women, with the support of their families, have strived to preserve in their efforts to create emotive archives rife with emotionally meaningful and generative

Mexican immigrant family history. Mexican American women and Mexican immigrant women's emotional daring has moved them to invest themselves and instill in their families an appreciation for the potential of intergenerational and transnational family knowledge production. Preserving and inheriting emotionally empowering archives for future generations of their families, most especially their children, resonates as a resourceful approach to belonging and raising their children in Southern California. This archive creation also emboldens Mexican immigrant men emotionally to recognize, express, document, and preserve feelings and creative interests and talents for their families in ways that had previously been culturally discouraged and undocumented. Men's emotional labor and feelings when striving to belong and lead personally meaningful lives as they face the ebbs and flows of deportation and deportability are often taken for granted. Moreover, the women's dedication to making manifest, in the form of emotive archives, the historical imaginaries of their Mexican immigrant female and male relatives illustrates their creative acts asserting their sense of obligation to defend their families' emotional well-being in the face of personal loss and threats of U.S. domestic deportation and deportability.