When did the term Chicano become popular?

The term Chicano was popularized during the Chicano Movement or *El Movimiento*, which reached its apex from 1968 to 1974. It was during this time that people of the Southwest, which they called Aztlan, began to refer to themselves by the term Chicano rather than Mexican, Mexican-American, Spanish-American or Hispano. The intent was to unify the community using one term that adequately identified the community as 1) American citizens 2) having an Indigenous ancestry 3) colonized first by white Spanish Christians and later by white American, Christian capitalists.

What was the primary factor that led to the beginning of the Chicano Movement?

The primary factor leading to the Chicano Movement was racism. Racism takes on many forms: police brutality, job discrimination, exclusion from education, inadequate healthcare, low wages, poverty, profiling, violence, discrimination from getting loans, higher interest rates, gerrymandering, and high conviction and incarceration rates. Moreover, the daily micro-aggressions such as signs declaring “No Mexicans and No Dogs” on the store and restaurant windows, being followed around by store employees when shopping, getting stopped and arrested more often by police officers, being denied access to housing except in areas designated for “Mexicans,” all contributed to the stressors that pushed Chicanos to do something about their oppression.

Why did the Chicano community of Colorado become active?

The 1960s are best known as the time of the social change movements that happened following 200 years of racism and exclusion of people of color in the privileges reserved for white people. It was a tumultuous time shaped by the assassination of President Kennedy; the assassinations of Dr. King and Malcom X; the Cuba Missile crisis, and the Viet Nam War. There were many events happening at once. White youth rebelled against their parents creating a “hippie” movement that embraced the open use of recreational drugs. There was a pop musical movement responsible for much of the music we take for granted today; there was an anti-war movement against the war in Viet Nam.

In the communities of color there was a collective consciousness that sparked a national response to racism in all of its institutionalized forms: education, healthcare, housing, military-service, labor, the electoral process, and Chicanos and American Indians land rights.¹

Chicanos in Colorado witnessed the changes that were sweeping the country. Chicanos had been involved in the political process (the Viva Kennedy campaign), but saw no beneficial results from their involvement.² Veterans that returned from WWII, the Korean War, and Viet Nam returned to the same racism and discrimination that they faced before they left to war.

Despite fighting for their country, Chicanos were not regarded as full-fledged American citizens.³ The blatant racism and discrimination became unbearable. The anti-war movement, the hippie movement, the student movements, and the Black movement, all encouraged Chicanos from across the state of Colorado to become involved in a larger movement to improve life for the Chicano people.
What were the issues addressed by the Chicano Movement?

In the rural areas of the state, many Chicanos were closely tied to agriculture. Chicanos tended the crops of the farmers but received poor pay and horrible working conditions in exchange for their hard-work. Large numbers were living in squalor housing conditions provided by the farmers. A large number of Chicanos follow the migrant stream; working and following the crops as the seasons dictated. Chicanos would travel great distances with little or no resources, to make very small amounts of money for survival needs.

Chicanos in rural areas also did not have access to good healthcare. There were no doctors that would serve the Chicano community. Hospital and doctor fees were more than Chicanos could afford. The only recourse was to go to the emergency room at a local hospital where illness or injury was beyond the scope of local healers.

There existed a minimal amount of work for Chicanos living in rural areas. The few jobs available in rural areas were always given to White people. The brown side of town and the white side of town were separated by tracks. Housing discrimination was rampant. Racism and all of its expressions was the standard under which the Chicano communities lived.

In urban areas, issues like police brutality were common. Chicanos were relegated to low-income housing developments (projects) or barrios, where there were concentrations of brown people where the streets were unpaved and city services were paltry except for over policing.

In both rural and urban areas there were many Chicanos that were being drafted for the war in Viet Nam. These soldiers were coming back maimed, injured, psychologically damaged or dead. There were more brown and black soldiers dying in Vietnam than whites soldiers per capita. The loans available to White veterans because of the GI bill were not available to Chicano veterans. Chicanos were rarely employed for good jobs, only for those jobs no one else would do: janitorial work, agricultural work, service industry jobs. K-12 education for Chicanos was inadequate and there was no references in the history books related to Chicano history, despite being the original inhabitants of Colorado.

In Colorado, there were two social change movements that had prominence: The Chicano Movement and the American Indian Movement because of the large population of Indigenous people in Colorado. Chicanos are indigenous to the U.S. Southwest. Chicano communities exist only in the Southwest and nowhere else in the world.

The Chicano Movement across the Southwest, referred to as Aztlán by Chicano people, was concerned with the war draft, the electoral process, farm workers’ rights, education, civil rights, housing, healthcare and land rights. Many actions were taken across the state to remedy the inequities faced by Chicanos. Civil rights in Colorado were about Chicano rights.

Despite the fact that many women held key positions and were responsible for much of the work that was involved in the Chicano Movement, it is the men that get the credit for the Chicano Movement. For example, José Angel Gutierrez is remembered for founding El Partido de La Raza Unida out of Corpus Cristi, Texas; Reyes Lopez Tijerina is remembered for his work with La Alianza and the struggle for land in New Mexico especially around Tierra Amarrilla, NM; Cesar Chavez is credited for the work with the United Farm Workers out of La Paz, California; Rudolfo “Corky” Gonzales is credited with leading Chicanos in Colorado out of the Crusade for Justice. The men got the credit, but a lot of the times, the women were doing the bulk of the work at every level and in every community.
The Chicano Movement in Colorado had the following areas of focus:

**Land Rights**: a 1981 court case was filed by the Land Rights Council to return land in the San Luis Valley purchased by Jack Taylor in 1960. The struggle of the communities of Chama and San Luis Valley, to access and use ancestral land granted by the governments of Spain and Mexico, during the early decades of colonization of Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, and California (mid 1500s) resulted in court battles that lasted for four decades. The original court battle began in the 1960’s but the formal court case that eventually returned the lands back to their respective community was filed in 1981. The lands located near San Luis Valley Colorado, were legally protected under the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The Lobato vs. Taylor court case was finally settled in 2002 granting the land heirs to utilize La Sierra as they had always done.

**Farm Worker Rights**: Magdaleno Avila and Manuel Martinez, led a movement of striking farmworkers in the San Luis Valley. Although a good deal of the workers were of Mexican descent, a significant number were migrant Chicanos from Colorado, New Mexico and Texas. The Farm Workers’ strike was focused around Alamosa and Center Colorado. The strike was to improve working conditions for farm workers, provide toilets, proper housing, and livable wages.

**The Crusade for Justice**: Under the direction of Rudolfo “Corky” Gonzales, a center for political thought, and action was created. Hence, Escuela Tlatelolco was created and housed within the Crusade. The members of the Crusade concerned themselves with urban issues like police brutality, housing and job discrimination, access to the political system, and the draft for the war in Viet Nam. The Crusade also initiated a cultural renaissance that resulted in the explosion of Mexican *folklorico* dance groups, Chicano art and music, poetry, writing (they published “El Gallo” newspaper), and teatro.

The National Chicano Youth Conference of 1968 was held at the Crusade for Justice. It was at this conference that the poet and scholar Alurista, along with those at the conference penned the manifesto, *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán*. El Plan provided a foundation for the Chicano Movement that recognized Chicano people as an Indigenous people of the Southwest, exclaimed the sovereignty of the Chicano people, and established a template for organizing on a national level.

**Student Movement**: There were a number of student organization and clubs started at both the high school level and the university level. The most prominent of all of the student organizations was UMAS (United Mexican-American Students) at the University of Colorado in Boulder. UMAS led the charge in terms of developing a political consciousness for students attending the university and for advocating for post-secondary (college) education. “Lost to our land, education is our stand” was the mantra of the Chicano students at CU. Other campuses established M.E.Ch.A (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan) chapters. The students of these organizations were involved with the Farm Workers movement, labor unions, La Raza Unida Party, the Crusade for Justice, and dedicated themselves to the recruitment and retention of Chicano students at institutions of higher learning.

**Labor movements**: Efforts were made to organize unions and to advocate for the rights of workers in factories, slaughterhouses, and the hospitality service industry (hotels and restaurants). One of the most prominent events was the Kitayama rose and carnation plant strike and protests in Greeley, Colorado.

**Healthcare**: In the Arkansas Valley a small group of community organizers under the name of Nosotras, led by Dora Esquibel, Pablo Delgado, and a handful of other Chicanos, started a people’s clinic to tend to the health care issues of the Chicano community. This free clinic was eventually moved from La Junta to Rocky Ford and is still in operation.
El Centro Quinto Sol in Pueblo Colorado, led by Eddie Montour and the Brown Berets, initiated a strong Chicano advocacy in Pueblo. The city was able to elect a Chicano mayor (Henry Reyes), saw a strong presence in the arts, and has one of the highest Chicano student enrolment figures for a university in the state. The famous Cinco de Mayo event held each year in Denver originated in Pueblo Colorado organized by Dr. Antonio Esquibel.

6. Two other national Chicano leaders and the causes they addressed

**Reyes Lopez Tijerina: Land Grant Rights/ La Alianza – Northern New Mexico.**
Tijerina was concerned with returning stolen land back to the original Indigenous inhabitants. He was well-versed in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo signed when the United States stole over half of northern Mexico, a treaty that guaranteed citizenship rights to the many people already residing on the land stolen by the U.S. Over time, the U.S. government was complicit in stealing land from original land owners via white tape, bureaucracy, congressional acts. The U.S. court system always ruled in favor of white invaders that stole land by murder or deceit. Tijerina led a raid against a courthouse in Tierra Amarilla, N.M. as part of his plan to return stolen lands.

**José Angel Gutiérrez: Political Representation/ Partido de La Raza Unida**

The area where he founded a third political party had a majority of Chicano citizens, yet, all of the elected officials were white. Through La Raza Unida party the group that Gutierrez worked with was able to get Chicano officials elected to school boards, city councils, etc. The Partido de La Raza Unida spread across Aztlán. Colorado ran candidates for governor, school boards and city councils in an attempt to repeat the success of Texas.

7. What was *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlan* and when was it written?

*El Plan* was written in 1968 at a national Chicano Youth Conference held at the Crusade for Justice in Denver, Colorado. The primary author of *El Plan* was a poet by the name of Alurista. *El Plan* became a manifesto for the Chicano Movement and was embraced by leaders across the country. (Image of National Chicano Youth Conference) (http://lamechacentral.tripod.com/id1.html)
8. Name two of the major student groups in Colorado that were part of El Movimiento?

U.M.A.S (United Mexican American Students) and M.E.Ch.A (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán) were the two most recognized student groups in Colorado. The strongest student group in the state was UMAS at the University of Colorado at Boulder with chapters at University of Northern Colorado at Greeley, and Mesa State College at Grand Junction. MEChA was strongest at the Auraria campus in Denver. University of Southern Colorado at Pueblo had a student group called CUFA (Chicanos Unidos for Action).

Many of the high schools across the state formed MEChA chapters or had “Spanish” clubs that addressed issues in their particular schools. UMAS at Boulder had the most cohesive and radical group of all of the student groups and therefore the most recognition. UMAS students were involved in the farm labor movement in the San Luis Valley, the Crusade for Justice, La Raza Unida, and the Land Rights Council struggle in San Luis. UMAS students organized huge events, marches and rally to address the issues plaguing Chicano students on the Boulder campus and across the state. Their work led to a Chicano Studies Department that evolved into an Ethnic Studies department at the University of Colorado. M.E.Ch.A in Denver was able to get a Chicano Studies department installed at the Auraria campus. UMAS at UNC was also able to get a Mexican American Studies program instituted at their institution.

9. What is the UFW?

The UFW or United Farm Workers is a union of farm workers started by Cesar Chavez in Delano California. The intent of the UFW was to bring attention to and improve the working conditions for farm workers. In Colorado, the UFW was strongest in the San Luis Valley, particularly around Center Colorado where much of the lettuce, potatoes, and hops are grown. The strike in Colorado, at the time, centered on the lettuce pickers led by Magdaleno “Len” Avila, originally from Las Animas Colorado; the farm workers were able to get attention and contracts that helped improved the conditions under which they worked.
2016 JTOH Test Questions El Movimiento
(Multiple Choice)

1) Who is the primary author of the manifesto “El Plan Espitutal de Aztlan”?  
   Lalo Delgado
   Tijerina
   **Alurista**
   Ricardo Sanchez
   Juan Valdez

What is “Aztlan”?  
   Old Mexico
   The American Southwest
   Mexico
   New Spain

What were the two major social movements in the 1960s said to have begun in Colorado?  
   Black and Asian Civil Rights Movement
   LGBT and Woman Suffrage Movement
   Feminist and Pacifist Movements
   **Native American and Chicano Movement**

2.) People involved in the United Farm Workers movement included:  
   Japanese
   Filipinos
   Chicanos
   Mexicans
   Blacks
   **All of the above**

3.) Farmworkers’ workers protested the following conditions in the 60s and 70s:  
   No electricity    Low wages
   Long hours        Inadequate housing
   Child labor       **All the above**

Chicanos during the 60’s and 70’s demanded livable wages and a humane working environment. The Delano grape boycott in California included United Farms Workers (Cesar Chavez) immigrant farm workers such as the Pilipino Farm workers who were often unpaid for their daily work and had to pay for using the bathroom. Any compensation for their hard work never was above 90 cents an hour. (Ferris 1)
4.) What was the Chicano Rights Movement concerned with? (check all that apply)
   - The war draft
   - Access to education
   - Access to Healthcare
   - Farmworker Rights
   - Civil Rights
   - Land Grants
   - All the Above

5.) When and where was the document El Plan Espiritual de Aztlan written?
   - 1969 at the National Chicano Youth Conference in Denver
   - 1963 at the Chicano Rights Conference in Washington D.C.
   - 1977 at the United Farm Workers Symposium in Los Angeles
   - 1984 at the World Chicano day in Toronto, Canada

6.) When and what year was the first National Chicano Youth Liberation Conference held?
   - 2010 in Seattle, Washington
   - 1993 in Mexico City
   - 1969 in Denver, Colorado
   - 1974 in Brighton, Colorado

7.) What did the Crusade for Justice fight for? (Check all that apply)
   - Stop police brutality
   - Improve the community
   - Education
   - Support of farmworkers
   - Voters’ right
   - End of discrimination
   - Access to legal aid
   - All of the above

8.) Where did the fight for land grant rights in Colorado take place?
   - Boulder
   - Aspen
   - Denver
   - San Luis Valley
   - Durango

9.) In Colorado, with regards to land rights and the Taylor Ranch, what was at issue?
   - Education
   - Women’s rights
   - Access to the ancestral land granted by the Mexican government in the 1500’s
   - A new school
10.) **What did the Colorado Supreme Court rule for the land-grant heirs?**
   - A new school
   - Women’s rights
   - **Right to graze livestock and gather wood**
   - Free education
   - Better working conditions for farmworkers

11.) **What is the name of the epic poem credited to Rudolfo Corky Gonzales?**
   - Yo Soy Chicano
   - La Raza Cosmica
   - America the beautiful
   - **Yo Soy Joaquin**
   - Declaration of Independence

*Corky Gonzales wrote many poems his most famous is “Yo Soy Joaquin” (Gonzales 1)*

12.) **Name two of the major student groups in Colorado that were part of El Movimiento.**
   - UMAS
   - AAUW
   - MEChA
   - JTOH

UMAS (United Mexican American Students) and MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán) were the two most recognized student groups in Colorado.

13.) **What is a “blowout”?**
   - A flat tire
   - A Dairy Queen sundae
   - Really hot green chilli
   - **A large school walkout** (Series of walks outs)
   - Yelling at the principal

The “Chicano blow outs” were a series of protests in 1968 by Chicano/a students to stand against unfair conditions. It happened in the Los Angeles Unified School District. The first protest happened on March 1st 1968.
14.) Two national Chicano rights leaders were ___________ & ____________.

   Reyes Lopez Tijerina: Land Rights/ La Alianza - Northern New México
   José Angel Gutiérrez: Partido de La Raza Unida in Crystal, Texas/Elected Officials.
   Cesar Chavez Co-founder of the United Farm Workers Movement
   Dolores Huerta Co-founder of the United Farm Workers Movement

15.) In 1969 one of the most violent Chicano student protests in the State of Colorado was ____________.

   West High Blowout

16.) _______________ was a Filipino civil rights activist that led workers to unionize throughout the northwestern U.S.

   (Larry Itliong) Filipino

17.) Corky Gonzales was one of the main co-founders of the _________________.

   (Crusade for Justice)

18.) _______________ was a leader of the United Farm Workers in Colorado who also led a lettuce boycott in San Luis Valley.

   (Magdaleno Len Avila)

19.) _______________ is the historic Chicano theatre in Denver, Colorado.

   Su Teatro

20.) _______________ is known for his poem “Stupid America”.

   Lalo Delgado
21.) “Corky” Gonzalez founded the United Farmworkers (UFW).
   True / False

22.) La Raza Unida was successful in getting Chicano officials elected into government offices like the school board and city council.
   True / False

23.) A court case was filed in 1981 with the Land Rights Council to return land in the San Luis valley stolen by Jack Taylor in 1960 to the native people of the valley.
   True / False

24.) Cesar Chavez was the leader of the Crusade for Justice
   True / False

25.) People in the southwest started referring to themselves as Chicano rather than Mexican between 1968-1974.
   True / False

26.) Leo Tanguma is famous for his mural in DIA’s Jeppesen terminal.
   True / False

27.) Dr. Ramon Del Castillo was awarded the Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales Civil Rights Award in 2009.
   True / False

28.) Lalo Delgado was a teacher at MSU Denver for 17 years.
   True / False

29.) Dolores Huerta was awarded the presidential Medal of Freedom.
   True / False

30.) Cesar Chavez was born in California to a family of migrant workers.
   True / False

31.) The West High School blow out was one of the biggest and most violent student protests in Colorado history.
   True / False

32.) The Crusade for Justice was formed in Santa Fe, New Mexico in the mid 1970’s.
   True / False


Atekpatzin, El Movimiento (Boulder, CO: Calmecaztlan, 2015)

(High School Student Questionnaire on El Movimiento Chicano © David Atekpatzin Young, Calmecaztlan, 2015)


Tijerina, Reies López. They Called me “King Tiger” : My Struggle for the Land and Our Rights (Houston: Arte Publico Press, 2000).


Ibid., Muñoz.