

Politics Beyond the Ballpark: The Los Angeles Dodgers
Latino Fandom and the Politics of Reconciliation

Adelina Ramírez, Sociology Department, Barnard College
Dr. Randa Serhan, Barnard College Sociology

INTRODUCTION

Dodger Stadium is one of Los Angeles's most iconic cultural landmarks. Yet the land it occupies was once home to a thriving Mexican-American community. In May 1959, approximately 1,800 Mexican-American families were forcibly displaced, enabling the construction of Dodger Stadium. Since then, the Dodgers' cultural visibility has become deeply embedded within Los Angeles's Latino community, causing this history to continuously shape contemporary debates surrounding Dodgers fan loyalty, institutional accountability and Latino identity politics.

Los Angeles Times

You can't separate sports from politics. Just ask the L.A. Dodgers

As a lifelong Dodger fan yet a committed advocate for justice, the complexity of this history prompts me to ask: **How do competing perspectives on the legacy of displacement shape contemporary debates surrounding Latino identity politics, institutional accountability and public perception in relation to the Los Angeles Dodgers?**

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1 Investigate how the displacement shapes contemporary public perceptions of the Los Angeles Dodgers
- 2 Understand why activists, descendants of displaced residents and Dodgers fans have differing perspectives on reparative action
- 3 Inform broader discussions about the intersection of sports, urban displacement and Latino identity politics

	Do you watch Dodger games?	Should sports be separate from politics?
Respondent 1		
Respondent 2		Mixed: believes fans can enjoy Dodger baseball while confronting its political history
Respondent 3		Mixed: watches yet recognizes that the organization's actions are political
Respondent 4	No response recorded	
Respondent 5		No response recorded

METHODS

RESEARCH DESIGN



Secondary research



Press and social media analysis



Interviews



INTERVIEWS

Melissa Arechiga

Ron Cabrera

Larry Cabrera

Evan Apodaca

Lydia Moreno

IMMIGRATION RIGHTS GROUPS URGE DODGERS: "PLEASE DON'T GO TO THE WHITE HOUSE."



lakern

Yes they should go! Stop bringing politics into sports! ❤️🤝💙

39 w

2 likes

Reply

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Preliminary Conclusions



The interviews reveal disagreement not over whether the displacement was unjust, but over what accountability should look like



Reconciliation remains debated, shaping how participants view the Dodgers' relationship to their fanbase



Activism and education serve as tools for mobilization, with Melissa Arechiga using social media to keep history visible



Internal debates reveal gendered dynamics, as Melissa described being labeled "difficult" and "aggressive" by men within the same movement

Next Steps

Continue monitoring how the Dodgers engage with contemporary political and community issues

Transition to community programming through potential collaboration LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes

Spearhead initiatives that utilize historical research to foster dialogue within Dodger fanbase

REFERENCES

- Barabak, M. Z. (2025, June 25). Amid raids, Dodgers can't separate sports from politics. Los Angeles Times.
- Fernandez, I. (2025). The Dodgers won't speak out against the ICE raids, so fans are calling for a boycott. In LA Public Press. LAPP.
- Gumbel, A. (2026, July 22). As Dodgers head to White House, loyal fans are conflicted: 'Trump is tearing this city apart'. The Guardian.
- H. M. Laslett, J. (2015). Shameful victory. University of Arizona Press.
- Home. (n.d.-a). In Buried Under the Blue.
- Munoz, A. (2025). Immigration Rights Group urges Dodgers to skip White House visit after world series win. In ABC7 Los Angeles.
- Playing politics: Sport, power and conflict in US history | USAbroad – journal of American history and politics. (2026). Unibo.it.
- ROAR Studios. (2025, October 21). The uprooted - documentary film. YouTube.
- The dark legacy of this iconic baseball stadium. (n.d.-b).
- W. López II, R. (2009). Community resistance and conditional patriotism in cold war Los Angeles: The battle for Chavez Ravine.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the Laidlaw Scholars Foundation and the Barnard College Laidlaw Scholars Programme for making this research possible. Thank you to Dr. Randa Serhan for her generous guidance and support throughout this project. I also thank my parents for planting the seed of advocacy from a young age and encouraging me to champion the stories of neglected communities, as well as everyone who generously shared their time, resources and stories to help grow this research project. Finally, this work is dedicated to the Chicano stories that have been overlooked, silenced and unacknowledged. May this research serve as an homage to those stories and the communities who carry them forward.