The Depression

 Economic collapse

 Domestic causes

 Industrial expansion and overproduction

 Agricultural overproduction and decline

 International causes

 World War I and reparations

 Urbanization

 The Depression led to a transformation of the Mexican community from rural to urban

 The Depression was a catalyst to this urbanization

 According to Gonzales true urbanization occurred during this time (beginning in 1920s)

 This follows general trend of urbanization in US

 Gonzales talks about Mexican Americans who did have farms and ranches such as in New Mexico began to lose them during the Depression

 However this was a general widespread trend in US

 The Mexican population of Denver doubled in 1930s

 The old Urban barrios in LA, San Antonio, El Paso, etc. grew

 As suburbanization increased, Mexicans began to form new barrios, such as East LA

 However, much of the barrio population continued to be migrant labor during this time, contributing to instability in the communities

 The Midwest

 Railroad and farm labor continued to be the basis of the Mexican community in the Midwest during the late 1920s and 1930s

 Nevertheless, Mexicans began to be recruited to work in industrial factories during the 1920s

 The Detroit community expanded as Ford hired Mexican workers

 Mexican auto workers also fanned out across Michigan to Flint, Pontiac, Saginaw, etc.

 Chicago became the largest center of Mexican migration in Midwest

 Hub of railroad network and center of heavy industry

 Steel, meatpacking

 South Chicago towards the Indiana border

 There is a debate over the nature of Midwestern Mexican immigrant life

 Different or similar to Southwester Mexican society?

 Differences:

 More heavily urbanized

 Received higher wages and education

 Less isolated from other ethnicities

 Higher levels of intermarriage or exogamy

 Farther distance from Mexico made it more difficult to maintain ties with ancestral traditions

 Greater assimilation

 Greater use of English

 Similarities:

 Assimilation rate may not have been that much different

 Discrimination at similar levels

 The development of ethnic communities or barrios

 The development of Mexican nationalism

 The development of religious, patriotic, and ethnic mutual aid societies

 The Mexican Problem

 The collapse of the economy contributed to the scarcity of jobs

 This exacerbated ethnic tensions

 During the 1930s the presence of Mexican workers began to be considered problematic for economic recovery

 Mexican workers represented unskilled labor and were considered to be helping hold down wages

 The stereotype of Mexicans was that they were driving down wages and that they were an unrestrained population

 These sentiments gave rise to calls for the removal of Mexican immigrants from US

 Repatriation

 It's estimated that one-third of Mexican immigration left the country voluntarily or involuntarily

 Some say figure is closer to half

 In 1931 the Roosevelt administration launched a deportation drive in Southern California

 Perhaps the highest level of repatriation occurred in the Midwest

 Much of repatriation was voluntary

 One cause of repatriation was the AAA which took a large amount of farm land out of production

 Unintended consequence

 Dust Bowl Migration

 Labor Strife and the Labor Movement

 Increase in labor union activity

 Mexicans generally excluded from labor unions

 Mexican workers often acted on their own

 Mutual aid societies became the bases of Mexican labor organization

 Clifton and Morenci strike in Arizona 1915 was an example of this type of organization

 This activity encouraged Mexican and American workers to cooperate

 In the 1930s there was a lot of activity by communist organizations to organize Mexican labor