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**Review of *Mexican Americans in the 1990s: Politics, Policies, and Perceptions*, ed. Juan Garcia**

Ed A. Muñoz  
*Iowa State University*

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*Mexican Americans in the 1990s: Politics, Policies, and Perceptions*. Perspectives in Mexican American Studies, Vol. 6. Edited by Juan García. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997. x + 228 pp. \$15.00 paper.

In *Mexican Americans in the 1990s*, Juan García assembles a fine collection of essays addressing the tremendous diversity and fluidity of the Latino/Chicano/Mexican American political experience in contemporary US society. More importantly, the contributors' admirable analyses and interpretations of Latino/Chicano/Mexican American identity, culture, and politics in the thirty-year wake of the Chicano Movement provide a refreshing alternative to those who view the decline of strict cultural nationalism and oppositional politics as detrimental to Chicano self-determination and community empowerment.

Contrary to Armando Navarro's contention, the increased trend to accommodationist and coalition politics occurring within a broader Latino/Hispanic social, economic, and political milieu is no reason to believe that the goals and objectives of '60s Chicano/a activism have become diluted. Rather, as recognized by contributors such as Ignacio García and Raoul Contreras among others, this is the ongoing elaboration of ideas, strategies, tactics, and adaptations necessary for the success of Chicano/a political struggles. What's more, Phillip Gonzales's convincing analysis of the social, economic, and political appropriateness of the ethnic label *Hispano* cautions readers that uncritical censure of derivations from strict Chicano Movement ideology is in itself contradictory to the overarching goal of self-determination.

A compelling assessment, and one voiced by a majority of the authors, is that accommodationist politics is but *one* response to the neo-conservative sentiment in American politics that has placed Chicano political action in a dilemma since the mid-'70s. For example, David Manuel Hernández and Christine Marín discuss how Latino leaders' reluctant denunciation of "undocumented immigration" in

order to ward off backlash against all "legal immigration" amounts to political scapegoating of a vulnerable segment of the Latino population. Yet nativist and racist affronts directed at Latino immigrants have brought forth a diverse unification of grassroots activists, scholars, and legal officials to re-energize the Latino community's efforts in promoting non-restrictive immigration sentiments and policies. Mario Barrera further explains the need for compromise by arguing that Latino films are most useful as a weapon against an oppressive social system when the message conveyed is not explicitly political and ideological, but reinforcing of indisputable moral values.

Finally, in his study of Chicano/a students, Mark Pizarro leaves little doubt as to the complexity involved in shaping and molding Chicano/a identity. Varying levels of power are associated with such characteristics as culture, class, community, religion, and sexuality that interact and allow for the rich variability in Chicano/a identity. And as Daniél Estrada and Richard Santillán point out, some of the most exciting possibilities for future research on Chicano identity, culture, and politics lie in regions outside the historical borders of Aztlán such as the Great Plains. Immigration, coupled with natural growth, has allowed for the increased visibility of the Latino/Chicano/Mexican American population outside of the American Southwest, undeniably influencing the group's politics, policies, and perceptions well into the next millennium.

ED A. MUÑOZ  
Department of Sociology and  
Latino/a Studies Program  
Iowa State University