

we simply consider the Puritan colonization of New England as a continuation of Iberian models rather than a radical departure” (215), or that “for all confessional differences, the English and the Spanish were ultimately cultural twins” (76). To judge by the sources, the author's argument might be valid only as far as literary models and representations are concerned. Any such claim to economic, institutional, political or other similarities would need further evidence and argumentation.

In addition, it is worth noting that although Cañizares-Esguerra presents a thorough analysis of the popular tropes and representations used by British and Spanish intellectuals, he is not as thorough when explaining how they promoted or contributed to practices of colonization and domination.

“For a historiographical dialogue to take place,” concludes Cañizares-Esguerra, “U.S. historians need to find a balance between the patriotic excesses that characterize the historiography of the North and the tragic visions that dominate the historiography of the South” (233). It is this position that makes *Puritan Conquistadors* essential reading for historians of both Colonial British and Spanish America. In a broader sense, it is an additional call for scholars in general to break out of the “ghettos” of area studies into a wider, more comprehensive framework of historical research and study.

Yael Mabat

Tel Aviv University

LISA GARCÍA BEDOLLA: *Fluid Borders: Latino Power, Identity, and Politics in Los Angeles*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

For decades, Latinos/Hispanics have been the proverbial “sleeping giant” who slept through the 70s, 80s, 90s, and now in the first decade of the twenty-first century, continues to sleep. In fact, in her book *Fluid Borders: Latino Power, Identity, and Politics in Los Angeles*, Dr. Lisa García Bedolla quotes Otto Santa Ana: “The Mexican sleeping giant never woke up. It died in its sleep in the summer of 1993.” *Fluid Borders*, however, is not a book about a funeral, but rather a well-researched, thoughtful, and timely book about Latino, but principally Mexican, political behavior. If the book reveals nothing else, and in fact it reveals much more, it shows us that thinking of Latinos as a giant fails to capture the complexity of the Latino, or even Mexican, community and the political behavior of its people.

There is little question that Latinos could form a very powerful political force in the United States, especially because of their concentration in the key electoral states of California, Texas, Florida, New York, and Illinois, which combined hold

168 of the 270 electoral votes needed to win the presidential race. The Latino population is also the fastest growing in the United States; between 1990 and 2000, it increased by almost 58 per cent compared to just over 13 per cent for the total U.S. population. In 1950 there were approximately 4 million Latinos in the United States; by 2004, there were 40 million – a 900 per cent increase in fifty years. If projections are correct, 25 per cent of the U.S. population will be Latino in 2030. But size is not enough. The question is whether this population will assert itself politically, and if it does, will it do so in a way that will change the country's political landscape. In an attempt to answer this and related questions, García Bedolla offers a sophisticated analysis of the political behavior of Latinos based on more than 100 in-depth, semi-structured interviews of Latinos in two Los Angeles County communities: East Los Angeles, predominantly working class; and Montebello, middle class. She engages the interdisciplinary literature on a wide range of issues, including voting behavior, social movements, community activism, and Latino Studies.

García Bedolla conducted her fieldwork during the summer of 1996 and the winter of 1996-97 in two high schools and two adult-education schools. Eighty-three per cent of her respondents were Mexican and two-thirds were either first or second generation and the remaining third were third generation or more. The sample included roughly an equal number of males and females. "In this book, through Latinos' own voices, I show how members of marginalized groups engage in the complex process of negotiating their relationship with the U.S. political system and the role of collective identity and social context in that process," she writes (21). What she found was that class mattered, but not necessarily in the way that contemporary political theories predict. García Bedolla found that her working-class respondents were more, not less, politically engaged than their Montebello counterparts, both as voters and as community activists, principally because they had a stronger sense of community and ethnic pride and because their family and friends were more politicized than those of the Montebello respondents. The two communities differed in other respects as well.

García Bedolla observed that while over 90 per cent of her East L.A. respondents opposed Proposition 187, only 53 per cent of her Montebello respondents opposed the proposition (and were much more likely to have good things to say about the proposition even if they voted against it). The proposition, supported by over 60 per cent of Californians in 1994, called for denying public education, medical care (other than emergency medical care), and social services to the undocumented and their children. This disparity, and other differences between these two communities, prompted García Bedolla to question whether Latinos will be able to fashion a common agenda. The voting behavior of Latinos in the 2004 elections suggested that there was good reason for concern among those

seeking a common Latino agenda. Polls indicated that 44 per cent of Latinos voted for Bush in 2004. In the November 2006 election, however, only 29 per cent voted Republican, allaying some of these fears. What the figures reveal, however, is that the Latino vote is more variable than generally assumed, and in this respect García Bedolla's work is indeed instructive and can be useful for political organizers to mobilize this community or (as Garcia Bedolla's work suggests) *communities*.

To her credit, she takes her analysis a step further with a prescription, based on her research, for political mobilization. The keys to mobilization are positive identities and group attachments. "In other words," she writes, "for members of stigmatized groups, establishing a positive attachment to their social group may be a necessary first step toward their attachment to the political community as a whole" (190). Flowing from this, and consistent with the Saul Alinsky model, is the need to organize at the local level around local issues, and then move from there to the state and national levels. Finally, the United States is *racialized* and the lives of members of "stigmatized" groups are affected by that reality. An analysis of the political participation of Latinos and other racial and ethnic minority groups has to take this into account, which she does. Instead of closing with the requisite minor criticisms, and there are a few, I prefer to close with kudos for a nicely conceived, well executed, and timely piece of scholarship. This is a book for anyone interested in political participation in general, and that of Latinos, specifically. The book is an important contribution not only to the political science literature, but to sociology and Latino studies as well.

Héctor L. Delgado

University of La Verne, CA

RAMÓN SALDÍVAR: *The Borderlands of Culture: Américo Paredes and the Transnational Imaginary*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2006.

Américo Paredes (1915-1999) remains a towering figure in Chicano and Borderlands history, and his significant contributions to cultural studies are increasingly recognized in other fields. His 1958 book *With His Pistol in His Hand: A Border Ballad and Its Hero* challenged historical narratives that had long marginalized ethnic Mexicans in the United States. This work opened the door for scholars to consider previously neglected sources, such as the *corrido*, in order to arrive at a fuller understanding of the history of the border region. Ramón Saldívar examines the origins of Paredes' intellectual engagement with transnationalism, with particular focus on Paredes' life before he entered academia in the 1950s.