

Leo R. Chávez. *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008. 272 pp.

Dr. Chávez's latest book length study, *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation*, continues his precedent-setting interdisciplinary ethnographic studies of Mexican immigration in the United States. Dr. Chávez's work looks (at the risk of being too poetic) at the ugly bestia/beast of American nativism and structural racism directed towards Mexicans, who are perceived as threats to the American body politic. He provides a seven chapter study that is both elegant and nuanced, yet written in an accessible way that makes this book ideal for classroom adoption for courses related to Chicana/o Latina/o Studies, US and Mexico border studies, immigration, political science, ethnic studies, applied anthropology, women and gender studies, and discourse and rhetoric studies.

The seven chapters are a lively and engaged overview of how nativist discourse practices affect the subject citizen formation of people of Mexican ancestry in the current political climate, their own feelings of belonging, and the quantitative measures of economic and educational success. Chávez takes the meta-methodological prerogatives of Foucault's discussion of biopower and the regulation of citizenry, and applies it to the real life and ongoing struggles of immigrants seen as threats to the health of the nation state. The way that Dr. Chávez blends a heteroglossia of narratives from his interview subjects with numeric measures evinces an impeccable example of the promise of trans-disciplinary scholarship. His models of segmented assimilation are an especially useful frame to understand the stop and start dynamics that immigrants negotiate as they struggle to empower themselves, belong and succeed, and who are then upended by the ways that the Latino Threat Narrative discourses and institutionalized practices create obstacles that impede this progression. His chapters on how Latina fertility is construed as a threat to the nation looks at the caustic and afactual stereotypes that Latinas endure as "breeders," making them threats to the white purity of the nation state in both discursive and empiric ways, and he shows how this attitude represents a racialized and deep seated misogyny towards Latinas. His data analysis of women in Orange County clearly shows that these deep seated attitudes contribute to the threat and invasion narratives and are without factual merit.

Dr. Chávez's final chapters speak to the paramilitary representational and real violence of the Minute Men on the border and the very timely phenomenon of the 2006 marches and mobilizations that took place to call for Immigration Reform and to

challenge the unbridled racism of nativist discourses. As someone who was involved and participated in these marches and taught about them in my classes, I appreciate Chávez's willingness to look at the contradictory forces in the ways immigrant rights are being articulated, and the strategy to embrace a full cultural citizenship to a body politic which sees white European descendent subjects as the rightful Americans. After successfully debunking the Latino Threat Narrative by looking at the genealogies of discourse that form and reproduce this narrative, Chávez ends by providing a series of sober and pragmatic policy recommendations which scholars, community organizers, lawmakers and policy makers can take into consideration.

The only quibble that I have, as a friendly comment, is Chávez's use of the Quebec model metaphor for his comparative frame. I appreciate his willingness to look at Canada, the rarely discussed third wing of NAFTA, and his expanding of border studies beyond the north-south dialectics of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. His examination of the Quebec model and the push for French Canadian sovereignty in terms of language and cultural geography is useful to understand how the reconquest narrative is constructed and perceived. However, his arguments might be more useful and more comparative if his analysis looked at how indigenous groups in Canada such as the Mohawks, Crees, and the Métis communities compared to mestizas/os negotiating their struggles for citizenship, land rights and cultural survival. France and England are colonial powers that colonized the indigenous communities of Canada. In my mind, I wonder if it makes more sense to compare the struggles of Mexicans in the Southwest to other colonized and displaced subjects, and how Mexicans carry their mixed ancestries and indigenous legacies. How many Mexicans have land ties to the Southwest that predate the arrival of Anglos, and how many have ancestral ties to indigenous nations, Apache, Pueblos, Dine, Yoeme, and Kickapoo, to name a few. The ugly and virulent ironies of this nativist discourse and the paramilitary practices of the Minute Men are that they want to deport, harass, intimidate and position as illegal aliens all brown-skinned subjects, regardless of historic and geographic ties, to position white colonial subjects as the true native Americans. I wonder if indigenous communities especially the Mohawk nation and Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy), whose ancestral lands are cut by the Canada-U.S. border and Métis nations are seen as threats to the Canadian body politic or as undesirable elements that need to be expelled from Canada.

However, having offered this friendly suggestion to an otherwise engaging study, I conclude that Chávez accomplishes a thorough, complex, wide-ranging, sophisticated and truly interdisciplinary read of this narrative, which balances the best of race and gender scholarship. He is willing to look at discourse, theory and policy in

ways that make this book a precedent-setting model of how scholarly practice can engage with the real life struggles of immigrants and the pervasiveness of structuralized attitudes about their subject positions.

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