

Latino Metropolis (Globalization and Community)

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Urban Studies/Latin American Studies

A readable look at culture and politics in Los Angeles through a Latino lens.

Los Angeles: scratch the surface of the city's image as a rich mosaic of multinational cultures and a grittier truth emerges-its huge, shimmering economy was built on the backs of largely Latino immigrants and still depends on them. This book exposes the underside of the development and restructuring that have turned Los Angeles into a global city, and in doing so it reveals the ways in which ideas about ethnicity-Latino identity itself-are implicated and elaborated in the process. A penetrating analysis of the social, economic, cultural, and political consequences of the growth of the Latino working-class populations in Los Angeles, Latino Metropolis is also a nuanced account of the complex links between political economy and the social construction of ethnicity.

Lifting examples from recent news stories, political encounters, and cultural events, the authors demonstrate how narratives about Latinos are used to maintain the status quo-particularly the existing power grid-in the city. In media representations of riots, in the recasting (and "whitening") of Mexican food as Spanish-American cuisine, in the community displacement that occurred as part of the development of the Staples Center-in telling instances large and small, we see how Los Angeles and its Latino population are mutually transforming. And we see how an old Latino politics of "racial" identity is inevitably giving way to a new politics of class.

Combining political and economic insight with trenchant social and cultural analysis, this work offers the clearest statement to date of how ethnicity and class intersect in defining racialized social relations in the contemporary metropolis.

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