



Chicana /o Identity in a Changing U.S. Society (The Mexican American Experience)

Aída Hurtado, Patricia Gurin

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What does it mean to be Chicana/o? That question might not be answered the same as it was a generation ago. As the United States witnesses a major shift in its population—from a white majority to a country where no single group predominates—the new mix not only affects relations between ethnic groups but also influences how individuals view themselves. This book addresses the development of individual and social identity within the context of these new demographic and cultural shifts. It identifies the contemporary forces that shape group identity in order to show how Chicana/os' sense of personal identity and social identity develops and how these identities are affected by changes in social relations. The authors, both nationally recognized experts in social psychology, are concerned with the subjective definitions individuals have about the social groups with which they identify, as well as with linguistic, cultural, and social contexts. Their analysis reveals what the majority of Chicanas/os experience, using examples from music, movies, and the arts to illustrate complex concepts. In considering *¿Quién Soy?* ("Who Am I?"), they discuss how individuals develop a positive sense of who they are as Chicanas/os, with an emphasis on the influence of family, schools, and community. Regarding *¿Quiénes Somos?* ("Who Are We?"), they explore Chicanas/os' different group memberships that define who they are as a people, particularly reviewing the colonization history of the American Southwest to show how Chicanas/os' group identity is influenced by this history. A chapter on "Language, Culture, and Community" looks at how Chicanas/os define their social identities inside and outside their communities, whether in the classroom, neighborhood, or region. In a final chapter, the authors speculate how Chicana/o identity will change as Chicanas/os become a significant proportion of the U.S. population and as such factors as immigration, intermarriage, and improvements in social standing influence the process of identification. At the end of each chapter is an engaging exercise that reinforces its main argument and shows how psychological approaches are applicable to real life. *Chicana/o Identity in a Changing U.S. Society* is an unprecedented introduction to psychological issues that students can relate to and understand. It complements other titles in the Mexican American Experience series to provide a balanced view of issues that affect Mexican Americans today.

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