



The Trouble with Unity: Latino Politics and the Creation of Identity

By Cristina Beltrán

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Over the past decade, much attention has been given to examining the growing political influence of Latinos in the United States in order to define the so-called "Latino vote." The existence of a coherent, pan-ethnic Latino political agenda is, as this book shows, not only highly debatable, but democratically unviable.

Situated at the intersection of political theory and Latino studies, *The Trouble with Unity* is a nuanced critique of civic Latinidad and the Latino electoral and protest politics that work to erase diversity and debate in favor of images of commonality. Cristina Beltrán looks at key moments in U.S. Latino political history through the lens of political, feminist, and cultural thought to provide a theoretically driven account of the many ways in which Latinos lay claim to the public realm. In its innovative approach to the realities of Latino protest politics, *The Trouble with Unity* advances both social movement and democratic political theory.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Cristina Beltrán's powerful book, *The Trouble with Unity* is timely for our age of Obama in which an ugly anti-immigrant spirit looms large. Don't miss it!" --Cornel West, Princeton University

"In her lucid account of the complexities of identity politics, Cristina Beltrán analyzes U.S. Latino efforts to forge a unified political community, persuasively arguing that unity-based politics can provide spaces for meaningful political action but too often minimizes major differences. *The Trouble with Unity* is an informative, balanced, and unusually thoughtful contribution." --Rogers M. Smith, Christopher H. Browne Distinguished Professor of Political Science, University of Pennsylvania

"Many have looked at the growth of Latino political identity from a purely empirical perspective. This work, however, tries to understand how Latino-ness is performed and understood in the public sphere, the growth and nature of pan-ethnic identity, and how disparate individuals come together to see themselves as a political interest. Cristina Beltrán's book is a work of theory built off of a careful historical examination of practice and is a major contribution." --Gary Segura, Professor of Political Science and Chair of Chicana/o Studies, Stanford University

"This book makes an original and centrally important contribution by using categories of political theory to analyze the ways in which 'Latinos' have thought about their political identities. It will become essential reading for those interested in how political theorists can contribute to the rethinking of race and ethnicity." -Joan Tronto, Professor of Political Theory, University of Minnesota

"A sophisticated analysis of social justice in the Latino community.... useful for general readership and all undergraduate work on Latino studies in the US.... Recommended." --*CHOICE*

"The idea of applying political theory to movement politics is certainly unusual, but Beltrán deftly weaves together empirical observation with normative insight in ways that allow us to see the dangers and promises of identity-based political movements." --*Perspectives on Politics*

"[P]ioneering... systematically dismantles outmoded political discourses in favor of emergent, negotiated, more complex coalitions of Latino solidarity." --*Contemporary Sociology*

"[A] dazzling reading of Latino politics... One of the signal achievements of *The Trouble with Unity* is its capacity to vivify the political value and limitations of theoretical canons, old and new. If Beltran's argument stimulates conversation across disciplinary boundaries and takes democratic theory to places where it has not typically wanted to go, she also offers a forceful reminder of why political theorists return to hallowed texts. *The Trouble with Unity* puts political theorists on notice: the construction of Latino identity [is] not [a] specialty subject. [It is] democratic theory."--*Political Theory*

"In this pioneering work of social theory, Cristina Beltrán applies thought to the contemporary predicament of 'Latinos,' that portion of the U.S. population which is of Latin American origin or social identity."
--*Contemporary Sociology*

About the Author

Cristina Beltrán is Associate Professor of Social and Cultural Analysis at New York University.

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