

being charted by this show? The answer Delmont provides is a resounding and compelling no.

The Nicest Kids in Town is an important contribution to the existing and growing historiographies of postwar Philadelphia and civil rights in the North. Where Delmont's work presents opportunities for further exploration is in its examination of popular culture and memory. In chapter 8, "Still Boppin' on *Bandstand*," Delmont considers the narratives of race relations in two contemporary representations of the program, NBC's *American Dreams* and the *Bandstand*-like show represented in the movie *Hairspray*. Although Delmont uses these two texts to bolster the argument he has built carefully in the preceding chapters, his analysis reads as a largely isolated critique of these two texts, as opposed to a rich opportunity to think through the ways in which memory of *Bandstand* has been negotiated. Given that Delmont has created a companion website to the book where individuals can write in with their memories of *Bandstand* (<http://scalar.usc.edu/nehvectors/nicest-kids/index>) and considering the array of sources from which he draws, the tools exist to consider the contests and negotiations involved in understanding the past more fully. Taken together, Delmont's book and website offer a wealth of material that future scholars will surely examine with great interest and excitement.

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NOTE

1. For examples of recent work on civil rights in the North, see Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008); Matthew J. Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); and Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

Edgar Sandoval. *The New Face of Small-Town America: Snapshots of Latino Life in Allentown, Pennsylvania* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010). Pp. xi, 152. Appendix, index. Cloth, \$29.95.

Edgar Sandoval begins his latest book by relating the story of Nerivonne Sanchez, a fifteen-year-old Puerto Rican on the verge of celebrating

her *quinceañera*. Part cotillion, part religious ceremony, the *quinceañera* is a centuries-old ritual that marks a girl's passage into womanhood in some Hispanic and Latino cultures. In times past, the *quinceañera* served as a public declaration that the celebrant was eligible for marriage, though that function has diminished greatly with changing cultural mores and attitudes toward age and gender. The story of Nerivonne and the larger Sanchez family sets the stage for what could have been a worthwhile examination of the adaptations and integrations of long-standing cultural and national traditions in new contexts among Hispanic and Latino populations in the United States. What follows instead, however, is what this volume's subtitle suggests. There are no in-depth examinations of the social forces or structures that inform Latino populations' transnational movements, settlements, or recreations of cultural rituals in places like Allentown offered here. Rather, Sandoval provides only glimpses—snapshots indeed—into the existences of Latino populations living in this postindustrial town. While Sandoval offers the uninitiated a look into some of the social issues recent immigrants and long-term residents confront on a regular basis, scholars and students of Hispanic and Latino populations looking to deepen their research and studies will likely be left wanting.

Sandoval spreads his snapshots over thirty-one brief essays of about three to five pages each. In addition to Nerivonne and the Sanchezes, readers meet within these portraits the principal of a charter school, public school teachers and students in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, various laborers and workers of different stripes, television and other media personalities from Spanish-language programming, and several other individuals trying to do the best for themselves and their families against some difficult conditions. On one hand, Sandoval provides a service by showing how immigrants from different parts of Latin America and the Caribbean eke out an existence in unfamiliar lands. Yet, his treatment of that existence suffers from the use of the term "Latino" as customarily deployed in most mass-media outlets. Sandoval applies "Latino" somewhat uncritically throughout the book with a seeming presumption that all Spanish-speakers from Latin America and the Caribbean ascribe to a single identity bound by language, socioeconomic status, or both. Striving to portray a pan-ethnic identity in this way ultimately diminishes the overall value of this work.

While the casual reader may gain some insights into the social, political, and cultural lives of these new immigrants settling in an unlikely port of entry rather than a more traditional site like New York, Chicago,

Los Angeles, or Miami, scholars interested in an in-depth analysis of these immigrants' socialization, political engagement, or culture will likely be frustrated, particularly by the book's organization. The essays appear in no discernible pattern. A piece about education is followed by one about news broadcasting, which is followed by one about migrant laborers, and then by one about housing ordinances. Essays addressing these kinds of issues appear at different points throughout the book, but without any linkages to the other related pieces. Themes around which Sandoval could have arranged his essays include familial and social connections, popular media, schools and education, and the politics of housing. Such organizational schemas would have facilitated the development of a larger synthesis of ethnic identity formation and its role in Allentown's Latinos' efforts to advocate for improved educational opportunities, reformed housing policies, and greater access to and representation in Spanish-language newspapers and television broadcasts.

The shortcomings highlighted here could be forgiven. Sandoval is a journalist and not a social scientist, after all. Sandoval even could be forgiven for claiming as he does to be doing the work of an anthropologist, even as he writes like a journalist (viii). What complicates this, however, is Sandoval's simultaneous admission to violating the standards and practices of his chosen profession. "In journalism school, I was taught not to get too close to sources. . . . In the end, I learned that journalism rules don't always apply when you write about everyday folks," he states, explaining why he ingratiated himself to the Sanchez family and, by extension, Allentown's other Latino residents. "That got me a little close to them," Sandoval continues, "but in the end, that only made my piece better." Unfortunately, this reads as a self-serving rationalization that obviates any objectivity Sandoval may have maintained toward his subjects. "Besides, I was not the only one receiving warm affection from the Sanchezes," he concludes, noting that a local insurance salesman also attended Nerivonne's quinceañera (6–7).

The New Face of Small-Town America ultimately is an interesting look into the existence of Latino populations in new settlement areas and would be a perfectly serviceable addition to a reading list for an introductory undergraduate course on contemporary Latino issues. Professional historians and other researchers, however, are not likely to find many new interpretations of those issues.

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