



Democratic Renewal and the Mutual Aid Legacy of US Mexicans

Julie Leininger Pycior

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The legacy of the historic mutual aid organizing by US Mexicans, with its emphasis on self-help and community solidarity, continues to inform Mexican American activism and subtly influence a number of major US social movements. In *Democratic Renewal and the Mutual Aid Legacy of US Mexicans*, Julie Leininger Pycior traces the early origins of organizing in the decades following the US-Mexican War, when Mexicans in the Southwest established *mutualista* associations for their protection. Further, she traces the ways in which these efforts have been invoked by contemporary Latino civil rights leaders.

Pycior notes that the Mexican immigrant associations instrumental in the landmark 2006 immigration reform marches echo *mutualista* societies at their peak in the 1920s. Then Mexican immigrants from San Diego to New York engaged in economic, medical, cultural, educational, and legal aid. This path-breaking study culminates with an examination of Southwest community organizing networks as crucial counterweights to the outsized role of large financial contributions in the democratic political process. It also finds ways in which this community organizing echoes the activity of *mutualista* groups in the very same neighborhoods a century ago.



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