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### Review of *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens and the Nation*. Leo R. Chavez. Reviewed by Catherine Carballeira.

Catherine Carballeira  
*Touro College*

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complex interplay of economic, political, legal, and sociological factors that, when combined with the power of the media, inevitably leads to the cyclical nature of opportunity, change, and backsliding that has accompanied every reform effort. Rarely do we see as finely written a story by one who lived and led a social change movement.

By the end, Tobis acknowledges the difficulty of changing a system whose focus is on those without a voice: children. He counts on people like Beam to bring those voices to the fore, while empowering parents and advocates to continue working toward child welfare reform. Beam and Tobis write from two very different perspectives—the former primarily that of the foster child and foster parent, and Tobis, from that of the (birth) parent. Yet, if they were in the same room, they would likely agree on many things, primarily that change should focus on working to prevent family problems in the first place.

In reading both books, I occasionally found myself defensive, arguing on behalf of the agency's perspective, or, as a social worker, privileging the social work voice. I wanted to point out the progress we have made, of the evidence we continue to amass on its sometime effectiveness. I wanted to scream that most of its shortcomings are the result of underfunding, and many of its inefficiencies an outcome of its unavoidable scope. That each book left this me unsettled, agitated, and deeply affected is evidence that the seeds these authors have sown can cultivate longer lasting reform.

*Julie Cooper Altman, School of Social Work, Adelphi University*

Leo R. Chavez, *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens and the Nation*. Stanford University Press (2nd ed.) (2013). \$70 (hardcover); \$22.95 (paperback).

With Congress currently positioned for battle in the final round for comprehensive, bipartisan immigration reform, including a path to citizenship, immigrant rights activists are gearing up with rallies and fasts across the country. On the one hand, the Pew Hispanic Center polls reveal that the majority of Americans are in favor of immigration reform, yet the Southern Poverty Law Center delineates an unprecedented

rise (figures have doubled between 2007 and 2009) in alarmist, nativist, extremist hate groups fomenting intolerance and angry demagoguery. The time is certainly ripe for a second edition to Leo Chavez's *Latino Threat*, which is replete with updated information on draconian immigration laws, as well as coverage of the presidential debates of 2012, which showcased the vituperative and vitriolic discourse of the Latino Narrative Threat, defined as:

A number of taken-for-granted and often-repeated assumptions about Latinos, such as that Latinos do not want to speak English; that Latinos do not want to integrate socially and culturally into the larger U.S. society; that the Mexican origin population in particular, is part of a grand conspiracy to take over the U.S. Southwest (the *reconquista*) and that Latin women are unable to control their reproductive capacities, that is, their fertility is out of control which fuels both demographic changes and the alleged reconquista. (p. ix)

The book is divided into two parts: the first describes the myths and stereotypes which undergird the Latino threat discourse, including chapters on the cultural contradictions of citizenship and on Latina sexuality as a threat to the nation; the second part focuses on media spectacles, such as marches and demonstrations, as well as the privileges of citizenship, on the Minutemen, on DREAMers, and anchor babies. Armed with Foucault, Chavez proceeds at a relentless speed as he deconstructs these narratives through critical cultural analysis and mixed method research, and ultimately denudes and topples each of the triple, mythic, stereotypical threats of invasion, re-conquest and separatism. He thus exposes the primitive and primary process thinking which creates the essentializing binary constructions of citizen/foreigner, legal/illegal, deserving/undeserving, moral/immoral. Chavez then moves on to a cogent analysis of the manipulation of the threat narratives by media pundits and politicians to create divisiveness and prevent social integration for Latinos, as they further their own personal and political ambitions at the expense of denying basic social services, meaningful jobs, benefits and

rights, including prenatal care or quality education and ultimately citizenship. Chavez ends with the enumeration of concrete policy recommendations “to alleviate the damage caused by the Latino Threat Narrative and to ensure a rapid integration of Latino immigrants and their children” (p. 217).

Chavez writes with compassion and integrity, restoring dignity to the lives deformed by these narratives. At times, the reader would have preferred more analysis of the economic and labor issues that also drive these narratives. *The Latino Threat* is accessible and essential reading for students and professionals alike, and fosters advocacy for policy change, as well as the need to understand the psychologically and emotionally damaging repercussions of structural racism and nativist discourse practices, and their effects on provision of language access, health disparities and social services for Latino immigrants.

Catherine Carballeira, Touro College  
Graduate School of Social Work

Katherine Stewart, *The Good News Club: The Christian Right's Stealth Assault on America's Children*. Public Affairs (2012). \$25.99 (hardcover).

This book is an unusual one for review in a scholarly journal for several reasons. First, the author herself is not a scholar in the conventional sense; she is a journalist. Secondly, the work is more of a call to action than to contemplation. Thirdly, the book, though exploring an important social phenomenon, does not seek to explain that phenomenon.

Alternatively, though the author is a public intellectual, she presents not screeds but substance in a developing form of social organization that has gone, for the most part, unnoticed. She uses recognized qualitative methods—participant observation, interviews, and detailed textual examination. Overall, the book merits review.

*The Good News Club* documents various ways the Christian Right is infiltrating the American educational system through sponsored after school activities that are highly planned centrally and then “franchised,” as it were, to local church groups