

Latino Studies and Political Science: Politics and Power Perspectives for Latino Communities and its Impact on the Discipline

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Occasional Paper No. 34

December 1997

ABSTRACT

The development of Latino studies over the past 25 years has focused on the examination, analysis, and expansion of the knowledge base of Latino origin persons and communities in the U.S. Within the academy, questions of legitimacy as a focus of scholarly inquiry were confronted by Latino Studies scholars. The development of Latino Studies has established its tradition to include systematic analysis of the Latino experiences with a dimension of the application of the knowledge for social change and empowerment of the Latino community. This paper portrays the development of Latino Studies, particularly in the realm of politics, power, and policy. In this discussion, three themes are developed: a) nature and development of Latino Studies over the past 25 years; b) development and impact of Latino scholars on the Political Science profession; and c) the impact of Latino Studies scholarship on the discipline of Political Science. This paper was prepared for the Julian Samora Research Institute's conference on Transforming the Social Sciences through Latino Studies held at Michigan State University, April, 1997.

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John A. Garcia, is Professor of Political Science at the University of Arizona. He earned his B.A. from the University of Texas, his M.A. from the University of Houston, and his Ph.D. from Florida State University. His major fields of study are Government and Political Science with specialization in Minority Politics, Urban politics, Methodology, and American Government. He serves as a Board of Directors member of the Mexican-American Studies and Research Center, as well as on the Advisory Committee to the Directorate of Social Behavioral Sciences, Nation Science Foundation. Dr. Garcia also serves as Chair-Elect for the Hispanic Advisory Committee for 2000 Census, U.S. Bureau of the Census. Among his many published works, he co-authored *Latino Voices: Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban Perspectives on American Politics* in 1993.