

**Julian Samora Research Institute**

*The Midwest's Premier Latino Research Center*



# Beyond Internal Colonialism: Class, Gender, and Culture as Challenges to Chicano Identity

Maria E. Montoya

Occasional Paper No. 18

April 2000

## ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on the demographic change of scholars between the current (2000) generation and those who fought the battles to establish Chicano Studies in the early 1970's. Many older scholars do not trust the new generation to carry on the vision that guided them in the creation of the Chicano Movement. Today, Chicana/o history stands at a crossroads. For the first time, this "new," but really remade, Chicano history will be told and retold by people who were not there at the inception of the field. Several factors separate and distinguish the myriad of Chicanos experiences. The author discusses in the paper what she thinks challenge the Chicano/a community of interest, both in terms of academia and activism. They are issues around class, gender, and culture. In terms of class, diversity among the Mexican American population has always marked the Chicano experience, but is becoming more prevalent as more Chicanos slowly make their way into the middle and upper classes of American society. Even more divisive than class, however, has been the failure of the majority of Chicano (not Chicana) historians to incorporate gender as a meaningful category of analysis in their work. Finally, what and who defines Chicano culture may help us to define what Chicano history is and what it will be in the future.