

Fredy González. *Paisanos Chinos: Transpacific Politics among Chinese Immigrants in Mexico.* Oakland: University of California Press, 2017. xiii + 277 pp. \$29.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-520-29020-4.

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Paisanos Chinos provides the first comprehensive historical analysis of the Chinese community of Mexico during the mid-twentieth century. Over the past decade, several works have examined Chinese immigration and settlement in Mexico during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These books build upon the foundational scholarship of Evelyn Hu-DeHart, and include: *The Chinese in Mexico, 1882-1940* (Robert Romero, 2010); *Chinese Mexicans: Transpacific Migration and the Search for a Homeland, 1910-1960* (Julia Camacho, 2012); *Making the Chinese Mexican: Global Migration, Localism, and Exclusion in the U.S.-Mexican Borderlands* (Grace Delgado, 2012); and *Chino: Anti-Chinese Racism in Mexico, 1880-1940* (Jason Chang, 2017). González picks up where most previous studies have ended—the aftermath of the sinophobic movement that culminated in the expulsion of the Chinese from the Mexican state of Sonora in 1931. Drawing from a wide array of Chinese-language sources from both the People's Republic of China and Taiwan, as well as local, regional, and national Mexican archival materials, González recovers “the history of the first wave of Chinese migrants after the anti-Chinese campaigns” (p. 193) and “traces the racial formation and political participation of Chinese Mexicans through the Second World War and the Cold War” (p. 4).

This extensive use of Chinese-language sources sets *Paisanos Chinos* apart from previous studies that have been based primarily upon Spanish- and English-language archival materials. As part of his research, González scoured the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in Beijing, Hong Kong Baptist University, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Taiwan, and the Guomindang Archives of Taipei. Drawing upon many hitherto unexplored Chinese-language sources, together with other source materials from Mexico, the United Kingdom, and the United States, *Paisanos Chinos* offers fresh insight into the Cold War Chinese community of Mexico, as well as broader Chinese diplomatic history.

Whereas previous works have emphasized the anti-Chinese movement as a peculiar phenomenon of the northern Mexican states of Sonora and Sinaloa, González analyzes the spread of sinophobia across central and southern Mexico. At a fine level of detail, he examines the specific tactics employed by Chinese immigrants to counter the efforts of José Ángel Espinoza and others who sought the eradication of the immigrant community. Chinese Mexicans appealed to diplomatic officials in Mexico, their compatriots in San Francisco and mainland China, and even local and feder-

al Mexican officials. They also pursued legal strategies of defense in Mexican courts.

While shedding new light upon the anti-Chinese campaigns and strategies of resistance, *Paisanos Chinos* focuses upon the history of Chinese incorporation and integration within Mexican society during the mid-twentieth century. After the devastation wrought by the anti-Chinese campaigns, the Chinese remnant fought for socioeconomic and political survival by strengthening their attachments to China. This was accomplished by joining transnational associations such as the War of Resistance and the Guomindang. According to González, such political participation promoted a strong Chinese government, which in turn engendered greater respect and protection for the overseas Chinese community of Mexico. Moreover, González argues, the maintenance of such transnational political ties “did not hinder integration, but rather forged an alternative path to achieve it” (p. 4). Transnational political participation not only served as an effective strategy of protection, but also created a political ethnic identity and platform for Chinese Mexicans that brought them into visible and meaningful contact with Mexican society. For example, political organizing gave Chinese Mexicans enough clout to form a welcoming committee to celebrate the arrival of the Chinese navy to the Mexican port of Acapulco, as well as to form a self-defense military group in Tijuana during the Second World War. It also translated into the development of trade relationships between Mexico and China and the promotion of cultural events such as Cantonese opera in the Distrito Federal. Such activities were featured in newspapers both in Mexico and China and led to the further inclusion of “paisanos chinos” as special guests at Mexican government celebrations and diplomatic functions. In sum, transnational political organizing gave Chinese immigrants a respected political voice within Mexican society, which, in turn, fur-

thered their social, cultural, and political integration on more equal footing.

From the standpoint of ethnic studies, this alternative path to integration reflects the similar experience of Mexican Americans and Chinese Americans during the era of Jim Crow. Segregated in housing and education and regarded as second-class citizens, Mexican Americans formed civic associations such as the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), which simultaneously represented their distinct legal and political interests and created a more equal platform for political incorporation within US society. To assist in their civil rights efforts, LULAC members forged political ties with Mexican consular officials, made appeals to the US-Latin American “good neighbor policy,” and filed constitutional cases in federal courts. Such political strategies were all part of an explicit bid on the part of Mexican Americans to be accepted as equals in US society. Parallels can also be made to the Chinese American community and the formation of historic civil rights organizations such as the Chinese American Citizens Alliance. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) can be cited as a contemporary example. For persecuted ethnic minorities of any country and of various historical time periods, social and political incorporation is often nonlinear and often involves transnational politics aimed first at securing civil rights protections. As demonstrated by González in his study of Chinese migrants who searched for inclusion in Mexico, as well as these other historical examples, “transnational politics [perhaps counter-intuitively] makes immigrants more likely to integrate into the host community” (p. 5).

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