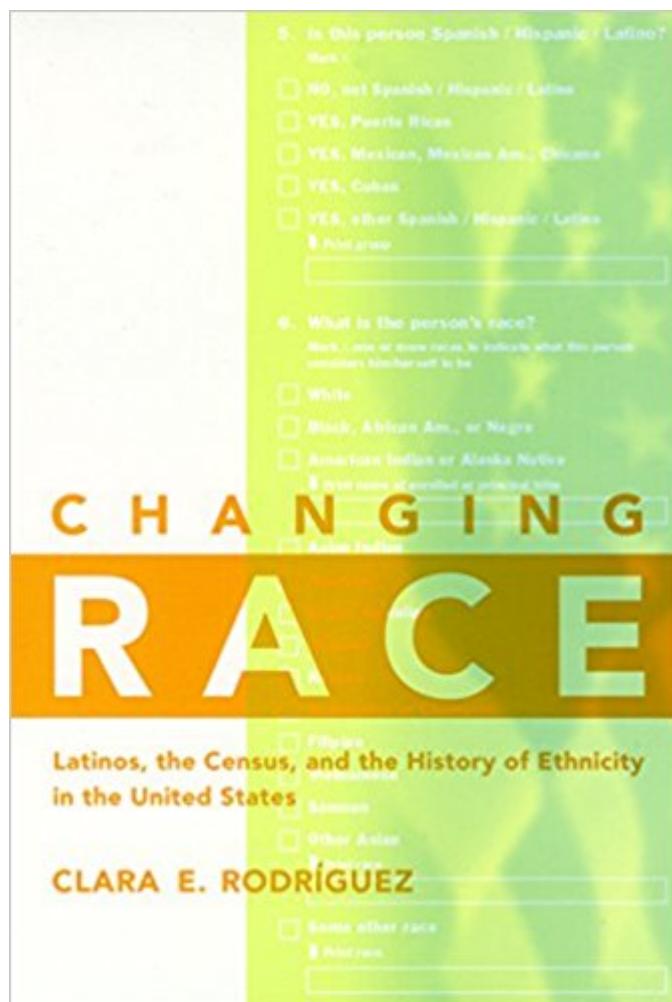


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# Changing Race: Latinos, The Census And The History Of Ethnicity (Critical America)



## **Synopsis**

Latinos are the fastest growing population group in the United States. Through their language and popular music Latinos are making their mark on American culture as never before. As the United States becomes Latinized, how will Latinos fit into America's divided racial landscape and how will they define their own racial and ethnic identity? Through strikingly original historical analysis, extensive personal interviews and a careful examination of census data, Clara E. Rodriguez shows that Latino identity is surprisingly fluid, situation-dependent, and constantly changing. She illustrates how the way Latinos are defining themselves, and refusing to define themselves, represents a powerful challenge to America's system of racial classification and American racism.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Interesting read. I learned a lot about the census. Bought it for my class.

Currently, the Federal government recognizes White, Black, American Indian, Asian, and Pacific

Islanders as race groups, and Hispanic as an ethnic group. If the Arab Institute has it's way, Arabs may soon become separate group. CHANGING RACE by Clara Rodriguez is a good summary of materials prepared by U.S. Census Bureau analysts as they have struggled to operationally define and measure population subgroups that are in essence social constructs. Rodriguez' book covers the history of measuring "race" in the United States from the first census in 1790 to the 1990 census 200 years later. Most of her book focuses on the past 25 years when race issues have been very salient. During this period, Census Bureau analysts have operationalized criteria established in regulations written by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in the Executive Branch of the Federal government (i.e. the White House). OMB is charged with recognizing the race and ethnic categories referred to in legislation written by the U.S. Congress, official representatives of the American people who presumably pass laws that reflect the people's interests and desires. One might say there's plenty of slip between cup and lip, and like most things done in Washington, what actually gets done at the field level (the Census Bureau) may not be what the American people intended. However, like other government field agencies, the Census Bureau, takes it on the chin when members of the public complain. Rodriguez book attempts to describe what happens at the field level--who complains and Federal responses to those complaints. Rodriguez book does not adequately address the issue of what happens to blanks--many Americans can't or won't respond to race and ethnic questions. Non-responses for these individuals to the race and Hispanic items are filled in via an imputation process that generally assumes birds of a feather flock together. In other words, if you did not fill in your form someone filled it in for you. The assigned values reflect the characteristics of your neighbors. To the extent you are like your neighbors this is not a problem. Whether you like the idea of measuring race and ethnicity or not, this is an informative book and one every citizen should read--and every person who plans to be a social scientist. You can't change anything if you don't understand how it works and you certainly should not be conducting research if you don't know what race is or isn't. Many political interest groups have discovered how race categories become reified via government recognition and use this knowledge to their advantage. As Rodriguez says, "Identity is relative and constantly negotiated through relationships and situational contexts."

Book arrived sooner than expected shipment date, and in condition reported. Had really useful highlighting throughout! Thanks!

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