



National Performances: The Politics of Class, Race, and Space in Puerto Rican Chicago

Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas

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In this book, Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas explores how Puerto Ricans in Chicago construct and perform nationalism. Contrary to characterizations of nationalism as a primarily unifying force, Ramos-Zayas finds that it actually provides the vocabulary to highlight distinctions along class, gender, racial, and generational lines among Puerto Ricans, as well as between Puerto Ricans and other Latino, black, and white populations.

Drawing on extensive ethnographic research, Ramos-Zayas shows how the performance of Puerto Rican nationalism in Chicago serves as a critique of social inequality, colonialism, and imperialism, allowing barrio residents and others to challenge the notion that upward social mobility is equally available to all Americans—or all Puerto Ricans. Paradoxically, however, these activists' efforts also promote upward social mobility, overturning previous notions that resentment and marginalization are the main results of nationalist strategies.

Ramos-Zayas's groundbreaking work allows her here to offer one of the most original and complex analyses of contemporary nationalism and Latino identity in the United States.

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