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Sunbelt Diaspora: Race, Class, and Latino Politics in Puerto Rican  
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We can begin to ask questions not only about the conditions under which such movements successfully provide peace and security, but when they can broaden their remit from security (*sensu stricto*) to the provision of a wider set of common goods, how such groups can persist in a system of centralized (albeit inefficient) authority through legitimacy or cooption, and how they might end up sanctioning brutal violence in the name of providing security.

What makes this book so special is how it is built on lifelong friendships with men (sadly, only men) who grew from childhood playmates or teenage accomplices to become movers and shakers, and indeed instigators of a small, secretive, local movement in 1981 that has grown and evolved into a concept recognized by every living Tanzanian. Sadly, some of these characters have died, unnoted. *Mhola* will do much to honor their memory, creativity and courage.

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*Sunbelt Diaspora: Race, Class, and Latino Politics in Puerto Rican Orlando.*

Patricia Silver. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2020, 320 pp. \$45.00,  
cloth. ISBN 978-1-4773-2045-7.

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In *Sunbelt Diaspora*, Patricia Silver examines Puerto Rican and Latino political life in Orlando, Florida. In doing so, Silver fills an important gap in social scientific knowledge by providing a rich analysis of an important yet underexamined case. A key task of the book is to examine “the dynamics of Puerto Rican and Latino political community formation in a specific time and place in a social field of pressures that inform how local dynamics around racial-ethnic identifications, class relations, and ideas about place play out in the encounter with myriad differences subsumed under a homogenizing label as Hispanic or Latino.” The analysis relies on an impressive breadth of data—ethnographic, oral histories, and archival research—collected over a ten-year period in Orlando metro. Throughout seven chapters, Silver develops the argument that “Puerto Rican political identifications and practices in diaspora are being reworked in important ways as the so-called Latinization of the United States continues and Latinos in Orlando and other spaces in the US South become focal points of national political attention.”

Chapters 1 and 2 provide contextual background—historic, geographic, demographic, and political—that informs the analysis that follows. These first two chapters review migration patterns that led to the growth of Orlando’s Puerto Rican community, and they identify key structural features—neoliberalism and colorblind multiculturalism—that shape Puerto Ricans’/Latinos’ place, and relations to each other, in central Florida.

Chapter 3 explores the invisibility and hypervisibility experienced by Puerto Ricans in Orlando. Silver contends that Puerto Ricans were largely invisible in Orlando from midcentury until 1980 because they did not fit race- and class-based ideas about Puerto Ricans that were prevalent in stateside communities. Yet, the 1980s marks an important “tipping point” as Puerto Ricans and Latinos become hypervisible to and homogenized by Orlandoans. This chapter provides insight into important local racial and political dynamics. First is the emergent ethnoracial formations as Puerto Ricans/Latinos are racialized as different from Black and White. Second is insight into important tensions—pursuing ethnic *or* panethnic political organizing—as Puerto Ricans seek access to political spaces and power.

Chapter 4 builds on the previous chapter by examining how Puerto Ricans have struggled to move beyond invisibility/hypervisibility to define their own presence, right to be different, and right to belong in Orlando. Key to this process of claims-making is what Silver calls *translocal Puerto Rican remembering*. This chapter also draws on important community actions that marked Puerto Ricans’ (specifically) and Latinos’ (more broadly) political and cultural presence in Orlando during the 1990s. Silver contends these efforts along with others demonstrate how Puerto Ricans/Latinos have enacted a participatory citizenship to challenge an exclusionary inclusion.

The next three chapters are particularly critical. Chapter 5 provides an important examination of local political systems and the barriers they create for Puerto Rican/Latino political participation and representation. It also uncovers symbolic gestures of Latino inclusion that essentially allow local economic and political power holders to maintain control. Silver contends these forms of political exclusion are a part of “Puerto Rican dispossession and displacement in local government.” Indeed, the systemic barriers uncovered here explain the paucity of Puerto Rican elected representatives statewide despite Puerto Ricans’ demographic and electoral numbers.

Chapter 6 delves into intra-Puerto Rican and Puerto Rican/Latino relations to examine the nuances of collective identification and organizing. The analysis focuses on a key event and its dynamics: Orange County’s Redistricting Advisory Committee (RAC) appointments. Silver contends the RAC appointment process stirred up the *balde de hueyes*—a struggle at times in concert with and at other times in competition for equitable opportunities—by simultaneously promoting Hispanic homogeneity and sowing discord between Puerto Ricans and other Latinos. Drawing on the outcomes documented here, Silver reminds us that while a collective identity may exist, it does not mean there is a common political ideology or that it will lead to political solidarity.

Chapter 7 focuses on the important and consequential redistricting process of Orange County following the 2010 decennial census. Silver pays close attention to the technologies of the mapmaking process to examine how a process intended to create greater inclusion in response to demographic changes resulted in containment of non-white communities and the overall preservation of white economic and political control. This is a critical analysis for understanding how local racial-ethnic and class hierarchies are reproduced. Overall, a key contribution of *Sunbelt Diaspora*, which is supported by its

methodological and analytical approach, is its engagement with intersecting histories, “messiness of difference,” “contradictory relations” in the examination of place-making, and political community formation in a new and southern destination.

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*Esperanza Speaks: Confronting a Century of Global Change in Rural Panama.* Gloria Rudolf. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021, 224 pp. \$26.95, paper. ISBN 9781487594695.

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Once upon a time, in the rural, mountain forests of southwestern Panama, Esperanza was born to *campesino* (subsistence farmer) parents in the tiny village of Loma Bonita. She recalls that day, remembering, “As soon as I opened my eyes, I saw these mountains and all of my relatives” (p. 37). This moment marks the beginning of a long and beautiful story of a brave and determined woman. Her name, Esperanza, is a pseudonym for “hope,” and her story has plenty of it.

In *Esperanza Speaks*, Gloria Rudolf takes us along Esperanza’s journey from Loma Bonita back and forth to Panama City, where, as a domestic worker, Esperanza is introduced to the pernicious effects of income inequality on rural-urban labor migrants. To tell Esperanza’s story, Rudolf relies on a life history approach, which draws on a half century of participant observation and interviews over the course of 20 research visits that illuminate how Esperanza’s experiences shape, and are shaped by, historical change in Panama and beyond. Esperanza is at once unique in her narrative voice yet shares many of the same or similar life experiences with other rural Central American women of her generation. In some ways, this is very much a global account of how one person is interconnected to the rest of humanity in webs of politics and economy.

The book actually does not begin at Esperanza’s birth. Instead, Rudolf chooses to open the story with her own arrival in Loma Bonita in 1972 when, as a graduate student, she is first introduced to Esperanza and her family. By sharing her personal experiences subsumed under those of her interlocutor, Rudolf presents a richly layered and compelling story, not of anthropologist and research subject, but as she puts it, “two women who love the telling and the listening that make for lively conversations” (p. 24). Readers will find some of these exchanges hilarious and some heartbreaking. Along the way, Rudolf provides snapshots—set aside from the main text—of a “wider lens” of Panamanian politics, economy, and society. These occasional waypoints help situate Esperanza’s story in a broader cultural context that allows readers to imagine how the story’s protagonists are embedded in global forces.