

Response Paper:

Latino Landscapes: Postwar Cities and the Transnational Origins of a New Urban America — A.K. Sandoval-Strausz

Andrew K. Sandoval-Strausz writes in his text about the purpose of U.S born and migrant Latinos in creating and revitalizing a new American landscape and the impact of a transnational community on the history of the United States.

He begins by visualizing the historical background during the postwar period and the urban crisis. Many cities in the United States were facing a period of social and economic decline, thus most scholars solely focused on elements such as “white flight and neighborhood abandonment” (p. 805). This led to his main argument about the rise in Latino population and their function during this period. He proceeds to talk about the emergence of Oak Cliff, its evolution over the years and social, cultural and economic factors leading to its popularity.

It is understandable that Sandoval-Strausz wants to present as many aspects as possible to clarify his point, which makes sense. But it does seem repetitive at times. For example, in the paragraphs on New Oak Cliff and “Desde Latin America”, in which he asserts that the decline of the economic opportunity in Latin America lead to a rise in Latino population in Oak Cliff. Repetitions weaken an argument, as it seems that the author is lacking examples. Additionally, due to these reiterations, it is more difficult to keep track of the chronological order as well as the spatial distinctions relevant for the purpose of the text.

Furthermore, he briefly mentions an African American neighborhood, but does not put it in the context of the subject of Latino neighborhoods. The reader thus questions the usefulness of this information to support the general argument. Sandoval-Strausz provides information which are not necessarily reinforcing his arguments, for instance

when he states that Little Mexico was the neighborhood “that people understood as the heart of the community” (p.812). Based on its said relevance to the Latino community, the reader wonders why he did not mention this neighborhood beforehand and questions the choice of Oak Cliff as an representative area.

Overall, his arguments are well structured. He supplies a great understanding of the benefits and difficulties of community building at that time, despite few superfluous informations which can be confusing to the reader and whose relevance is not clearly recognizable.