Jerry González. *In Search of the Mexican Beverly Hills: Latino Suburbanization in Postwar Los Angeles*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2017. Pp. 201. Paper $27.95.

Jerry González, Associate Professor of Metropolitan and Chicano History at the University of Texas, San Antonio, argues that suburbanization and development in Los Angeles County's San Gabriel Valley area in the 1940s and 1950s was part of "two concurrent historical processes" (2). First, developers and planners of newly-incorporated cities displaced self-constituted Mexican American communities of agricultural laborers (defined in the book as *colonias*) and created new tract neighborhoods to meet the growing postwar housing demand. At the same time, returning GIs and upwardly-mobile Mexican Americans leaving the barrios of the Eastside asserted their claims to citizenship through their pursuit of the "Mexican Beverly Hills," typified by single-family homeownership. This second process involved Mexican Americans' careful navigation of racial and ethnic identities to overcome a system of segregated development, and the formation of political activist coalitions to establish safe and well-served communities. In some instances, middle-class Mexican Americans clashed with their working-class counterparts as suburban city officials participated in policies to displace *colonia* residents.

González expands on the suburban studies of Southern California historians like Becky Nicolaides and Chicanx historians such as George J. Sánchez. His case-studies of El Monte, Pico Rivera, and Santa Fe Springs highlight the significant participation of Mexican Americans in the physical construction of these suburbs, as well as the foundation of distinct middle- and working-class Mexican American suburban identities. Based on his dissertation, the research employs a bottom-up social history approach. Oral histories and newspaper reports offer a relatable sense of Mexican Americans' experiences, desires, and obstacles, as well as the different and often difficult ways in which they made their dreams manifest.

As this study is primarily about the community debates over rights to land and claims to citizenship via homeownership, there is much for future researchers to explore regarding the cultural

characteristics of this community outside of the debate over single-family homes. The handful of compelling images that accompany the text, along with his epilogue about cruising culture on Whittier Boulevard, inspire more questions about the nature of suburban domestic and work life, youth culture, and the characteristics of a broader regional Latinx community that would grow to include large Asian and Central American immigrant groups in the following decades. This research is only the beginning of what promises to become a rich body of scholarship on the San Gabriel Valley in the twentieth century.

More specific to Cal State LA, this work may resonate strongly with southland residents. A La Habra native, González's keen sense of the physical and cultural geographies of the upper San Gabriel River watershed reveals an intimate portrait for those who grew up in the region. For those with established roots in the area, the book also solidifies a historical claim to urban space and political activism. For newer residents, it disavows the narrative that the land of tract homes and industrial plazas was simply untouched farmland before suburban development.

González's great care to recognize Mexican Americans as both supporters and opponents of suburban renewal also speaks to the complicated nature of development and growth in urban and suburban ethnic communities today, where issues of class and identity characterize the debate over ideological and physical community ownership. As urban communities nationwide grapple with the consequences of development and displacement, *In Search of the Mexican Beverly Hills* helps locate present contests over urban space within a longer-running process of urban and suburban development.

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