



# ¡Chicana Power!: Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement (Chicana Matters)

By Maylei Blackwell

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The first book-length study of women's involvement in the Chicano Movement of the late 1960s and 1970s, *¡Chicana Power!* tells the powerful story of the emergence of Chicana feminism within student and community-based organizations throughout southern California and the Southwest. As Chicanos engaged in widespread protest in their struggle for social justice, civil rights, and self-determination, women in *el movimiento* became increasingly militant about the gap between the rhetoric of equality and the organizational culture that suppressed women's leadership and subjected women to chauvinism, discrimination, and sexual harassment. Based on rich oral histories and extensive archival research, Maylei Blackwell analyzes the struggles over gender and sexuality within the Chicano Movement and illustrates how those struggles produced new forms of racial consciousness, gender awareness, and political identities.

*¡Chicana Power!* provides a critical genealogy of pioneering Chicana activist and theorist Anna NietoGomez and the Hijas de Cuahtémoc, one of the first Latina feminist organizations, who together with other Chicana activists forged an autonomous space for women's political participation and challenged the gendered confines of Chicano nationalism in the movement and in the formation of the field of Chicana studies. She uncovers the multifaceted vision of liberation that continues to reverberate today as contemporary activists, artists, and intellectuals, both grassroots and academic, struggle for, revise, and rework the political legacy of Chicana feminism.

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### **Editorial Review**

#### **Review**

"Blackwell's !Chicana Power! offers a compelling microhistory that invites readers to drill down into the 'disturbances and shifts'... Blackwell seeks to make an intervention into how historians frame the Chicana/o movement, and while her focus on Chicana voices invites comparison to important works in this vein... Blackwell's aim is to broaden not only the cast of characters in movement narratives but also the epistemological registers of movement historiography itself." - Signs "The Chicano movement of the 1960s and 1970s gained national prominence fighting discrimination against Mexican Americans, but women's contribution to the cause is frequently downplayed. In !Chicana Power!, Chicano studies professor Maylei Blackwell shines light on Mexican American women's fight for equality. For the book, Blackwell drew on documents written by Chicana activists and oral histories gathered over the past 20 years to create 'the first book-length study of women in the Chicano movement.' The book focuses on Anna NietoGomez, a Chicana theorist and founder of Hijas de Cuauhtemoc, a feminist newspaper and organization from Long Beach, California, that opposed male domination, racism, and classism. Blackwell notes that Chicana activists faced numerous hurdles to social equality, foremost amongst them the 'chauvinism, discrimination, and sexual harrassment' of male Chicano movement leaders. Tracing the role of women in the movement's development, the book paints an illuminating picture of Chicano movement history from a feminist perspective." - NACLA Report on the Americas "This is an excellent study that can be used in Chicano and Chicana literature courses, as well as women's and gender studies and Latina studies classes. It is a book written with passion that uses fundamental theoretical oral history and ethno- graphic practices."--The Oral History Review

#### **About the Author**

MAYLEI BLACKWELL is Assistant Professor in the César E. Chávez Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies and Women's Studies at UCLA. An interdisciplinary scholar activist and oral historian, she works with indigenous women's organizers in Mexico, Latin American feminist movements, and sexual rights activists, all of whom are involved in cross-border organizing and community formation.

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**Thelma Atkins:**

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