



# **The Border Crossed Us: Rhetorics of Borders, Citizenship, and Latina/o Identity (Albma Rhetoric Cult & Soc Crit)**

*Dr. Josue David Cisneros*

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*The Border Crossed Us* explores efforts to restrict and expand notions of US citizenship as they relate specifically to the US-Mexico border and Latina/o identity.

Borders and citizenship go hand in hand. Borders define a nation as a territorial entity and create the parameters for national belonging. But the relationship between borders and citizenship breeds perpetual anxiety over the purported sanctity of the border, the security of a nation, and the integrity of civic identity.

In *The Border Crossed Us*, Josue David Cisneros addresses these themes as they relate to the US-Mexico border, arguing that issues ranging from the Mexican-American War of 1846–1848 to contemporary debates about Latina/o immigration and border security are negotiated rhetorically through public discourse. He explores these rhetorical battles through case studies of specific Latina/o struggles for civil rights and citizenship, including debates about Mexican American citizenship in the 1849 California Constitutional Convention, 1960s Chicana/o civil rights movements, and modern-day immigrant activism.

Cisneros posits that borders—both geographic and civic—have crossed and recrossed Latina/o communities throughout history (the book’s title derives from the popular activist chant, “We didn’t cross the border; the border crossed us!”) and that Latina/os in the United States have long contributed to, struggled with, and sought to cross or challenge the borders of belonging, including race, culture, language, and gender.

*The Border Crossed Us* illuminates the enduring significance and evolution of US borders and citizenship, and provides programmatic and theoretical suggestions for the continued study of these critical issues.

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