abortion, contraceptives and counseling, which he calls collectively birth control services, more readily available to the young and unmarried. Lisk and Stevens consider Sierra Leoneon policies and programs as well as results from the failure of policy-makers and planners to recognize the active part played by women in the productive process and to incorporate their needs in the planning process. They suggest strategies that would increase the employment and income status of women and enhance appreciation of their contribution to national development. Pittin's essay on Nigerian Hausa women, as do a number of the other contributions, reminds readers that poor questions or premises invariably elicit faulty answers or results, and cautions that census data or other information gathered in a traditional manner should be used with extreme prudence. Pittin shows that Eurocentric terms and concepts might become muddled if applied unmodified to African societies. With the prominent exception of the essay on urban Yoruba mothers by Catherine di Domenica et al., part two is the weakest section of the book. All too often its essays rest on dated sociological and economic data and introduce little new knowledge.

This is a valuable scholarly volume nonetheless. It is well documented with a vast array of footnotes. It is also reinforced by a number of tables and figures and an excellent bibliography. Though directed at planners, policy makers, researchers, and students of demography and development, it should be read by anyone with the slightest interest in social developments and planning in modern West Africa. Students of comparative ethnicity will find its treatment of a number of groups highly useful.

— Ashton Wesley Welch
Creighton University


Américo Paredes is a figure quite familiar to anyone who has delved even lightly and briefly into Chicano literature, history, and culture. His long and distinguished career as a teacher at the University of Texas and his excellent scholarly publications have insured that his name is among the first encountered as one begins to examine the writings of Mexican Americans. "With His Pistol in His Hand": A Border Ballad and Its Hero (1958) is a landmark study, and his collections, A Texas-Mexican Cancionero: Folksongs of the Lower Border (1976) and Folktales of Mexico (1979) are significant contributions to the corpus of American folklore.

His George Washington Gómez (with the subtitle of "A Mexicotexan Novel") was, according to the introduction provided by novelist Rolando Hinojosa, begun in 1936 and finished in 1940. Hinojosa further states that it "should be seen and appreciated as an historical work, not as an artifact." In
In this context, Paredes' book is excellent, one which should be read by anyone interested in a literary view of Mexican-American life in the lower Rio Grande Valley from the time of the Mexican Revolution (1910) to the beginning of the Second World War. It is a straight-forward account of the title figure's coming of age. Along the way, the reader sees a loving family, a dreadful and prejudiced educational system, and a unique social/political system based principally on race. It is written in five parts, with the first four dealing with the protagonist's family background, his early years, his grappling with the burden of living up to his dead father's expectations, and the problem of his name and all the social and cultural baggage attached to it.

This is a first-rate novel, but there is a serious flaw in the fifth chapter, "Leader of His People," where the reader is completely unprepared for the jolting reversal regarding the title figure. George Washington Gómez in the last twenty-two pages is not the same person the author spent the rest of the book defining and describing, and the last pages seem to be only slightly connected to the rest of the novel. There is a great deal missing between the time "Gualinto" heads off to college at the end of part IV, and his return in part V as a counter-intelligence officer in the U.S. Army. Hinojosa is entirely accurate in calling it "a first draft of a work set against the Great Depression, the onset of World War II in Europe, and set also against the over 100-year-old conflict of cultures in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas."

In spite of the ending, George Washington Gómez has a great deal to offer the reader. For the first 280 pages, this is a well-written, thoughtful, intelligent, and engaging work which, had it been published in the early 1940s, would have been proclaimed as the "first" modern Chicano novel. Instead, that honor usually goes to Pocho, published in 1959 by José Antonio Villarreal. Paredes provides a much better portrait of a young man as he grows toward maturity in a bi-cultural society than does Villarreal, and George Washington Gómez is much more skillfully written and constructed. It is a significant contribution to the large and frequently neglected body of Chicano literature written prior to the mid-1960s.

— Carl R. Shirley
University of South Carolina


From a broad perspective, Parker discusses the political impact of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Thus, as he notes in his opening comments, "Since 1965 America has witnessed a renaissance of black participation" in the political process. His central focus is on the impact it had on the state of Mississippi. Throughout his discussion he examines the court challenges