

## “Chicana Fashion, 1940s to the Present, A Search For Independence and Solidarity Through Fashion”

In the United States, there is a history of insubordination in Mexican-American fashion for women, from which current-day Chicanas gather knowledge and inspiration for their social, cultural, and political affronts. American society has targeted and delegitimized Chicana fashion believing it marks the delinquency of an ethnic and gendered subculture. Despite this, Chicanas forge hybrid styles to create solidarity among each other. In this essay, I propose there is a generational continuity linking the women referred to as Pachucas in the 1940s, the Chicanas during the Civil Rights Era, the Cholas (1980s-2000s), and today’s younger generation of Chicana-identified individuals. By analyzing the phenomena of the Pachuca, Chicana (1960s-80s), and Chola styles, I trace their uses of style or style politics, branding for unity, and the gender histories of these subcultures to understand how they influence sloganism within the modern-day Chicana community. The authors Catherine S. Ramirez (2002 and 2009) and Amaia Ibararran-Bigalondo (2019) provide roadmaps to understanding the fashions of the three past Chicana subcultures, but I will extend their arguments and question their perspectives about the Mexican-American female image. I exhibit what the Chicana styles achieved in relation to independence and defiance by analyzing images of these women during each period. I pinpoint how and when these groups achieve solidarity, visibility, and individualization from others within the Chicano community. Consequently, I demonstrate how these Chicana fashion histories culminate in the work of Chicanas today, as they use fashion as a mode of political, social, and cultural commentary and protest.