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GAMBLING: SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS AND PUBLIC POLICY

Special Editor of this Volume

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ceive careful and fascinating analysis based on primary and secondary sources.

Schmidt argues that the story of the interconnections between commercialism and festivals is far from simple or undirectional. In the overall picture, marketing and merchandising increasingly gave shape to the calendrical time and public meaning, but the particulars show unevenness, confusion, and conflict. At Easter and Christmas, for example, domestic and often femaledominated customs intersected with the insights of promoters. Fashion and the proliferation of gifts and novelties were contested by some denominations, even as men like John Wanamaker adopted the language and symbols of Protestant Christianity as a way of making the marketplace sacred. Symbols were inverted and even made up by merchandisers, accepted and recast by consumers, criticized and purified by reformers, only to be worked again into the glorious tapestry of goods. Schmidt shows convincingly how secular is the sacred, and how sacred the secular.

Consumer Rites is engagingly written and well constructed. Overall, the book tends to place great weight on the influence of the nineteenth century, while telescoping discussions of the twentieth. Since nineteenth-century American consumer culture, directed largely by Protestants and aimed at whites, laid the groundwork for our world, this emphasis makes sense-but it makes the commercial-religious mélange of the present seem like an aftereffect. Schmidt might in a future volume look more closely at the twentieth century and say more about the relationship between mass sacralized consumption and other traditions: Afro-American, Catholic, and non-Christian American varieties of religious experience, all of which struggle with the unresolved relationship between the world of goods and the world of belief.

Consumer Rites also connects Schmidt's large questions with a world of material culture often seen as trivial. The book is illustrated with examples of a wealth of carefully researched commercial and folk art related to the festivals; merchant cards, greeting cards, advertisements, floral designs, window displays, and comic Valentines suggest a trove of relatively unstudied problems. In all these small things forgotten, there is meaning, excitement, and fascination.

SUSAN G. DAVIS

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ECONOMICS

GRAETZ, MICHAEL J. 1997. The Decline (and Fall?) of the Income Tax. Pp. ix, 323. New York: W. W. Norton. \$27.50.

For decades, tax policy has dominated the domestic political debate. Congressional policymakers have been unable to stop tinkering with the income tax—leaving the tax laws ever more complicated and less coherent as a result of the incremental development of this instrument of national economic and fiscal policy. Republicans and Democrats alike have also yielded to the temptation to use the income tax for implementing their respective partisan policies. Neither politicians nor taxpayers are very happy with the result, but virtually all tax reform efforts have failed.

Michael Graetz, a tax policy official in the Treasury Department during the Bush administration, likewise is not happy with the income tax. One of the leading authorities on U.S. tax law, Graetz has written a sensible, informative, and accessible account and critique of the income tax. The book is targeted at a general audience and works best at that level. BOOK DEPARTMENT 229

The first part of Graetz's book focuses on some of the more notable deficiencies of the income tax: the so-called marriage penalty, tax shelters, the complexity confronting taxpayers preparing their returns, and the difficulties of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) itself in administering the tax laws. This is the weakest section of the book, filled with anecdotal accounts purportedly illustrating the failures of the system and why the public distrusts the IRS. While written in a lively style and fun to read, the argument is unsupported by scholarship and lacks intellectual rigor. The second part of the book, focusing on the politics of the income tax during the 1980s and 1990s, will be of greater interest to students of American politics and public policy. Graetz is particularly hard on his former boss, George Bush, who waged an illadvised war in pursuit of a tax cut for capital gains and entered into the politically disastrous 1990 budget summit that ended with the president breaking his "no new taxes" campaign pledge. The criticism is justified.

The last part of the book—an analysis and critique of the major proposals for replacing the federal income tax with some form of national consumption taxis by far the strongest. Graetz debunks many of the exaggerated claims made by proponents. While his own reform proposal (a supplemental value-added tax and restructured corporate and individual income tax) makes considerable sense, it will not be very appealing politically. Still, policymakers should read these chapters. Graetz's book is a welcome and instructive introduction to a very complicated problem, the federal income tax.

SHELDON D. POLLACK

University of Delaware Newark HOYMAN, MICHELE M. 1997. Power Steering: Global Automakers and the Transformation of Rural Communities. Pp. xi, 262. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas. \$35.00. Paperbound, \$17.95.

Hoyman's book offers many important insights into the dynamic adjustment process resulting from major external shocks to local communities, such as locating a large plant employing in excess of 3000 production workers in a small rural town in America. Although the particulars may differ among the four cases cited. Hoyman finds that large plant location decisions set in motion a series of powerful regional dynamic adjustments in excess of what is anticipated by the original political leaders and inhabitants. Specifically, the study finds that growth is multidimensional (economic, political, and cultural); encompasses a multicommunity area of influence considerably larger than the target community where the new plant is located; and unfolds over time in a series of sequential stages, ranging from the primary impacts on jobs, wages, housing, and traffic, to intermediate and long-term concerns such as the political and cultural transformation of the affected communities. The major primary impacts include primary and secondary job creation, real estate speculation and growth, and traffic congestion. An important finding is that the land speculation and local euphoria occur before the actual construction and associated costs of the new facility begin.

At the intermediate stage, the public infrastructure of the affected communities shows signs of stress and congestion, leading to a need for new schools, water lines, waste treatment facilities, roads, and police and fire protection. Many local residents who do not participate directly in the benefits of new jobs and land speculation find themselves supporting higher levels of taxes to support the economic