Living in a Promiseland?: Mexican Immigration and American Obligations

Rogers M. Smith

with responses by Edwina Baravosa, Rafael Alarcón, and Louis DeSipio
**Editor's Introduction**

501  Editor's Introduction  

*Jeffrey C. Isaac*

**Articles**

505  How the U.S. State Works: A Theory of Standardization  

*Desmond King and Marc Stears*


*Jesse Hessler Rhodes*

**Reflections Symposium**

545  Living in a Promiseland?: Mexican Immigration and American Obligations  

*Rogers M. Smith*

559  Inner Contradiction to Immigration Quagmire: A Response to Rogers Smith  

*Edwina Barvosa*

563  U.S. Expansionism, Mexican Undocumented Migration, and American Obligations  

*Rafael Alarcón*


*Louis DeSipio*

571  Reply to Barvosa, Alarcón, and DeSipio  

*Rogers M. Smith*

**Reflections**


*Elizabeth F. Cohen*

---

Cover Art: Undocumented immigrants apprehended in the desert near the Mexican border are processed before being transported to a detention center June 1, 2010 near Sasabe, Arizona. They were captured in a group of 10 immigrants navigating the desert at night about two miles north of the border. During the 2009 fiscal year 540,865 undocumented immigrants were apprehended entering the United States illegally along the Mexican border, 241,000 of those were captured in the 262 mile stretch of the border known as the Tucson Sector. (Photo by Scott Olson/Getty Images)
Review Essays

585 Whose Equality? The Discouraging Politics of American Education (and What We Might Do about It)
Joseph P. Viteritti

597 Global Crime: Political Challenges and Responses
Mark Galeotti

Review Symposia

603 The Danish Cartoon Controversy and the Challenges of Multicultural Politics
A Discussion of The Cartoons That Shook the World
By Jytte Klausen
Cécile Laborde
Anne Norton
Donald Downs
Abdulkader Sinno
Carolyn M. Warner

621 Citizenship in an Unequal World
A Discussion of The Birthright Lottery: Citizenship and Global Inequality
By Ayelet Shachar
Linda Bosniak
John Echeverri-Gent
Terri E. Givens
Jane Junn

639 Class Politics, American-Style
A Discussion of Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer—And Turned its Back on the Middle Class
By Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson
Kathleen R. Arnold
Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier
Edward G. Carmines
Jodi Dean
Paula D. McClain
Jonas Pontusson
Brian Waddell

Book Reviews

IMMIGRATION POLITICS
663 Simon Bornschier, Cleavage Politics and the Populist Right: The New Cultural Conflict in Western Europe.
Rafaela M. Dancygier, Immigration and Conflict in Europe.
Review by Cas Mudde

665 Wendy Brown, Walled States, Waning Sovereignty.
Review by Jacqueline Stevens

668 Erin Aeran Chung, Immigration and Citizenship in Japan.
Review by Randall Hansen

Review by Roberta Villalón
Avigail Eisenberg, Reasons of Identity: A Normative Guide to the Political and Legal Assessment of Identity Claims. Review by Audie Klotz

Kelly M. Greenhill, Weapons of Mass Migration: Forced Displacement, Coercion, and Foreign Policy. Review by Christopher Rudolph

Daniel Martínez HoSang, Racial Propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California. Review by Caroline J. Tolbert


Anna O. Law, The Immigration Battle in American Courts. Review by Luis Fuentes-Rohwer


Aziz Rana, The Two Faces of American Freedom. Review by Duncan Ivison


Deborah J. Schildkraut, Americanism in the Twenty-First Century: Public Opinion in the Age of Immigration. Review by Gary P. Freeman

Vanita Seth, Europe’s Indians: Producing Racial Difference, 1500–1900. Review by Kevin Bruyneel

Rogers M. Smith, ed. Citizenship, Borders, and Human Needs. Review by Lisa García Bedolla

Andrés Solimano, International Migration in the Age of Crisis and Globalization: Historical and Recent Experiences. Review by Susan Y. Kneebone


Jodi Dean, Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies: Communicative Capitalism and Left Politics. Review by Joseph M. Schwartz

Stephen L. Esquith, The Political Responsibilities of Everyday Bystanders. Review by Colleen Murphy


Frank Lovett, A General Theory of Domination and Justice. Review by Casiano Hacker-Cordón

Adam Lupel, Globalization and Popular Sovereignty: Democracy’s Transnational Dilemma. Review by Craig Borowiak

Tamara Metz, Untying the Knot: Marriage, the State, and the Case for Their Divorce. Review by Brian Duff


Sibyl A. Schwarzenbach, On Civic Friendship: Including Women in the State. Review by Daniel Engster

Review by Mark Blitz

**AMERICAN POLITICS**

Review by Matthew E. K. Hall

716  *Tom S. Clark, The Limits of Judicial Independence.*
Review by Martin J. Sweet

718  *Margaret E. Farrar, Building the Body Politic: Power and Urban Space in Washington, D.C.*
Manuel Pastor, Jr., Chris Benner, and Martha Matsuoka, *This Could Be the Start of Something Big: How Social Movements for Regional Equity Are Reshaping Metropolitan America.*
Review by Keith Fitzgerald

720  *Eric T. Kasper, To Secure the Liberty of the People: James Madison’s Bill of Rights and the Supreme Court’s Interpretation.*
Review by Alan Gibson

722  *Frances E. Lee, Beyond Ideology: Politics, Principles, and Partisanship in the U.S. Senate.*
Review by Nicole Mellow

723  *Jarrett Lovell, Crimes of Dissent: Civil Disobedience, Criminal Justice, and the Politics of Conscience.*
Review by Christian Davenport

Review by Todd Shaw

726  *Kevin B. Smith and Christopher W. Larimer, The Public Policy Theory Primer.*
Review by Evan J. Ringquist

727  *Martin Sweet, Merely Judgment: Ignoring, Evading, and Trumping the Supreme Court.*
Review by Tom S. Clark

**COMPARATIVE POLITICS**

729  *Saïd Amir Arjomand, After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors.*
Mehran Kamrava, *Iran’s Intellectual Revolution.*
Review by Mehrzad Boroujerdi

731  *Marcelo Bergman, Tax Evasion and the Rule of Law in Latin America: The Political Culture of Cheating and Compliance in Argentina and Chile.*
Review by Isaac William Martin

Review by Benjamin Goldfrank

736  *Jennifer Jihye Chun, Organizing at the Margins: The Symbolic Politics of Labor in South Korea and the United States.*
Agnieszka Paczyńska, *State, Labor, and the Transition to a Market Economy: Egypt, Poland, Mexico, and the Czech Republic.*
Review by Michelle L. Dion

739  *Matthew R. Cleary, The Sources of Democratic Responsiveness in Mexico.*
Review by Caroline Beer

741  *Kirk A. Hawkins, Venezuela’s Chavismo and Populism in Comparative Perspective.*
Review by David J. Myers

742  *Natasha Iskander, Creative State: Forty Years of Migration and Development Policy in Morocco and Mexico.*
Review by Alejandra Castañeda

744  *Mona Lyne, The Voter’s Dilemma and Democratic Accountability: Latin America and Beyond.*
Review by Peter M. Siavelis

745  *Satu Riutta, Democratic Participation in Rural Tanzania and Zambia: The Impact of Civic Education.*
Review by Barak Hoffman

746  *Graeme B. Robertson, The Politics of Protest in Hybrid Regimes: Managing Dissent in Post-Communist Russia.*
Review by Kelly M. McMann
Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer, Political Power and Women’s Representation in Latin America. Review by Maria C. Escobar-Lemmon

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, eds. Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives on and beyond Asia.

Arlene B. Tickner and Ole Wæver, eds. International Relations Scholarship Around the World. Review by Patrick Thaddeus Jackson


David C. Kang, East Asia Before the West: Five Centuries of Trade and Tribute. Review by Michael J. Green

Daniel P. L. Chong, Freedom from Poverty: NGOs and Human Rights Praxis. Review by James Ron


Donatella della Porta and Manuela Caiani, Social Movements and Europeanization. Thomas Risse, A Community of Europeans? Transnational Identities and Public Spheres. Review by Beate Sissenich


Nathan C. Funk and Abdul Aziz Said, Islam and Peacemaking in the Middle East. Krista E. Wiegand, Bombs and Ballots: Governance by Islamic Terrorist and Guerrilla Groups. Review by Frédéric Volpi

William Hooker, Carl Schmitt’s International Thought: Order and Orientation. Review by Gabriella Slomp

Christine Horne, The Rewards of Punishment: A Relational Theory of Norm Enforcement. Review by Chad Rector


John Kane, Between Virtue and Power: The Persistent Moral Dilemma of U.S. Foreign Policy. Review by Patrick Callahan

Jenny Rebecca Kehl, Foreign Investment and Domestic Development: Multinationals and the State. Review by Mark S. Manger


Christina J. Schneider, Conflict, Negotiation and European Union Enlargement. Review by Uwe Puetter

Brent L. Sterling, Do Good Fences Make Good Neighbors? What History Teaches Us about Strategic Barriers and International Security. Review by Tony Payan

Review Index
strongly with the intellectual elite. This shortcoming may be attributed to the observation that his book is in many ways a work of advocacy by a public intellectual, who, through his frequent writings in Iranian media and visits to the country, has managed to insert himself into intellectual deliberations taking place there. Contrary to Kamrava, who was simply reporting on intellectual currents and debates without taking sides, Mirsepassi is himself a party to the debate and may have overstated the differences between the two approaches. Can he really claim that the Magna Carta, the Federalist Papers and the ideas of such thinkers as Mill, Rousseau, Jefferson, and Madison had no role to play in the development of democracy in the Western world?

One can also take issue with Mirsepassi’s appropriation of Rorty by pointing out that whatever Rorty says about democracy is primarily about liberal democracy. Like John Rawls, Rorty believes that democracy has primacy in contemporary Western liberalist societies exactly because a certain epistemology (pragmatism) and a certain philosophical view (secular liberalism) are already imbedded in these societies. In other words, we can stop worrying about truth not because it is unimportant and inconsequential to democracy but, rather, because we have already articulated what we mean by truth, philosophically as well as historically. Mirsepassi’s reading overlooks Rorty’s philosophical armor in defense of liberal democracy. Furthermore, the application of the ideas of this liberal/secular/pragmatist philosopher to a country like Iran, where the ruling elite claim divine mandate, legalistic Islam is the nomenclature of statecraft, the body politic is divided, laws are applied arbitrary, and nonliberalist truth claims are still in vogue, is methodological at the least.

As for Kamrava, regrettably he does not situate his analysis in terms of the economic and social transformations of Iranian society in the last three decades. Taking into account such factors as the rapid urbanization of the population, enlargement of the higher education system, attenuated nature of class relations, empowerment of new social groups, boldness of women’s and youth movements, and so on could have given more heft to the author’s analysis of the trajectory and dynamics underpinning each of these three intellectual currents.

Arjomand, Kamrava, and Mirsepassi all concentrate mainly on the post-Khomeini phase (“the second republic”) of Iranian polity and are in concordance that the grandiose experiment of the Islamic republic has failed. Arjomand and Mirsepassi also criticize the platform of Islamic reformists, but from different angles. While Arjomand is critical of the persistent attachment of these intellectual activists to a revolutionary discourse and their political timidity in challenging the “clerical monarchy” (p. 91), Mirsepassi takes them to task for being seduced by abstract thoughts about democracy. Unfortunately, none of the three authors really engages with the impressive body of political science literature on democratic transition or the persistence of authoritarianism to help us situate Iran in a larger theoretical framework. Similarly, engagement with the perceptive writings of scholars like Rajeev Bhargava, José Casanova, Alfred Stepan, and Charles Taylor could have further enriched discussions of the present and future prospects of “public religion” in Iran.

Many years ago, an astute analyst described the 1979 Iranian revolution as the victory of “ignorance over oppression.” Arjomand, Kamrava, and Mirsepassi manage to demonstrate that the Iranian society has come a long way in addressing the obliviousness charge but that, alas, oppression endures. In their own unique ways, each author has provided us with valuable insights into the epistemological tumult, theological fury, and recondite politics of post-revolutionary Iran. Three decades after the revolution, more empirically based studies of Iran’s Byzantine political structure and its political elite are needed to account for the durability of theocratic authoritarianism.


— Isaac William Martin, University of California, San Diego

For most of the twentieth century, the study of taxation was the province of economists, and the research literature on taxes concerned with market efficiency and distributional equity, to the near exclusion of other issues. That is changing: The works reviewed here, by a sociologist and a political scientist, respectively, exemplify the recent revival of what Joseph Schumpeter called “fiscal sociology.” Like other scholars of the new fiscal sociology, these authors use comparative methods to identify causal relationships between the revenue policies of particular states and the characteristics of their environments. In particular, both focus on the relationship between effective tax administration and cultural norms that legitimate taxation.

Marcelo Bergman’s *Tax Evasion and the Rule of Law in Latin America* concerns the relationship between tax administration and the cultural norm of tax compliance. You might expect such norms to be irrelevant if you have a rational enforcement bureaucracy that yields the credible threat of sanctions. Instead, the comparative evidence suggests that strong enforcement goes hand in hand with informal cultural taboos on tax evasion; tax administration and tax culture seem to function as complements, not substitutes. One hypothesis to explain this pattern is that bureaucratic administration fosters compliance norms by reassuring compliant taxpayers that free riders are not
taking advantage of them. Another, alternative hypothesis is that a tax compliance culture improves the quality of tax administration, by reducing the costs of surveillance and enforcement. Bergman argues that both hypotheses are correct, and that the causation is reciprocal. We should, therefore, expect polities to tend toward one of two equilibria, a high-compliance equilibrium or a low-compliance equilibrium.

Bergman subjects his theory to an impressive battery of tests, drawing especially on detailed qualitative and quantitative comparisons of high-compliance Chile to low-compliance Argentina. These two countries differ with respect to tax culture, but are otherwise similar with respect to levels of development, colonial legacies, and revenue strategies. The author argues that their tax cultures are self-reproducing equilibria in which administrative enforcement and cultural norms reinforce each other. He draws on several original surveys to show, for example, that Argentines, in comparison to Chileans, believe that their tax administration has less information about their finances (p. 89); believe their odds of detection are much lower if they cheat (p. 92); and are more willing to risk underreporting their tax liability—especially if they have previously been audited (pp. 96, 99). He presents longitudinal administrative data from a matched sample of audited and unaudited taxpayers to support his thesis that the low compliance rate of audited taxpayers is a perverse causal effect of audits gone wrong: Taxpayers who are audited only superficially learn that the tax administration is “all bark but no bite” (p. 124), and reduce their subsequent tax compliance accordingly (pp. 136–37, 151). Bergman also reports experimental evidence that information about the frequency of noncompliance affected the likelihood that subjects would cheat in a repeated assurance game (pp. 193–4). And he rounds out the study with a simulation to show that the choice of audit strategy matters a great deal; the wrong strategy will do little to deter the spread of cheating in a population of rational agents who look to their social environment for information about the odds of getting caught (p. 232). Differences in tax culture, in short, are endogenous to differences in the quality of tax enforcement.

As this partial summary suggests, the book draws on an impressive collection of data. Bergman’s comparative research design is exemplary, and his book may be read with profit even by comparativists who do not study tax administration were episodically relaxed during total wars, he argues, is that the cultural barriers to effective tax compliance behavior in the two countries has differed at least since the 1970s (pp. 71–73), but the book left me wondering what miracle put Chile on the virtuous path in the first place.

If Sheldon Pollack is right, the answer is probably war. The question of critical junctures in tax administration is addressed explicitly in Pollack’s War, Revenue and State Building. This book concerns the United States, which appears in Bergman’s study as a shadow case that exemplifies a strong culture of tax compliance and effective administration (see, e.g., pp. 4–5, 70, 111, 166). As Pollack points out, however, the United States is also known to comparativists for an ideological climate that is distinctively hostile to taxation. His central question concerns how these observations of the United States can be reconciled: Given the antistatist political culture of the United States, how did it “emerge in the twentieth century as the most powerful nation-state in the world with a robust revenue system capable of supporting a global military force as well as the panoply of expensive social welfare programs adopted since the 1930s?” (p. 107). The answer, he argues, is that the cultural barriers to effective revenue administration were episodically relaxed during total wars, when elites overcame their reluctance to tax and people overcame their reluctance to pay. The result was “a series of sporadic episodes in state building” (p. 108) that expanded the revenue-raising capacity of the federal government.

This argument is not particularly novel, which is another way of saying that it is consistent with a large literature. The connections among war, revenue, and state building will be familiar to anyone who is versed in the
Hugo Chávez has been widely discussed—and debated. Unlike most other Latin American countries, Venezuela did not fall prey to military authoritarianism in the heady decades of the 1960s and 1970s. A two-party democracy held sway, but was marred by cronyism and corruption. The prevailing calm ended in 1989, with riots sparked by an economic austerity program. There was a loss of 200 lives, and a loss, too, of credibility for the political regime. Officers led by then-Lieutenant Colonel Hugo Chávez attempted a coup d’état, but were foiled and arrested. An unrepentant Chávez emerged from prison with enough of a name for himself to run for president—on a campaign to end corruption, but pledging, too, to press for the election of a constituent assembly to write a new constitution for the country. His victory in the December 1998 elections was more than a triumph for him; it was a stinging indictment of Venezuela’s democracy. Established political leaders and institutions had lost such a degree of legitimacy that an outsider, and, indeed, one who had attempted to use violence to seize control of the state, was elected.

Chávez suggested that a new beginning was necessary for Venezuela and, invoking the country’s hero from independence, Simón Bolívar, coined the term “the Bolivarian Revolution,” which he would champion, and which he said would bring to Venezuela “socialism of the twenty-first century.” Chávez was a loquacious orator, and he offered heaping criticism of Venezuela’s established political and economic institutions—and actors. He also criticized the United States, reviving the discourse of “el imperialismo yanqui.” With his combative tone, he was inspiring to millions of poor—and even middle-class—Venezuelans, and also to many outside the country.

Intelectuals, including those in the United States and Europe, were quick to classify Chávez as being on the “left.” His ascendency to the presidency of Venezuela was held to be part of a widespread “leftward” shift in Latin American politics, as reflected in the electoral victories of Evo Morales in Bolivia, Luiz Inácio “Lula” da Silva in Brazil, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, and Michelle Bachelet in Chile. Numerous analyses focused on Latin America’s increasingly radical orientation in economic and social policy, as well as in international affairs. Books emerged with such titles as The New Latin American Left: Utopia Reborn (by Patrick Barret, Daniel Chavez and Cezar Rodriguez-Garavito, 2008). Chávez was the most visible leader—and for many the most inspiring—of this reported swing to the left. A biography written by Bart Jones was published with the title Hugo: The Hugo Chávez Story from Mud Hut to Perpetual Revolution, 2008. He was the protagonist in films, too, such as Chávez: The Revolution Will Not Be Televised. Many scholars at prominent academic institutions both within Latin America and outside the region publicly embraced the purported swing to the left in Latin America, and of Chávez in particular, as a route to progressive change.

With the passage of just a few years, perceptions have changed. Some held to be on the left, such as Lula and Bachelet, appeared more pragmatic than anything else. Recent elections in Latin America have gone the way of “centrist.” And, just as importantly, there has been a reassessment of those held to be firmly on the left—especially of Chávez. There are two important questions: 1) What...