

has guided these inquiries. And as the authors come from different disciplines, it is a shortcoming that the editor and/or publisher have not seen fit to provide any information about the contributors' home disciplines or institutional affiliations. This limits the book's utility as a teaching tool, since it makes it more difficult for instructors to guide students through a critical comparison of multiple methods of inquiry.

The most important element missing from the book, however, is a systematic and sustained inquiry into the role of racial animosity and bias in these state and local government efforts to control and limit the influx of immigrants. While immigration restrictionists are nearly always vehement in their denial of racial bias in relation to immigration policy, there are plenty of good reasons for subjecting this claim to systematic and critical inquiry. Although some chapters in the book take note of the historical role of racism in several localities being studied here, and of claims of racial bias in contemporary immigration politics, the absence of a sustained inquiry into the question is a major lack in the book as a whole.

Still, as noted, *Taking Local Control* contains a wealth of good information, including multiple analyses of the subject of state and local government efforts to limit and control the influx of (especially undocumented) immigrants into their communities. These efforts will no doubt be a factor in U.S. politics for some time to come, and for those taking note of these political efforts, this collection is an excellent way to gain some initial understanding of what is going on in the field. Therefore, this reviewer highly recommends the book for those interested in gaining a basic understanding of this phenomenon, and it would also be a good text to use in upper-division courses on state and local government and/or immigration politics.

Boundaries of Obligation in American Politics: Geographic, National, and Racial Communities.

By Cara Wong. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 286p. \$84.00 cloth, \$25.99 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592711002027

— Ronald J. Schmidt, Jr., *University of Southern Maine*

This book is an invigorating, thorough contribution to debates that range across contemporary political science. Cara Wong provides us, via careful examination of public opinion survey research, with a new way to read rhetorical struggles over political membership, and she invites us to rethink the way we talk about policy preferences.

At the risk of deploying one of the oldest clichés in criticism, I would like to begin my review of this book with its cover. Wong starts her analysis with contrasting reactions to the displaced of Hurricane Katrina. Why were some communities welcoming to evacuees and others not, and in ways that seemed to contradict partisanship or ideology (p. xiii)? The cover photo puts a finer point on it,

and with an example that suggests the contribution that Wong makes to a number of scholarly literatures. The Dorothea Lange photo of Manzanar reminds the reader of the consequences of the ways in which Americans define their political communities: American citizens of Japanese descent put in internment camps out of the need to provide “every possible protection against espionage and against sabotage.” One could attempt to understand Executive Order 9066 in a variety of ways: as an example of the “state of exception,” the growth and development of the national security state, or racism. Wong asks us to approach the analysis of this sort of event by taking very seriously the way random Americans define their own “imagined communities.”

The author takes Benedict Anderson's central concern—the ways in which national membership is invented and maintained culturally and politically—very seriously, and she uses several public opinion data sets (including, but by no means limited to, the National Politics Study, the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey, and the General Social Survey) to examine how Americans think of their own most significant community memberships. (I should add here that she is scrupulous in providing her data, both in an appendix to the book and at an online appendix of her statistical models and results.) Wong does not want us to focus solely on membership in national communities, however; arguing that “all social groups *could be* imagined communities” (p. 5), she examines a variety of the communities Americans see as central to their own identities. Only then does she turn to her central enterprise: testing “empirically whether or not communities, as they exist in the minds of Americans, really have an effect on whom they want to help and to whom resources should be allocated” (p. 22).

After a careful description of her central terms and the logic of her argument—it is central to Wong's project that “individuals' perceptions of their community, regardless of their own objective status” (p. 53), are at least as significant to political decision making as the “official” designations provided by borders or legal precedent—she turns to three different formulations of an American imagined community. At the level of smaller *geographic* communities, such as neighborhoods and towns, she hypothesizes that individuals view both their public responsibilities and their sense of commitment to others on the basis of how they define their communities: “Where people draw the boundaries of their community affects their attitudes about local institutions, efficacy, and tolerance,” as well as obligation (p. 106). A clear definition of community, whether at the neighborhood or city level, inspires greater trust in politics and political efficacy. A difference in scope is also a difference in kind, however. The smaller one's imagined community, the more likely one is to engage in public attempts at enforced homogeneity, such as the banning of books from public libraries (p. 109).

That finding raises the question of other, broader forms of membership. Wong's next chapter turns to *national* community. This chapter is particularly rich; the use of multiple surveys allows her to take an intriguing look at the many different ways that people think about membership in the American demos. While her review of debates about American citizenship in democratic theory may be a bit cursory, that is not her focus. Instead, she studies the ways that the people polled in the surveys define their own sense of Americanness, and she finds, again, that a broader focus of membership produces a change not just in the scope but in the nature of political imagination: "The more exclusive is one's sense of who belongs in the community, the more one wants to restrict the flow of outsiders" into it (p. 135). Indeed, this is still true when Wong corrects for partisanship and ideology; even self-identified conservatives, with an aversion to taxation in general, are likely to support taxes that pay for services within the imagined national community they endorse. Meanwhile, she finds that those who define "American" community more narrowly than the Constitution or naturalization law do—whether their preferred criteria are based on certain actions or beliefs or on race—are more likely to castigate certain people or behaviors as "un-American" and more likely to support draconian punishments, limited public services, and even "anti-miscegenation" laws (pp. 135, 143–44).

This aversion to a blending of perceived communities, whether through the mixing of ideas from banned books or of population through "banned" racial or ethnic "Others," brings us to Wong's final case study, an imagined *racial* community. Here too, one finds that the author's larger pattern holds true; as she puts it, "heterogeneous communities, which are composed of people of more than one race, enable the passage of policies that benefit minor-

ity groups in our democracy" (p. 160). Again, we find that the broader one's imagined community, the more open one is to political partnership even with those who are outside that larger group. White respondents or African American respondents do not even need to see race as a permeable concept; if they see members of other races as part of their imagined political community, they are more likely to make common cause with them (pp. 180, 193) and less likely to see different races as locked in a zero sum political relationship. Among groups of Americans who draw the lines of community more narrowly, on the other hand, Wong finds the logic that, in 2006, led a majority of respondents in Arizona to support a law that would make it a felony to provide any form of support or assistance to undocumented immigrants (p. 115).

The author refers to the latter form of political imagination as "dark," but posits that even such a narrow definition of community could have a "light" side, a greater sense of civic responsibility (pp. 109, 114–15). This dichotomy strikes me as a little undertheorized; I suspect that "light" and "dark" are more closely imbricated than this part of the argument suggests. The relationship among democratic inclusiveness, civic engagement, and xenophobic hostility has roots at least as deep as Pericles' citizenship reforms of the fifth century B.C.E., and I would like to see Wong explore this relationship more than she does. But this is less a criticism than it is a plea for further research and analysis. She has given us a new way to consider the relationship between political membership and political preferences, one that bridges "ordinary language" (to quote Hannah Pitkin), political theory, and survey research. The result is an exciting invitation to new research and new ways of imagining our own political and, indeed, academic communities.

POLITICAL THEORY

The Trouble with Unity: Latino Politics and the Creation of Identity. By Cristina Beltrán. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. 240p. \$99.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

Race and the Politics of Solidarity. By Juliet Hooker. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. 240p. \$39.95.
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— Jeff Spinner-Halev, *University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill*

Political theorists have increasingly focused on the role of groups in democratic and liberal theory over the past two decades or so, something both of these books do. Yet neither discusses group rights; instead, both push the debate about groups in a different direction, looking at the issue of groups and solidarity or unity. Juliet Hooker bemoans

the lack of solidarity among Americans, which she sees as a central obstacle to the achievement of racial justice. Cristina Beltrán, on the other hand, is suspicious of attempts to create a Latino unity, which she thinks betrays a democratic commitment to multiplicity. These books do not, however, argue at cross-purposes, as unity and solidarity are not defined in the same way, though they do overlap. Hooker defines political solidarity as the "reciprocal relations of trust and obligation" between members of a political community that is necessary for "long-term egalitarian political projects to flourish" (p. 4). Beltrán looks critically at the quest for unity among some Latino leaders, political entrepreneurs, and the media, who often see unity as the same as loyalty, or acting as one voting bloc.

In *Race and the Politics of Solidarity*, Hooker argues that a crucial lacuna in arguments for multiculturalism is the frequent lack of attention paid to solidarity. She sees