



In the Shadow of Race: Jews, Latinos, and Immigrant Politics in the United States

By Victoria Hattam

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Race in the United States has long been associated with heredity and inequality while ethnicity has been linked to language and culture. *In the Shadow of Race* recovers the history of this entrenched distinction and the divisive politics it engenders.

Victoria Hattam locates the origins of ethnicity in the New York Zionist movement of the early 1900s. In a major revision of widely held assumptions, she argues that Jewish activists identified as ethnics not as a means of assimilating and becoming white, but rather as a way of defending immigrant difference as distinct from race—rooted in culture rather than body and blood. Eventually, Hattam shows, the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Census Bureau institutionalized this distinction by classifying Latinos as an ethnic group and not a race. But immigration and the resulting population shifts of the last half century have created a political opening for reimagining the relationship between immigration and race. How to do so is the question at hand.

In the Shadow of Race concludes by examining the recent New York and Los Angeles elections and the 2006 immigrant rallies across the country to assess the possibilities of forging a more robust alliance between immigrants and African Americans. Such an alliance is needed, Hattam argues, to more effectively redress the persistent inequalities in American life.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Elegantly structured and persuasively argued, In the Shadow of Race does a brilliant job of showing how the constitutive relationship between race and ethnicity formed over time rather than at a single moment. Victoria Hattam's analysis of this dynamic is subtle and engaging, the product of a finely researched and well-thought-out project." - Desmond King, University of Oxford"

About the Author

Victoria Hattam is associate professor of political science at the New School for Social Research.

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