

Others might wish for a broader accounting of “after-school” activities, both educational and athletic. Of course, there is something appealing about producing the best and brightest, or, perhaps, best and brawn-iest. The idea of American youth falling behind other young nationals has been a theme for well over sixty years—a point to which I can attest as a member of the Sputnik generation, where accelerated middle-school science education was the preferred means of fighting the Red Menace. These themes persist. Can America be great again if we cannot spell “tohuw,” even if we don’t know its origin and meaning (Hebrew, chaos)? These feats of memorization might distract us from the education we need. Likewise, does Mathcounts count in an incalculable field of calculators? Such activities surely provide credentials for an unequal society. These claims are grounded in a class and residential analysis that applies beyond the culture of any particular ethnic group.

Although this is not Dhingra’s emphasis, the underlying argument also links to battles over the amount of homework that is optimum. High-powered parents, toiling late at their desks, want no less strain—and perhaps no less satisfaction—for their offspring. Some children, as Dhingra’s account demonstrates, take to this life condition with aplomb. As the STEM is bent, so grows the nation. Yet, as becomes clear in the telling, both those who are part of this system and those who are not can be harmed, leading to the stressors of inequality and of over-scheduling. Further, hyper education and the concerted cultivation with which it is associated pose a challenge to teachers, forcing them to compete with parental involvement. Concerted cultivation surely has value in creating a literate citizenry, but it also threatens equality.

The third element of this rich analysis is based in a diasporic recognition of ethnic culture. Indian Americans are a model minority, but like Jews of a century past, such a designation contains contradictions. Dhingra paints a detailed picture of life in Indian homes where, in a sense, spelling bees are the entry point to engineering. These engagements produce the discipline of mindedness. To what extent this characterizes Indian culture, I cannot assess;

but based on Dhingra’s extended quotations, it fits in the context of South Asian immigrants, although as he emphatically emphasizes some of this is a function of stereotypical beliefs of those outside the ethnic community. His access to a range of candid informants is impressive, although one might have wished for a greater discussion of class differences, caste backgrounds, religions, or regional cultures.

Still, Dhingra powerfully portrays a successful and upwardly mobile ethnic group that cares deeply about the success of their children, and—in their rhetoric at least—will only encourage and not demand. Whether they are making the correct choices in emphasizing forms of hyper education with such passion is the question that motivates this theme. One wonders, along with the author, whether such remarkable feats of memorization as success at spelling bees entails will contribute to career goals or whether the champions will look back with regret on their “misspelled youth.” Will they wonder if parental attempts at concerted cultivation sacrificed sociality?

*Hyper Education* is a work that is filled with insight and rich with data. At its heart is that crucial sociological emphasis on counterintuitive arguments and unintended consequences. Children learning more and better and competing happily. What’s not to like? And yet, the very commitment to knowledge that might seem worthy of esteem and embrace can equally—or more than equally—strain its participants and hobble those who cannot engage. Hyper education may be as much a curse as a cure.

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*Divided by the Wall: Progressive and Conservative Immigration Politics at the U.S.-Mexico Border*, by **Emine Fidan Elcioglu**. Oakland: University of California Press, 2020. 316 pp. \$29.95 paper. ISBN: 9780520340367.

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Emine Fidan Elcioglu’s *Divided by the Wall* is a fascinating account of opposing activist

groups mobilizing on the U.S.-Mexico border. Elcioglu unpacks the social psychology motivating activists on both sides of the immigration debate (one of the most salient debates in contemporary American politics), each side's view of, and relationship to, the other as well as the state, and the ideologies informing both sides' varying tactics. The book is a significant contribution to political sociology, race and immigration studies, and the study of social movements. It is written accessibly and engagingly, such that it would make for good assigned reading in courses at either the graduate or undergraduate levels.

The subjects of the book are five social movement groups—three characterized by “restrictionist activism” and two by “pro-immigration activism”—each mobilized along what Elcioglu aptly terms the “ambiguous border” (p. 32) between Arizona and Sonora, Mexico. It is ambiguous, Elcioglu argues, because of its blurred symbolism regarding the question of state power. To the restrictionist activists, the border symbolizes the weakness of the state—that is, its inability to enforce immigration laws—while, to the pro-immigrant activists, the same stretch of border symbolizes the state's strength and its willingness to inhumanely use its power to oppress desperate, yet unwanted, migrants.

The book is divided into three parts. The first deals with the activists' “conflictual identities” (p. 10) and how they motivate individuals to mobilize as either restrictionists or pro-immigrant activists. The second deals with how activists on each side confront the criticisms of the opposing side. The third shows how the symbolism of the border (exemplifying the state's weakness, for restrictionist activists, and its strength, for pro-immigration activists) directly informs each side's tactical repertoire. At its core, the book argues that the mobilization of activists on both sides says more about their own struggles with their conflicting identities—“white, but working class” (p. 70), in the case of restrictionists, and “progressive, but privileged” (p. 40), in the case of pro-immigration activists—than it does about their ability to achieve their purported objective of definitively affecting immigration outcomes. Elcioglu further argues that

how the groups chose to mobilize—whether leaving water indiscriminately for migrants, in the case of the pro-immigration “Humanitarians,” or installing a sensor system with the hope that it would provide the U.S. Border Patrol with better data about illegal activity, in the case of the restrictionist “Engineers”—reflects how they view their role in relation to the power of the state: weakening it, in the case of the pro-immigration groups, or augmenting it, in the case of the restrictionist groups.

One of the contributions of this book that Elcioglu herself emphasizes is her focus on movements' “political ends” rather than just their “means” (p. 9)—that is, the process of mobilization rather than motivating ideologies and subsequent outcomes. I found this particular contribution to be overstated, as a robust literature both on activism's identity-based underpinnings (e.g., Bernstein and Olsen 2009; Blee 2012; Stryker, Owens, and White 2000) and on social movement outcomes (e.g., Amenta, Caren, Chiarrello, and Su 2010; Giugni 2008; McCammon, Muse, Newman, and Terrell 2007) began to emerge within the field years ago. On the other hand, one definitive contribution of Elcioglu's work that she also points to—which I wholeheartedly concur with—is the advantages offered by studying two opposing movement sides together rather than studying only one side by itself. This is something she does admirably. As Elcioglu rightly points out, “Examining one side of a political conflict [is] like watching only one team play in a soccer game” (p. 7).

*Divided by the Wall* is a remarkable scholarly achievement, but, like any good piece of scholarship, it has its limitations and its stones left unturned. As already noted, Elcioglu does not engage as thoroughly as she could have with the social movement literatures on activist identities and outcomes of mobilization. Also, Elcioglu's interpretations based on the very rich qualitative evidence she presents were more convincing in some places (e.g., how each side viewed the state) than in others (e.g., her claim that pro-immigration activists' responses to the other side's criticisms were driven by their conflictual identities as opposed to more strategic objectives). In addition, I found

myself wanting at least more exploration, if not explanation, of why it is that not all Americans with these “conflictual identities” (“white but working class” and “progressive but privileged”) choose to mobilize as her research subjects evidently did. What in particular drove *these* individuals, and not others, to mobilize as they did, as opposed to other plausible ways one might attempt to reconcile one’s conflictual identity?

I also felt that Elcioglu missed two opportunities to explore the implications of her findings even further. One would be in the area of policy implications. Elcioglu does discuss the relevance of certain key policies, such as Arizona’s Senate Bill 1070, to her research subjects’ mobilization, but she perhaps misses opportunities to discuss more policy-focused aims of these activists due to her choice to focus on what their mobilization does *for them* as opposed to how it is viewed by policy-makers.

Second, it strikes me that, in the concluding chapter, perhaps Elcioglu missed an opportunity to extrapolate the possible implications of these conflictual identities and the “strong state vs. weak state” effects even further, in terms of broader trends in American politics beyond the fight over the southern border. For example, what might her findings tell us about the rise of Donald Trump and the backlash among progressive activists mobilizing to resist it? Notwithstanding these missed opportunities, the arguments and analysis put forward in Elcioglu’s *Divided by the Wall* must be taken seriously by any political sociologist seeking to explain U.S. immigration politics and should also be engaged with by scholars and students of racial politics, identity, and social movements. Elcioglu’s *Divided by the Wall* is indeed “relational political ethnography at its best,” as Javier Auyero accurately describes it on the back cover.

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*American Community: Radical Experiments in Intentional Living*, by **Mark S. Ferrara**. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2019. 234 pp. \$24.95 cloth. ISBN: 9781978808232.

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Mark Ferrara’s *American Community: Radical Experiments in Intentional Living* provides a historical account of “experiments in intentional living, founded by visionary men and women over the last four hundred years” (p. 182). The book provides a vast, sweeping account of a diverse array of communities in the United States where individuals have attempted to live more communally, sharing land and sometimes homes and incomes in ways that are identified as radical experiments. The book is grounded in the argument that experiments in collective, (sometimes) socialist ways of living are the expression of a cultural desire in America to reinvent society to be kinder and more caring, based on sharing access to material goods and sharing collective fates. The author clearly defines intentional communities (p. 2) and argues that the book highlights “a long-standing American concern with social justice and cooperative business enterprise” (p. 2).