



Disenchanted Citizenship

Mexican Migrants and the Boundaries of Belonging

by Luis F. B. Plascencia

DESCRIPTION

Central to contemporary debates in the United States on migration and migrant policy is the idea of citizenship, and—as apparent in the continued debate over Arizona’s immigration law SB 1070—this issue remains a focal point of contention, with a key concern being whether there should be a path to citizenship for “undocumented” migrants. In *Disenchanted Citizenship*, Luis F. B. Plascencia examines two interrelated issues: U.S. citizenship and the Mexican migrants’ position in the United States.

The book explores the meaning of U.S. citizenship through the experience of a unique group of Mexican migrants who were granted Temporary Status under the “legalization” provisions of the 1986 IRCA, attained Lawful Permanent Residency, and later became U.S. citizens. Plascencia integrates an extensive and multifaceted collection of interviews, ethnographic fieldwork, ethno-historical research, and public policy analysis in examining efforts that promote the acquisition of citizenship, the teaching of citizenship classes, and naturalization ceremonies. Ultimately, he unearths citizenship’s root as a Janus-faced construct that encompasses a simultaneous process of inclusion and exclusion. This notion of citizenship is mapped on to the migrant experience, arguing that the acquisition of citizenship can lead to disenchantment with the very status desired. In the end, Plascencia expands our understanding of the dynamics of U.S. citizenship as a form of membership and belonging.

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