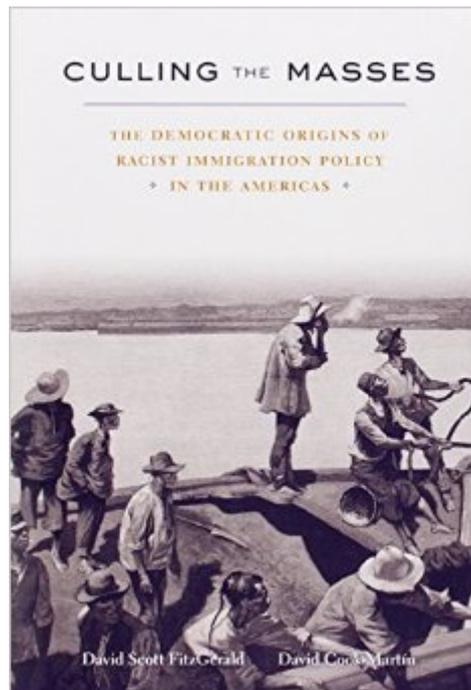


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Culling The Masses: The Democratic Origins Of Racist Immigration Policy In The Americas



Synopsis

Culling the Masses questions the widely held view that in the long run democracy and racism cannot coexist. David Scott FitzGerald and David Cook-Martín show that democracies were the first countries in the Americas to select immigrants by race, and undemocratic states the first to outlaw discrimination. Through analysis of legal records from twenty-two countries between 1790 and 2010, the authors present a history of the rise and fall of racial selection in the Western Hemisphere. The United States led the way in using legal means to exclude "inferior" ethnic groups. Starting in 1790, Congress began passing nationality and immigration laws that prevented Africans and Asians from becoming citizens, on the grounds that they were inherently incapable of self-government. Similar policies were soon adopted by the self-governing colonies and dominions of the British Empire, eventually spreading across Latin America as well. Undemocratic regimes in Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Cuba reversed their discriminatory laws in the 1930s and 1940s, decades ahead of the United States and Canada. The conventional claim that racism and democracy are antithetical—because democracy depends on ideals of equality and fairness, which are incompatible with the notion of racial inferiority—cannot explain why liberal democracies were leaders in promoting racist policies and laggards in eliminating them. Ultimately, the authors argue, the changed racial geopolitics of World War II and the Cold War was necessary to convince North American countries to reform their immigration and citizenship laws. Winner of: American Sociological Association's 2015 Thomas & Znaniecki Best Book on International Migration Award ASA's Political Sociology Section 2015 Best Scholarly Contribution Book Award American Political Science Association's Migration and Citizenship Section's 2015 Best Book Prize for Books on Migration and Citizenship Immigration and Ethnic History Society, Honorable mention, 2015 Theodore Saloutos Book Prize.

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Customer Reviews

A must read, *Culling the Masses* is an impressive book that offers a novel historical analysis of the evolution of immigration policy. The book is relevant to contemporary policy debates of immigration and should be read by politicians, scholars, and laypersons interested in issues of immigration and race.

Culling the Masses is a ground-breaking contribution to comparative immigration scholarship. It sheds light on what criteria were used to select immigrants in the entirety of the Americas, from Canada to Argentina, from the US to Cuba and other countries. The often openly racist policies of exclusion and inclusion of certain immigrants are meticulously researched by the authors, as are the underlying assumptions and value judgments about certain groups, such as Asians, Roma, and others. Their analysis spans more than 200 years, revealing authentic documents from policy-making processes in a large number of countries that are the result of in-depth archival work by the authors. Ultimately, the insights into processes of norm diffusion and the exploration on the impact of democratic and non-democratic political regimes make this book a must-read for scholars, students, and the interested public who want to learn more about how states learn to select immigrants and what are the limitations of the involved policy choices.

Culling the Masses is an indispensable read for anyone interested in the history and politics of racially exclusionary immigration policy in the Americas. This book is the first to provide a comprehensive analysis of the rise and fall of racial and national origin exclusions in immigration law across the Americas – covering no fewer than twenty-two countries over more than two centuries. The incredible breadth and depth of the analysis pays off in a big way. Fitzgerald and Cook-Martin break new ground by demonstrating the pivotal role of geopolitics and international organizations in shaping immigration policy in individual countries – including the United States. Their comparative analysis also raises troubling questions about the intimate historical link between democratic processes and racist social policies throughout the Americas.

This book provides a sweeping, meticulously researched, and fascinating argument that goes against prevailing wisdom; that is, that democracy leads to anti-racist immigration policy. It should be required reading for migration and policy scholars across a broad range of disciplines.

This well-researched and well-written comparative history of immigrant exclusion is impressive in depth and scope. It should be required text for students and scholars of immigration.

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