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which excludes itself from the law, does not excuse its sufferers from extricating themselves from the very mechanisms these exclusions lay bare. In other words, the paralegality of the law does not necessarily abolish the constraints and limitations of the juridical, it just enforces the necessity of becoming aware of its transgressions and whimsicalities. It is important to envision a contradictory scenario, where the issue of the status and its juridical implications would be properly re-considered and eventually resolved in a world where, yes, the law does not exhaust its powers within its legalities or its “proper” forums. The fact that the political parties in the island have co-opted (sometimes demagogically so, as Pabón rightly asserts) the juridical issue and turned it into a theater of national identity does not imply that the juridical discussion of Puerto Rico in the sphere of nations should be automatically discarded or seen as useless. By the same token, the fact that a historical or a conceptual category (like the nation, or the state) is eroded or superseded does not automatically mean that it is useless or that we can afford to act as if it no longer exists.

Negrón-Muntaner is incisively aware of the perfidious nature of the juridical in her final postscript about José Padilla’s tribulations as a political prisoner. She skillfully underscores how he has become the perfect target for the obscenities of the state of exception. It becomes, for the anthology, the ultimate example of how powerless identity becomes as a political tool when it does not match the expected scripts of the current multiculturalist agenda. Hard to pinpoint as a Puerto Rican, Chicago-based Latino, African-American, and professed Muslim, Padilla lays bare how truly vulnerable the category of identity becomes when it ceases to operate “properly.”

But we live in times where such categories seldom operate according to the script. Such demanding times call for truly imaginative coalitions and a more generous and inclusive understanding of the contradictory nature of political allegiances and radical activisms. In his brilliant and cynical debunking of the Vieques cause in Puerto Rico as a blatant and banal spectacle of manipulations, narcissisms, and facile pieties Juan Dúchense, for example, misses a central point. In spite of this “consensual spectacle,” which he describes with such clarity, a political event did take place. Vieques is no longer a bombing range or a munitions depot. The fact that this outcome does not tell the whole story should not blind us to its empowering possibilities.

Likewise, the deconstruction or the actual cancellation of the concept of the nation-state will not preclude it from exercising its enormous and sometimes disastrous powers in the years to come. Living in a dirty world implies using moribund categories and resorting to self-contradictory and mutually exclusive strategies and aberrations. Such a troubling world is still not the subject matter of an anthology like this one, which perhaps still clings too tightly to its tidy radicalism. But it is a promising and even a spectacular move in the right direction.

Latinos and American Law: Landmark Supreme Court Cases

By Carlos R. Soltero

Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006

252 pages; \$19.95 [paper]

REVIEWER: JODIE G. ROURE, City University of New York, John Jay College of Criminal Justice

There is minimal scholarship that addresses the impact of the United States legal system on Latinos/as and civil rights both in the continental United States,

Latin America, and those living in colonies of the United States. This book provides a general overview of the impact of fourteen critical landmark United States Supreme Court cases on the civil rights and discriminatory practices faced by Latino/as in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Research in the area of racial discrimination and civil rights to date has focused primarily on the inequality faced by African Americans in many areas such as education, voting, and housing. Carlos R. Soltero provides insight on the Latino/a experience in this context; however, the book has its limitations. When I was first asked to review the book, I was disillusioned by the title. On its face, the title *Latinos and American Law* reflects what at first seemed to me a lack of understanding by the author of basic concepts such as Manifest Destiny, imperialism, colonization, and ethnocentrism. After all, I spend my entire academic year as a college professor trying to provide my students with an understanding of the term “American” and how it has been used (and misused) historically and adopted socially in the United States, as well as communicating the implications of its use for Latinos/as in the United States and those Latinos/as living outside the United States.

Once I began to read the book and overlooked the use of “American” in the title, I realized that Soltero does provide an important resource for law and graduate students, professors of critical race theory, cultural studies, race/racism, the area of equal protection, and public law. He looks at the case law, and more important, he provides an understanding of the social and political climate of the time and how these factors shaped the outcome of the law for Latinos/as in the United States and those living outside of the United States. Soltero writes about United States Supreme Court cases and civil rights law pertaining specifically to Latinos/as. However, throughout my reading of the book, I found obstacles and limitations along the way. For example, his use of Linda Chavez’s *Out of the Barrio* as support throughout several chapters in the book was awkward since I could not help but think of other sources that could have been used as stronger support—works from authors such as Efrén Rivera Ramos or Juan Gonzalez are examples.

Another example of this awkward use of support can be seen on page 49, where Soltero discusses Puerto Rican migration in 1965. Soltero states that “Puerto Rican migration was similar to migrations from Europe, Asia, and other parts of the world, [but] there were differences as well.” He suggests the use of “the more mainstream and well-known *West Side Story*” as one example of works for the reader to refer to in this context. The use of *West Side Story* as a critical source of the depictions of the Puerto Rican experience in the United States could be helpful to readers to a certain extent, but I would argue that when suggested without context, it can easily render an unfamiliar reader vulnerable to buying into the stereotypes promoted by the work on its face. Additionally, the Puerto Rican (im)migration experience in the United States was unique when compared to many other immigrant groups; therefore, I believe this concept should have been expanded to provide the reader with a short insight into the actual experience. On this same page, Soltero overlooks little details that could make the book better as a research tool. For example, he cites New York’s Election Law 150 but does not provide the reader with the year of the law. I also believe the blank space on page 49 after “evidence of literacy,” is a typographical mistake that should have been caught by the editor.

Despite the seemingly odd approach for support discussed above, I tried to keep in mind that the subject matter here is of vital importance to people around the

world. There is a great need to promote an understanding of the realities of issues such as inequality, discrimination, and the impediment of access faced by Latinos/as in the United States. This book has the potential to provide a realistic view, which can be used comparatively, of the United States legal system, improperly referred to by Soltero as the “American” legal system for many reasons, but primarily because it does not include Mexican and Canadian legal cases.

The book does a great job at providing some basic outlining of the structure of the legal system and its process in the United States. However, I believe its readers, unfortunately, would not include laypersons. I found that my college students, some who are pre-law, were particularly interested in this material, but found the material too thick for comprehension without elaboration. I also found that I had to provide elaboration in the areas of history, the legal process, and other social issues that were occurring at the time of the cases discussed. This in no way means that I would not attempt to use chapters of the book for courses that I teach in the areas of Latinos/as, race, ethnicity, class, and gender in both the United States and Latin America, but the course would have to be an upper-level course. Even when using it in upper-level courses, I would still have to supplement the chapters with the historical experiences of immigrants and migrants in the United States at the time.

I believe that Soltero attempts to provide us with a basic understanding of how some very important United States Supreme Court cases impact on the rights of Latinos/as, but he also attempts to insert explanations of terminology and discussions of experiences throughout history without consistency. I first noted this on page five when he introduces Peter Skerry’s discussion of Mexican-Americans, and although I found it awkwardly placed and without transition, I did not think much of it. However, as I progressed, I found this occurrence was repeated in many of the book chapters. Soltero also states that the focus of this book is how Latinos/as interacted with the highest level of the United States legal system, but *Katzenbach v. Morgan* 384 U.S. 641 (1966) was brought forth by non-Latino/a New Yorkers who sought to continue to discriminate and exclude Spanish-speaking Latinos/as from voting. In many of the later chapters, for example in chapter four on pages 48 and 49, Soltero skips over decades of history very quickly (he discusses the 1870s then jumps to the 1960s), without transitions that would explain the context for the reader, and I believe this is simply a result of trying to cover too much material in one book too quickly.

Soltero does provide meaningful insight in to the discriminatory practices the United States government and State governments exercised against Latinos/as, as well as other people of color. His use of Congressional language in support of his case analysis provides the reader with facts that make his arguments and insight more compelling in understanding the realities faced by Latinos/as historically in the United States and its colonies. This is seen in his analysis of *Botiller v. Dominguez* 130 U.S. 238 (1889), on pages 12 and 13, where he discusses Justice Samuel Freeman Miller’s description of Mexicans living in ceded territory as “now occupied by savage tribes.” He paints a clear picture throughout the book of the imperialist, racist perceptions the United States had of Latinos/as living in what used to be Mexico as well as in its colonies such as the island of Puerto Rico. I believe the most useful part of each chapter for any person reading this book consists of the summations that he provides at the end of each article. Soltero discusses the significance each case has to Latinos/as in relation to the U.S. legal system. These discussions are what saved my sample readers, laypersons, and college students, because they allowed for an overall explanation of the meaning of each case even if they did not understand the at times thick legal jargon in some sections.

Soltero's use of ongoing academic debates of the times, such as that found on page 21 in his analysis of *Balzac v. Porto Rico* [sic] 258 U.S. 298 (1922) and his inclusion of a summation of the Spanish American War of 1898, for example, allow the reader to gain a more complete and meaningful understanding of the double standard that Puerto Ricans and other Latinos/as faced from the government of the United States. However, Soltero could also have organized his precedent cases more clearly for the reader (see page 50) and could have included dates of events such as the day Senator Robert Kennedy passed § 4(e) of the Voting Rights Act. Again, this would be beneficial to make this book a more effective research tool for law students and young scholars. To this extent, I found that each chapter's level of scholarship varied. I also would have liked to have seen more citations in chapters eight through ten. For example, in chapter eight, he does not provide citations on page 107, where he discusses discrimination faced by Asians, Southern and Eastern Europeans, Germans, and the Irish. I also found that throughout the book there was a lack of smooth transitions between ideas, for example in chapter five, which discusses *Miranda v. Arizona*. Soltero explains the situation of Mexicans and the Zoot Suit Riots, but then there is no transition in linking its relevance to *Miranda*. This erroneously assumes that the reader would be able to place the case in context.

Despite Soltero's attempt to fit too much in one book, he does offer great insight to readers on Justices of the period. For example, pages 54 and 55 offer valuable insight into the stance taken by Justice Brennan in regard to current social issues of ethnicity and race; his discussion results in a deeper understanding of the case as it relates to Latinos/as. Through his descriptions of the political climates of the time, he allows the reader to understand how, for example, the Warren Court allowed for the expansion of civil rights for Latinos/as. He maps out the mistreatment of Latinos/as throughout history and provides insight as to how these cases continue to be relevant to Latinos/as today. His descriptions of the judges allow for the reader to understand that they are also influenced by social and political external pressures when it comes to judicial decision-making, despite popular belief to the contrary. It also provides the reader with a different view, one that is more critical in nature of the law. The cited case law also provides a social construction of the realities of race and racism in U.S. society.

The State and Small-Scale Fisheries in Puerto Rico

By Ricardo Pérez

Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005

218 pp.; \$59.95 [cloth]

REVIEWER: DAVID GRIFFITH, East Carolina University

Over the course of my career, I have had the good fortune to have been exposed to the work of several Puerto Rican scholars whose insights have challenged North American social science, forcing many of us to reconsider what we mean by concepts like development, capital, the state, and modernization. In the past twenty years, I have had the even better fortune of working closely with a few of them, experiencing these relationships with a rewarding mixture of being both humbled and enlightened. To the list of superb scholars such as Carlos Buitrago Ortiz, Manuel Valdés Pizzini, Jorge Duany, and Fernando Picó, now, with the publication of his

Latinos and American Law: Landmark Supreme Court Cases. By Carlos R. Soltero. 2006. Book. To map this legal landscape, Latinos and American Law examines fourteen landmark Supreme Court cases that have significantly affected Latino rights, from *Botiller v. Dominguez* in 1889 to *Alexander v. Sandoval* in 2001. Carlos Soltero organizes his study chronologically, looking at one or more decisions handed down by the Fuller Court (1888–1910), the Taft Court (1921–1930), the Warren Court (1953–1969), the Burger Court (1969–1986), and the Rehnquist Court (1986–2005). For each case, he opens with historical and legal background on the issues involved and then thoroughly discusses the opinion(s)