the 10 chapters forming the heart of the book and from some confusion regarding the exact population being studied (i.e., at times the discussion appeared to refer to all residents of Twin Rivers, while at other times it appeared to focus on those living in the townhouses). The overall book, moreover, suffers from a disjointed structure. The three chapters that begin the book discuss the meaning of community, historical forms of community and theoretical and conceptual issues, but are not sufficiently integrated with the story of Twin Rivers; the final chapters also largely stand apart from the rest of the book. The summary of key findings that follows the chapters on Twin Rivers is superfluous, but might have served as a good outline to avoid the problem of repetition. Thus, while the story of Twin Rivers can tell us a great deal about the formation of community, the weaknesses of the overall package serve to distract the reader from all the story has to offer.

**Reviewer:** Emily Rosenbaum, *Fordham University*

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**Remaking the American Mainstream:**
**Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration**

By Richard Alba and Victor Nee
Harvard University Press. 2003. 384 pages. $42 (hardcover); $18.95 (paperback).

Post-1965 immigration primarily from Asia and Latin America has posed a serious challenge to the classical assimilation theory and given rise to alternative explanations such as pluralism and segmented assimilation. This book proposes a new assimilation theory that adapts the vital core from the concept of assimilation to the ethnically diverse and dynamic American population. To this end, the authors redefine mainstream and identify causal mechanisms at the individual, network and institutional levels by which immigrants assimilate to the modified mainstream. Alba and Nee reestablish assimilation as a central social process, making a significant contribution to immigration literature.

The authors first discuss the limitations of alternative theories to classical assimilation. Pluralism, or its new form of transnationalism, allows for autonomous cultural centers, which exist only at the societal margin or for a short period of time after the arrival of immigrants. Segmented assimilation theory, on the other hand, appears to inflate the magnitude of the underclass population and overlook various cultural models within an ethnic group. Yet, neither theory rules out the possibility that assimilation will play a major role in the long run or in future generations. This realization brings the authors back to reconsider the classical assimilation theory.

The classical assimilation theory, first delineated in Warner and Scrole (1945) and later synthesized in Gordon (1964), has four problems: inevitability, full incorporation, ethnocentrism and one-sidedness without a positive contribution of ethnic cultures. Stripping these undesirable features, Alba and Nee trace the root of assimilation to the Chicago School by raising a fundamental question: what is mainstream, the target of assimilation? From a human ecology point of view, Robert Park (1930) gives an answer that the mainstream is a composite culture with *hybrid* characteristics of the ensemble of cultural practices and beliefs that forms a common national existence. Assimilation to such a mainstream, Alba and Nee argue, is achieved through changes taking place in groups on both sides of the ethnic boundary through boundary crossing, blurring and shifting. The authors revise the definition of assimilation as a weakening role of ethnicity in assimilated people's life chances. They note that the weakening role of ethnicity is in no contradiction with the significant role of class and other non-ethnic factors determining assimilated peoples' life chance.
The most important contribution of the book is its development of the causal mechanisms of assimilation at the institutional, group and individual levels using new institutionalism and context-bound rationality. Immigrants either blend into the mainstream or segregate from the mainstream in the process of adaptation and institutional environment ultimately determines the advancement of either blending or segregating. Opportunities in occupational and educational structures are important institutional environments. For example, federal regulations of equal employment opportunities have drastically increased the cost of discrimination, hence reduced racial prejudice and practices in the workplace. The expansion of college education offers unprecedented opportunities to people of different backgrounds. The overarching institutional environment, according to the authors, generates ensuring forces for the assimilation of new immigrants. Thus, whenever opportunities for ethnic-minority immigrants are greater in the mainstream than in the ethnic economy, there is a motive for assimilation.

While institutional environment, in which immigrants are embedded, are distal causes of assimilation, group and individual forces are proximate causes of assimilation, leading to differential assimilation outcomes within and across ethnic groups under the same institutional environment. Alba and Nee advocate a form-of-capital approach to differential assimilation. To them, individual human capital is particularly important in accelerating assimilation whereas social capital derived from ethnic networks may be valuable in the short run but harmful in the long run.

Alba and Nee demonstrate clearly how institutional changes in occupation, education and suburbanization, as well as the civil rights legislation, produced and sustained the systematic forces of assimilation, using the successful assimilation stories of descendents of the first massive immigration. The more challenging task is to apply this view to the contemporary immigration. For example, defy the hourglass analogy of economic restructuring and the direct application of segmented labor market theory to today’s labor market, the authors carefully review the institutional mechanisms of the contemporary immigration, including economic niches immigrants occupy and the weakening connection between social origin and educational attainment. These institutional mechanisms are operating even after introducing path dependence. The legacy of past practices, vested interests and customs impose a powerful constraint on assimilation. Yet, the authors maintain that the watershed change in the institutional environment has benefited immigrants more than African Americans because the latter are heavily burdened by the legacy of racism. While the assimilation experience of Asian Americans offers a compelling testimony for this view, the lack of evidence for the ever-growing Hispanic labor immigrants in the book leaves an important gap to be filled in future research.

The book would make a greater contribution if it better addressed three issues. First, the weakening role of ethnicity in this new assimilation theory concerns immigrants’ experience and thus must be placed in the larger social context of the total population, both immigrant and native. American society has continuously experienced persistent ethnic patterns of income and wealth inequality, even after controlling for education and other non-ethnic factors. The contemporary ethnic immigrants seem to follow their native counterparts’ tracks. Reconciling the role of human capital and the role of race-ethnicity requires further consideration. Second, the new theory allows for differential assimilation outcomes within and across ethnic groups, but primarily by types of immigrants such as professional and labor immigrants. Although labor immigrants (the single largest group is from Mexico) do acquire language assimilation, their social mobility is slow and the prospects for a second and third generation are not dissimilar. A deeper discussion about the distinction between the new assimilation theory and the segmented assimilation theory with respect to the relative importance of human capital vs. race/ethnicity will help. Finally, the proposed causal
mechanisms of assimilation will provide theoretical guidance to research on assimilation if testable hypotheses can be derived. The book would have provided greater guidance if the analysis on the rich data rigorously tested the proposed causal mechanisms.

**Reviewer:** Lingxin Hao, *Johns Hopkins University*

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**Occupational Ghettos: The Worldwide Segregation of Women and Men**

By Maria Charles and David B. Grusky


Maria Charles and David B. Grusky (with substantial contributions from Kim Weeden, Mariko Chang, Joon Han and Jesper Sørensen) have provided the community of employment segregation scholars with a powerful review and extension of their sustained comparative and methodological work. This methodologically careful work has evolved through analyses of sex by aggregate occupation contingency tables, often comparing countries or time trends within countries and starting with the baseline question, "Is there a worldwide sex segregation regime?"

On a theoretical level the book proposes that in most countries there are two basic segregation processes at work. The first is a vertical mechanism, through which men tend to dominate the best jobs. The second is a horizontal mechanism, in which cultural notions of gender essentialism tend to match women to non-manual service work. They find in analyses of multiple countries, some over time, that both dimensions tend to be in play and that males tend to get the best jobs within the manual and non-manual sectors, but women tend to be overrepresented in the typically higher status non-manual sector. Thus the horizontal gender-essentialist mechanism tends to promote segregation but undermine inequality. Vertical gender segregation tends to be stronger in the manual sector, reflecting the stronger influence of egalitarian norms and politics on the non-manual sector. The mix of vertical and horizontal mechanisms varies across countries, and time and there is substantial national variability in detailed segregation patterns leading to the conclusion that there is no worldwide sex segregation regime.

One of the great puzzles in the sex segregation field has been that gender equalitarian countries often have high levels of sex segregation (e.g., Sweden). Charles and Grusky show that this is because Sweden has particularly high levels of horizontal segregation tendencies. Importantly, this insight demonstrates that gender essentialism and gender egalitarianism can operate simultaneously. Gender essentialism promotes a separate but equal segregation regime, while gender egalitarianism challenges the legitimacy of vertical segregation mechanisms such as sex discrimination.

Both methodologically and theoretically this line of research is linked to the classical analysis of mobility tables in sociology. A key strength of this approach to national sex segregation patterns is that it allows researchers to explicitly model the contributions of cross-country or cross-temporal occupational and sex distributions to observed segregation. This is an advantage relative to conventional summary indices of segregation (e.g., the Index of Dissimilarity) all of which are margin dependent in one way or another. That is, estimated segregation (depending on the index deployed) is partially a function of the national occupational distribution and/or the sex composition of labor supply. In classical mobility table analyses the key question was for a long time, "Net of changes in the marginal distribution (i.e., structural mobility), has intergenerational mobility increased with modernization?" Thus margin-free models were always implied by the theoretical question. It is not so clear that