CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF
Economy & Society

Department of Sociology

327 Uris Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853-7601

CSES Working Paper Series

Paper # 46

Victor Nee and Richard Alba

"Assimilation as Rational Action"

2009

Assimilation as Rational Action

By

Victor Nee and Richard Alba

March 26, 2009

* Prepared for the *Handbook of Rational Choice Social Research,* edited by Rafael Wittek, Tom Snijders and Victor Nee (New York: Russell Sage Foundation)

Assimilation as Rational Action

1 Introduction

Assimilation evolved endogenously as the dominant pattern of incorporation into the mainstream of American life. The process has been well documented and there is a broad consensus that assimilation constitutes a core cultural belief and predictable outcome of mass immigration to the U.S. Despite episodes of pressure for Americanization from political actors, assimilation has been a bottom-up process of cultural and social change for immigrants and their descendants. After a long hiatus in mass immigration to the U.S., the passage of the Immigration Act of 1965 opened legal immigration to all nationalities. The result was a swift and dramatic change in the composition of immigration to the U.S.

The overwhelming predominance of nonwhite immigrants from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia, sparked a debate in the social sciences over whether assimilation might not be unattainable for immigrant minorities (Glazer 1997; Huntington 2004). In light of the spatial concentration of new immigrant minorities in central cities, Portes and Zhou (1993) have argued that assimilation is being transformed into a deeply segmented process of incorporation wherein the children of poor nonwhite immigrants are at risk of "downward assimilation" into the racialized underclass of the inner city. In segmented assimilation theory, the children of immigrant minorities may be better served by relying on their own ethnic and cultural resources within immigrant enclaves (Zhou and Bankston 1998). Some have argued that the cultural beliefs of the new immigrants from South America and Asia threaten to undermine American identity (Huntington

2004). With the demographic composition of the American population swiftly moving in the direction of unprecedented ethnic and racial diversity, the questions posed by Huntington—"Who are we?"—can be expected to motivate public debate on mass immigration.

Post Civil Rights era immigration from South America and Asia has now reached approximate parity with the late nineteenth and early twentieth century immigration of Europeans. The new immigration has settled in burgeoning immigrant metropolises, rapidly increasing the ethnic and racial diversity of America's cities. In Los Angeles, Hispanics are the new majority group, while Asians have grown to 14 percent of Los Angeles' population, with non-Hispanic whites now dipping below 36 percent, no longer constituting a demographic majority. In New York City, the children of immigrants make up a growing percent of the city's population. "About 45 percent of the city's black population are immigrants or the children of immigrants, as are 40 percent of the white population. The same is true of 59 percent of the Hispanic population and 95% of the Asian population" (Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, Waters and Holdaway 2008:3). Similar trends of demographic transformation and growing racial and ethnic diversity are in progress in other major metropolitan centers in North America. Such dramatic demographic shifts towards unprecedented racial and ethnic diversity, concentrated in particular regions, have profound effects on neighborhoods, public schools and workplaces.

The growing racial and ethnic diversity of contemporary immigration and the debate over the place of immigrants and their children in American society have called attention to the need to rethink assimilation (Alba and Nee 1997; Lind 1995; Waldinger and Bozorgmehr 1996; Borjas 1999; Bobo, Oliver, Johnson and Valenzuela 2000; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Bean and Stevens 2003; Brubaker 2004;). The swiftness of the demographic transformation of American cities has motivated and guided social scientists in their work of extending, revising and updating the concept of assimilation for a new era of global immigration. In this essay, our aim is to lay out the general propositions of a rational choice theory of assimilation in Alba and Nee (2003) to explain why racial and ethnic minorities are assimilating into the American mainstream. The propositions are falsifiable and applicable to comparative social research on the incorporation of immigrants and their children in all industrial societies. The form of rational choice theory is new institutionalist in that the theory assumes context-bound rationality defined as social action enabled, motivated and guided by the institutional matrix within which actors conduct workaday transactions (Nee and Ingram 1998; Greif 2006).

In the following sections of this chapter, in section 2, we first review the canonical social science writing on assimilation stemming from the earlier era of mass immigration from Europe. Section 3 outlines the rational choice theory of assimilation proffered in Alba and Nee (2003). Section 4 will review evidence of assimilation based on a recent sociological study of the second generation in New York City. Lastly, section 5 concludes the chapter.

2 Chicago School and the Canonical Writings

In the raw industrializing city of Chicago of the early twentieth century, the experiences of immigrants and domestic migrants (whites from the mid-West and blacks from the South) provided a natural laboratory of inter-group relations for the newly established Chicago School of Sociology. From its origins as a trading center founded by

French-Canadian fur traders, Chicago developed rapidly in the late 19th and early 20th century into a sprawling industrial metropolis. Sustained mass immigration and domestic migration offered an unprecedented opportunity to sociologists at the University of Chicago to observe the emerging patterns of inter-group contact, competition, conflict and accommodation. In responding to the transformative changes and social problems associated with the turn-of-the-century immigration, the founders of the Chicago School elaborated the assimilation paradigm to guide social research on immigrant incorporation. This framework has influenced all subsequent sociological research on the incorporation of immigrants and their descendants (Gordon 1964; Shibutani and Kwan 1965; Massey, Alarcon, Durand and Gonzales 1987; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Alba and Nee 2003; Kasintz et al. 2008).

Influenced by advances in human ecology and evolutionary biology, Robert E. Park (1950) proposed a "race relations cycle" as a recurrent general pattern of social transformation resulting from immigration, which he claimed was progressive and irreversible. Following a natural history sequence of development, Park posited four stages of race-relations stemming from immigration—initial contact between two or more ethnic groups, followed by group-based competition for scarce resources, with the outcome of competition and conflict leading to a *modus vivendi* giving rise to a stable accommodation between groups. As members of minority groups acquire the culture of the dominant group, and over the course of intergenerational assimilation, the descendants of immigrants eventually become absorbed through intermarriage and amalgamation into the general population. Park's race relations cycle identified a pattern of development observed not only in the United States, but also in other immigrant societies like Australia and Canada, and also for Koreans who migrated to Japan, the Chinese in Thailand and Jews in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Germany (Shibutani and Kwan 1965). Park never himself specified causal mechanisms to explain assimilation, but instead adopted a teleological view of the inevitability of assimilation.

Assimilation as a paradigm for social scientific study of immigration was closely linked to the project of nation building in the writings of Chicago School sociologists. In this view, immigrants were the main source for peopling settler societies like the U.S. Though immigrants come with their own native languages and cultural traits, assimilation, conceived as an intergenerational process of endogenous cultural and social change, gives rise to a new type of nation state based not on common ethnicity, but constructed on the institutional elements of common cultural beliefs, norms, rules and organizations. Park (1930) posited a conception of a composite culture evolving out of the interpenetration of diverse social practices and cultural beliefs of immigrants and their children.

The more flexible and open-ended specification of assimilation of the Chicago School largely receded into the background in the "straight-line" assimilation models of Warner and Srole (1945) and Gordon (1964). This post-Chicago School assimilation canon was heavily influenced by structural-functionalism, the paradigm that displaced the dominance of the Chicago School in post-World War II American sociology (Parsons 1937; Parsons and Smelser 1956; Merton 1948). The post-War assimilation model conceived of society as a largely homogenous social system integrated around core values and norms, in which the structures and functions of component subsystems sustained social order in equilibrium. Consistent with structural-functionalism, the post-

War assimilation model posited an abstract view of Anglo-American middle-class culture and society as the end-point of assimilation (Gordon 1964).

In a lonely effort to revitalize the Chicago School approach, Tomatsu Shibutani and Kian Kwan wrote *Ethnic Stratification* (1965), which refocused analytic attention to the earlier emphasis on cumulative causation driving assimilation as a social process. In their theoretical reformulation of the Chicago School approach, Shibutani and Kwan integrated the social behavioralism of George Herbert Mead into the assimilation paradigm. Their approach emphasized the cognitive dimensions of inter-group relations and the causal significance of beliefs shaping perceptions of social distance between majority and minority groups. In their approach, it is the reduction of social distance stemming from institutional change, which cumulatively enables the assimilation of racial minorities. In the absence of institutional change, ethnic stratification orders, they argued, persist in stable equilibrium of domination of the majority group over the minority groups. In explaining changes that disrupt stable ethnic stratification orders, Shibutani and Kwan (1965) emphasized self-reinforcing exogenous changes that cause reduction of social distance between members of majority and minority groups.

In *Remaking the American Mainstream*, Alba and Nee (2003) revised the definition of assimilation to revitalize the Chicago School's view of the American mainstream as a composite culture. Their rethinking of assimilation sought to adapt assimilation as a social science concept to the context of a multi-racial society characterized by unprecedented racial and ethnic diversity. Alba and Nee redefined assimilation "as the decline of an ethnic distinction and its corollary cultural and social difference" (p. 11). Their definition focused measurement on *decline of ethnicity for* *individuals in determining life's chances* as a condition for assimilation. Defined in this manner, assimilation does not require the loss of ethnic identity, or the vanishing of ethnic boundaries, which Alba and Nee argued allows assimilation theory to jettison the tacit ethnocentrism of earlier definitions (Warner and Srole 1943; Gordon 1964). According to the new definition, members of an ethnic group can assimilate in large numbers even when the ethnic group maintains its distinctive neighborhoods and ethnic institutions. Moreover, ethnic identities may experience periodic resurgence as blending processes yields to segregating processes (Hannan 1979; Bonacich and Modell 1981; Nee, Sanders and Sernau 1994).

Alba and Nee (2003) defined the American mainstream to which descendants of immigrants assimilate as encompassing a core set of interrelated institutional structures and organizations regulated by rules and practices that weaken, even undermine, the influence of ethnic origins per se. For example, the modern research university is an interrelated set of institutional elements comprised of cultural beliefs, social norms and formal rules governing faculty and students conduct. The same formal rules of competition and cooperation apply to all faculty and students irregardless of their ethnicity. A useful way of conceiving of the mainstream is that it is part of the society *within* which ethnic and racial origins have at most minor impacts on life chances or opportunities.

3 Explaining Assimilation as a Social Process

This chapter aims to specify the general propositions of the new assimilation theory in Alba and Nee (2003:35-59). In contrast to the "thin" accounts of rationality used by Becker (1976) and extended to sociology by Coleman (1990), the context-bound rationality employed here assumes a "thick" view of rationality embedded in on-going relationships and institutional structures. Further, the propositions assume bounded rationality, wherein actors are "intendedly rational, but only limitedly so" (Simon 1957:xxiv). As Homans (1974) argued in his criticism of the maximizing assumption in economics, people are more apt to *meliorize* in their social behavior. By taking into account the context-bound nature of rationality, understanding purposive action involves interpreting choices made by actors within concrete institutional matrices. In other words, rational choice theory is self-limiting when it overlooks advances in understanding how beliefs, norms, rules and organizations shape social behavior.

Though the propositions specify general mechanisms, the theory's scope condition focuses on assimilation within the institutional context of immigrant societies. Obviously, between- country differences in cultural beliefs and legal systems render a mechanical extension of the theory outside of the North American context not automatic. To extend the theory to Western European societies, what is needed is context-specific analysis that takes into account beliefs, rules, norms and organization embedded in the institutional matrix of a country (Greif 2006). Nevertheless, the theory is motivating research in some European countries, such as France (Tribalat, 1995, 1996) and Germany (Diehl and Schnell, 2006). Moreover, Hartmut Esser (2008) has recently used a rational-choice approach to propose solutions to key questions about contingent pathways: Why in some institutional matrices does rational action give rise to self-enforcing social dynamics that strengthen racial and ethnic boundaries? Why, in other institutional contexts, does self-interest seeking at the individual level give rise to self-reinforcing endogenous cultural and behavioral change leading to social assimilation?

The aim is to explain assimilation as a process of cumulative causation driven by a repertoire of mechanisms operating at the individual, primary-group and institutional levels. We assume no single causal mechanism explains the mode of immigrants' accommodation to their host society; instead a repertoire of mechanisms operating at different analytical levels is involved. In combination, and cumulatively, they shape the trajectories of adaptation of immigrants and their children. The mechanisms proposed are general to social behavior and fall broadly within two groups: the *proximate* causes that operate at the individual and social network levels, shaped by the specific *forms of capital* immigrants possess, and the *distal* often deeper causes that are embedded in large structures such as the institutional arrangements of the state, firm and labor market.

In contrast to the canonical assimilation literature, the theory does not assume assimilation is an inevitable outcome of inter-group contact, competition, and accommodation. The problem with an assumption of inevitability of the Chicago School approach is it assumes away what needs to be explained. As the historical cases of extermination of indigenous people document, assimilation need not be the outcome of inter-ethnic contact (Shibutani and Kwan 1965) Moreover, inter-group contact and competition can lead to collective action by the majority group aimed at segregation and exclusion of despised minorities (Bonacich 1973; Nee and Nee 1973). Furthermore, the cases of Amish of Pennsylvania and Hasidic Jews of New York City show that small ethno-religious minorities can retain separate identities and communities even while participating to some degree in civil society. Not only does assimilation occur at different rates within different ethnic and racial groups, but within the same ethnic group there is considerable variation in the extent of assimilation—as for example is clear in the sharp contrast between intermarried Jews and the residents of socially encapsulated Hasidic communities.

A common feature of human migration is that it is enabled, motivated and guided by the purposive action of individuals embedded in social networks (Massey and Espana 1987). What we learn from the long record of human migration is the enormous capacity of migrants and their descendants to adapt to new social environments (Massey 1999, 2002). We are in broad agreement with the cognitive emphasis in the cumulative causation approach outlined in Shibutani and Kwan (1965). Notwithstanding, irrespective of differences in institutional contexts of receiving societies, inter-ethnic contact invariably sparks competition and conflict. Incrementally over time, amalgamation or assimilation has *neither always nor inevitably*, but often, evolved as the dominant outcome.

In immigrant societies like the USA, Canada, and Australia, assimilation evolved endogenously as cultural belief and social norm. In these societies, contemporary immigrants and their children often settle in mixed ethnic neighborhoods and not only establish ongoing social relationships with members of their own ethnic group, but also engage in frequent social and economic transactions with individuals outside of their ethnic group. Such transactions are a routine feature of living in urban regions characterized by a high degree of ethnic heterogeneity. The higher the level of ethnic heterogeneity, the more likely individuals will transact with others outside of their ethnic group, and the more common are cross-cutting ties connecting different ethnic groups (Nee et al. 1994).

Accordingly, to the extent assimilation occurs, it proceeds incrementally, usually as an intergenerational process, stemming both from individuals' purposive action and from the *unintended consequences* of their workaday decisions to optimize on past investments in human, cultural and social capital (Nee and Sanders 2001a). In the case of immigrants and their children who may not intentionally seek to assimilate, the cumulative effect of pragmatic social action aimed at successful adaptation can give rise to changes in behavior that lead to assimilation.

Moreover, the relative mix of mechanisms observed at the community level varies across ethnic and racial groups, sometimes involving more collectivist modes of accommodation in the case of labor migration (Massey Alarcon, Durand and Gonzales 1987; Massey Goldring and Durand 1994; Massey, Charles, Lundy and Fischer 2003) and sometimes more individualist modes of adaptation as in human-capital-driven migration of professionals and skilled workers (Nee and Sanders 2001a). For most ethnic groups, a mix of collectivist and individualist mechanisms contribute to shaping the trajectory of incorporation. Even while the modal experience is defined by the purposive activity of individuals, this does not rule out the importance of collectivist efforts at the group level which help to secure opportunities for gain at the individual level, as documented in Saxenian's (2006) study of immigrant entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley.

Institutional mechanisms

The theory of assimilation turns on the structure of relative rewards and the rules of the game embedded in the institutional environment. Institutional mechanisms comprise the deeper causes insofar as they determine whether the proximate causes— purposive action and network mechanisms— advance blending or segregating processes (Nee et al. 1994; Nee and Ingram 1998). The monitoring and enforcement activity by the state accounts for the effectiveness of coercive isomorphism of institutional mechanisms (DiMaggio and Powell 1983).

The vastly expanded reach of centralized authority in modern societies highlights the importance of the institutional mechanisms at the command of the state (Barzel 2002). The state is the sovereign actor in specifying the framework that sets the underlying rules of the game for competition and cooperation in a society. It is the ultimate source of coercion in its geographical area. It has the powers of taxation to mobilize resources to achieve its objectives, to redistribute wealth and income by enacting laws and regulations, and create wealth by devising and enforcing property rights. It has the capacity to enact and enforce laws and carry out institutional changes in order to secure public goods (i.e., defense, environmental protection, civil rights) and to respond to changing relative prices (i.e., through interest rates, minimum wage, money supply). Thus the institutional mechanisms of monitoring and enforcement of formal rules of the state organizations constitute a potent causal force.

The state specifies the fundamental rules regarding property rights, citizenship, competition and cooperation, and hence the structure of incentives of society (North 1981). The striking feature of the institutional environment of advanced industrial societies such as the United States is not so much the variability of localities and regions, but the extent to which there is homogeneity in the enforcement of laws and regulations of the federal government (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). For instance, the rules governing civil rights are invariant despite state and regional differences in economic conditions. Federal laws and regulations extend the power of the central state uniformly despite variability in local and regional customary practices. Variation in local institutional contexts may limit the effectiveness of monitoring and enforcement, but they do not occasion different federal rules.

Viewed from the vantage point of institutional mechanisms, the different experiences of the descendants of European and nonwhite immigration to the United States are readily explained. Despite a history of nativism and ethnic discrimination directed against southern and eastern Europeans, their constitutional rights provided basic legal safeguards that kept channels of mobility open (Lopez 1996). By contrast, for nonwhite minorities prior to World War II, the formal rules of the game and their enforcement, from immigration laws to legal rights, forcefully bolstered the informal constraints—the norms and etiquette of the color line—excluding racial minorities from civil society (Myrdal 1944; Shibutani and Kwan 1965; Wilson 1979; Massey and Denton 1993; Alexander 2006). For example, Asian immigrants were ineligible for citizenship (until the McCarren-Walter Act of 1952), and faced many discriminatory local and regional laws that restricted their property rights and civil liberties; while informal racism blocked the chances of mobility into the economic and social mainstream for the second generation. It required institutional change directed at extending formal rights and their enforcement to racial minorities before assimilation was a possibility, despite the preference of native-born Asian Americans whose cultural and human capital reflected a high level of acculturation already in the pre-World War II era.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to review the history of post-World War II institutional change culminating in fundamental constitutional rights extended to racial minorities. Suffice to say, in the post-civil rights era, the institutional mechanisms monitoring and enforcement federal and state rules outlawing racism have increased the cost of discrimination in nontrivial ways (Becker 1971; Burstein 1985; Skrentny 2002). Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 allows the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EOCC) the right to intervene in private bias lawsuits when it deems that the case is of "general public importance." A follow-up law, the Civil Rights Act of 1991, allows victims of bias to collect up to $300,000 in compensatory and punitive damages. Although enforcement of Title VII has been inconsistent under different administrations, corporations and nonprofit firms have become more attentive in observing its guidelines, with increasing numbers of firms offering diversity and multicultural training workshops for managers and employees and instituting company rules against racial and gender discrimination (Edelman 1990; Dobbin, Sutton, Meyer and Scott 1993). This stems from technical improvements in the monitoring of firm behavior by agencies of the federal government (Sutton, Dobbin, Meyer and Scott 1994). EOCC's district offices now routinely collect data on the pay and promotion practices of large organizations, and analyze them to discern patterns of discrimination. Political actors in Washington D.C. sought to demonstrate a credible commitment to enforcement of Title VII under perceived pressure to enhance the legitimacy of the U.S. as leader of the free world during the Cold War and a world wide human rights revolution (Skrentny 2002).

Landmark settlements of federal discrimination lawsuits have rendered the cost of discrimination more transparent for corporations and nonprofit organizations (Edelman 1990; Walsh 2000). They also provided the federal government useful case histories and lessons in dealing with discrimination lawsuits. Media attention focused on federal cases, contribute to increased attentiveness to Title VII guidelines in corporate America.

Laws, like norms, are statement of expected behavior, ideas framed with moral and ethnical authority backed by state power (Posner 2000). Whether as ideology or as cultural beliefs, they define the parameters of legitimate behavior to which organizations and individuals adapt through the effect of coercive isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Whether the price of noncompliance is perceived as costs imposed by fines and penalties or as a loss of legitimacy is moot since both are costly to the firm (Nee 2005).

The institutional mechanisms of monitoring and enforcement operate exogenously on firms and nonprofit organizations through the costs of penalties and withholding of federal grants and contracts. But there are also endogenous sources of compliance to the rules of the game. The civil rights movement and the legislative changes enacted by Congress created a normative environment in which legitimacy was conditioned on fair governance through formal protections of the principle of equality of rights (Edelman 1990; Dobbin et al. 1993: Sutton et al. 1994). Equal employment opportunity law (EEO) defined broad parameters and guidelines of legitimate organizational practices with respect to minorities and women. Because the civil rights laws have weak enforcement features and are ambiguously stated, organizations construct the meaning of compliance “in a manner that is minimally disruptive of the status quo” (Edelman 1992:1535). This enables organizations to gain legitimacy and hence resources through the appearance of abiding by civil rights legislation. However, once in place, EEO/AA [affirmative action] structures may produce or bolster internal constituencies that help to institutionalize EEO/AA goals (1959). The civil rights era legislation in this view has its largest impact indirectly through professionals who generate “ideologies of rationality” or cultural beliefs about how organizations should respond to the law (Edelman 1990; Dobbin et al. 1993; Sutton et al. 1994). In other words, as Greif (2006) argues, institutional change is self-reinforcing when it is motivated, enabled and guided by cultural beliefs and mutual expectations of a widening circle of actors engaged in on-going transactions.

It is more difficult to prove discrimination at the point of hiring than after minorities are already inside the firm. An unintended consequence of Title VII may be to reinforce employer preference to employ immigrant workers, believed by employers to be more acquiescent and less likely to cause trouble (Nee et al. 1994; Waters 2001; Waldinger and Lichter 2003). Title VII also contributes to the fierce partisanship in national elections as political parties vie for control over the monitoring and enforcement of federal rules. Firms enforce rules against discrimination not only due to more effective external monitoring, but also because an increasingly diverse labor force creates positive incentives for management to evolve norms in the workplace that promote a climate of racial tolerance to avoid costly ethnic conflict and tensions.

It might be argued that more important than institutional change stemming from the Civil Rights movement is the economic development since the end of World War II, which has resulted in the concomitant transformation of the American occupational structure and expansion of higher education to train the cadre of professionals and technical workers needed by advanced capitalism. Economic development is certainly important, but one should note that an earlier period of sustained economic growth sparked by the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century led to a radically different outcome. This earlier era paralleled the imposition through violence and legislation of the racial segregation in the South of the Jim Crow era, segregation of blacks in central cities in the North, virulent anti-Asian movements directed at exclusion and segregation in the West, and nativist mobilization against immigrants and their descendants from southern and eastern Europe. Hence, modern economic development in itself is not a sufficient cause of assimilation.

Notwithstanding, economic growth can be viewed as a necessary condition for assimilation on a wide scale (Alba and Nee 2003; Alba 2009). In combination with the institutional changes we have described, growth can make an important difference in motivating shifts out of ethnic enclaves into mainstream America. Moreover, growth has another aspect that can be considered propitious for entry into the mainstream by some previously excluded groups: it has been associated throughout the 19th and 20th centuries with the development of new economic sectors and new occupations. By contrast, economic contraction and stagnation intensify competition between groups, and hence reinforce segregating processes. Institutional changes and their enforcement have extended equal rights in asset ownership to racial minorities, which was denied before World War II. Consequently, of the engineers in Silicon Valley a high proportion come from new immigrant groups (25 percent are Chinese and Indian immigrants), testifying both to the openings the new economy affords for the creation of new elites and to the effectiveness of institutional mechanisms in the post-civil rights era in enforcing the property rights of immigrant entrepreneurs (Saxenian 2006).

But the more important institutional changes are those that have not only increased the cost of discrimination, but also have led to self-reinforcing changes in cultural beliefs and values (Shibutani and Kwan 1965). Alexander (2006) analyzes the robust action of Martin Luther King and civil rights activists in the 1960s. By embodying the ideals of civil society and by strategically using binary oppositions between justice and injustice in leading the struggle for integration, civil rights movement activists assumed the moral high ground in the struggle for inclusion in the American mainstream. Alexander shows that the strategy of non-violent civil disobedience crafted by King succeeded in defining the civil rights movement as one that embodied the core values and norms of civil society, while defining those who opposed the civil rights movement as embodying the binary opposite qualities. This symbolic action opened the way for a change in cultural beliefs and norms about diversity and inclusion of racial and ethnic minorities. While the ideological shift has not ended racial prejudice and racist practices, it has changed their character. They are more covert and subterranean; and racism as belief has lost its public legitimacy and can no longer be advocated in public without sanction (Alba and Nee 2003). Today, many white Americans are anxious to demonstrate that they are not racists (Schuman, Steeh, Bobo and Krysan 1997).

Institutional Mechanism Proposition: *1) If society's constitutional rules and their enforcement by the state extend formal equality of rights to all citizens, and 2) if political actors signal credible commitment to reinforcing cultural beliefs and formal rules of equality of rights, then immigrants and their children entitled to full citizenship are likely to choose a course of social action that increases their likelihood of assimilation.*

The institutional mechanism proposition highlights the importance of equality of rights and the rule of law as scope conditions for the theory. It might be argued that in so doing the theory overlooks the undocumented who make up nearly one third of all immigrants in the U.S. The proposition suggests that lacking legal rights, undocumented immigrants not only are more vulnerable to discrimination and prejudice than legal immigrants, but the more fundamental problem is the undocumented lack the legal basis to assert their rights. Living in a society governed by the rule of law may benefit undocumented immigrants insofar as the customary practices of organizations is to conform to formal rules and legitimate practices. However, the implication of the institutional mechanism proposition remains that undocumented immigrants are unlikely to assimilate. Their American born children, by the rule of *jus soli,* enjoy the same formal rights of all citizens, which makes a difference for the second generation as Kasinitz et al. (2008) confirm.

Cumulatively, formal equality of rights monitored and enforced by the state and action by political actors reinforcing cultural beliefs and norms of civil rights motivate, enable and guide self-interest seeking by immigrants and their children oriented to assimilation.

Purposive action

At the individual level, a rational choice theory of assimilation must conceptually incorporate agency stemming from purposive action and self-interest and provide an account of the incentives and motivation for assimilation. Like all of us, immigrants and their descendants act in accordance with mental models shaped by cultural beliefs and norms that mold perceptions of self-interest (Greif 2006). They follow rule-of-thumb heuristics in solving problems, and make decisions in the face of uncertainty stemming from incomplete information. Their choices are inevitably context-bound, shaped not only by cultural beliefs but also by institutional constraints (Nee 1998, 2005). Lastly, the theory of assimilation assumes aversion to inequity as a universal human trait embedded in cultural beliefs in fairness and distributive justice (Homans 1974; Fehr and Schmidt 1999).

In their adaptation to life in the U.S., many immigrants face choices in which the degrees of risk and of benefit are similarly hard to gauge; it is also usually the case that these choices involve long-term consequences that are unforeseeable. In contemplating the strategies best suited to improve their lives and those of their children, immigrants and the second generation weigh the risks and potential benefits of "ethnic" strategies, dependent upon opportunities available through ethnic networks (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993), versus "mainstream" ones, which involve an open-access higher educational system and labor markets (Nee et al. 1994; Sander, Nee and Sernau 2002; Sanders 2002; Massey et al. 2003). Often enough, there may be little choice in these matters—when immigrants have little human and financial capital and/or they are undocumented, they will usually be limited to jobs located through ethnic networks and constrained to residence in ethnic areas (Light 1972). But others, where possible, may try mixed strategies, built from ethnic and mainstream institutional elements, as when second-generation young adults obtain jobs through family and ethnic networks while continuing their education, thus leaving multiple options open.

Individuals striving for success in American society often do not see themselves as assimilating. Yet unintended consequences of practical strategies and actions undertaken in pursuit of the familiar goals—a good education, a good job, a nice place to live, interesting friends and acquaintances, economic security—often result in specific forms of assimilation (Nee et al. 1994; Sanders et al 2002; Massey et al. 2003. For example, it is not uncommon for first- and second-generation parents to raise their children speaking only English, or at least to avoid placing their children in bilingual educational settings, in the belief that their chances for success in school will be improved by their more complete mastery of the host language (Alba and Nee 2003; Kasinitz et al. 2008). This is often true of families that instill aspirations for professional careers in their children. Surprising numbers of second-generation Asian children speak only English at home, which suggests that their families have adopted this strategy. For another example, the search for a more desirable place to live—with good schools, safe streets, and opportunities for children to grow up away from the seductions of deviant models of behavior—leads immigrant professionals and entrepreneurs to move to the suburbs (if and when socioeconomic success permits this), since residential amenities tend to be concentrated there. One consequence, whether intended or not, is much greater interaction with families of other backgrounds; such increased contact tends to encourage acculturation, especially for the children. Immigrant professionals in particular are likely to optimize on investments in human capital through individualist strategies that increase their children's chances of entering into the mainstream society (Nee and Sanders 2001a).

Associated with acculturation are culturally codified notions of appropriate behavior, which, when learned, serve as cues to others of an individual's level of cultural and social competence (Spence 1974). Such competence contributes to reducing social distance through the signaling behavioral attributes that appear familiar and trustworthy. Physical differences may persist, but their effect on perceived social distance attenuates as cultural competence modulates social behavior in ways that highlight shared understanding and cultural attributes. For employers such cues are a "market signal" providing a ready rule-of-thumb measure of the individual's cultural capital, especially with respect to the linguistic and social competence needed to perform effectively in the workplace (Nee and Sanders 2001a). It is not surprising, given the emphasis on successful adaptation common to immigrant families that the second generation strives to acculturate. Institutionalized incentives are such that it is rational for individuals regardless of ethnicity to signal that they have the cultural and social competence to compete and perform in schools, the workplace and other institutional contexts, especially when they believe they have predictable chances of success in mainstream institutions. The exploitation of opportunities often carries some ramifications for further assimilation, even if unforeseen ones.

Purposive Action Proposition**:** *If opportunities are more extensive and plentiful in the mainstream economy than in ethnic enclaves, then purposive action of immigrants and their children will be aimed at optimizing returns to investment in human and cultural capital in the mainstream society, even in the face of informal opposition to assimilation by individual members of the majority and minority groups.*

Network mechanisms

Network mechanisms are the social processes that monitor and enforce norms within close-knit groups (Ellickson 1991; Nee and Ingram 1998). Strictly speaking, social networks and norms do not constitute causal mechanisms insofar as they are elements of institutional structure—the relationship connecting two or more actors and the informal rules governing the relationship—rather than social processes that give rise to and sustain cooperation. A more analytically tractable approach to understanding the causal properties of networks and norms is to focus on the social mechanisms that enable actors to engage in joint action as a means to achieve collective goals (Homans 1950). In close-knit groups, the mechanisms are the social rewards and punishments. Monitoring and enforcement of norms occur spontaneously in the course of social interaction among members of the group through the exchange of social approval for behavior conforming to the group's norms, and disapproval and ostracism for violating them (Homans 1974).

Norms are the informal rules that provide guidelines according to which joint action in close-knit groups or social networks is sustained. They arise from the problem-solving activity of individuals in their strivings to improve their chances for success through cooperation. Members of a close-knit group or social network will informally encourage each other to engage in cooperative behavior by jointly enforcing its norms. Individuals cooperate not only because their interests are linked to the success of the group, but their identity is as well. In collectivities involving large numbers, the "free-rider" problem arises from the availability of a public good to all regardless of whether they contribute to its production; this problem is minimized in close-knit groups where compliance to norms can be effectively secured as a routine by-product of ongoing social exchange among members. No claim is made that the norms of close-knit groups operate to benefit society as a whole. Indeed, the norms that benefit members may impoverish those outside a group--for example, the norm of solidarity among a band of thieves and the norms of racial segregation in the Jim Crow era of the South.

Network mechanisms in close-knit groups sustain norms that maximize the welfare of members of the group (Ellickson 1991; Nee and Ingram 1998). Ethnic minorities often exhibit many of the same qualities as close-knit groups in their capacity to monitor and enforce norms of cooperation, especially evident during periods of extreme societal hostility and social isolation (Bonacich and Modell 1981; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993). Welfare-maximization is seen in the central role of migrant networks in initiating, sustaining, and expanding streams of labor migration linking small communities in Mexico to destination points in California (Massey et al. 1987). It is seen in the norms of close-knit groups within the immigrant community. Newly arrived immigrants turn to relatives, acquaintances and friends for direct assistance in meeting practical needs from the first weeks following their arrival to establishing the sequence of jobs and residences that form the basis of their long-term accommodation (Nee and Sanders 2001b; Nee et al. 1994). The welfare-maximizing feature of norms in close-knit groups is assumed in studies of ethnic economies showing extensive cooperation to secure competitive advantages in markets (Light 1972; Bonacich and Modell 1985). Studies of immigration show that social networks lower the risks of international migration and increase the chances of success in making the transition to settled lives in America (Massey et al. 1987). They support the view that network ties are a fungible form of social capital, providing an array of tangible forms of assistance, especially timely and accurate information about the availability of start-up jobs and of places to live (Massey et al. 1994).

The welfare-maximizing feature of a close-knit group renders network ties a form of capital, a fungible asset, which like human or financial capital, can be converted into material gain (Portes 1995). Such social capital is generally accumulated as a by-product of ongoing social relationships, manifested in the build-up of good will and trust between members of a group and between acquaintances who have cooperated in the past (Homans 1974; Coleman 1990). For immigrants, it is comprised of the webs of network ties that they have accumulated over the course of the migration experience, starting with the strong ties of family, kinship and friendship and extending to the weak ties of acquaintanceship.

Network Proposition: *In general, when discriminatory barriers block an individualistic pattern of social mobility, assimilation, when it occurs, depends on ethnic collective action.*

As with the general pattern of social mobility in industrial societies, intergenerational mobility is likely to be most constrained in the move from the bottom to the middle, and from the middle to the top of the stratification order (Grusky and Hauser 1994). It is reasonable to assume that a similar pattern of divergent outcomes will obtain for the descendants of contemporary immigration as for native groups in industrial societies (Alba and Nee 2003). Hence, many in the second generation are likely to experience upward social mobility into the American socioeconomic mainstream, while the children of immigrant professionals and entrepreneurs may start there and, in fact, enjoy better life chances than white Americans from less advantaged social origins. But other members of the second generation may experience instead lateral or, at best, short-distance mobility, thus remaining close in their socioeconomic position to their immigrant parents (Kasinitz et al 2008). Portes and Zhou (1993) predict that children of low-wage labor migration are likelier to experience downward mobility into the urban minority underclass than the children of human-capital migration from the same ethnic group.

Institutional mechanisms extending civil rights to minorities and women have increased the cost of discrimination in nontrivial ways in American society. Despite this, a wealth of research in the social sciences has documented the persistent effect of racism in limiting the life chances of minorities, especially African Americans. Clearly implementing formal rules is not tantamount to the effective realization of the rules' intent. Whether in government-led efforts to safeguard the civil rights of minorities by outlawing discrimination, or in the attempts in post-communist societies to construct market economies by means of drastically altering property rights, changing the formal rules of the game at best incrementally results in path-dependent change. This is because the legacy of past practices, vested interests and custom imposes a powerful constraint limiting efforts to implement institutional change. In some cases, the rules become too costly to enforce effectively due to the strength of persistent racism or so unpopular that informal opposition gives rise to political efforts to overturn the rule.

Despite persistent racism and unevenness in enforcement under different administrations, in the post-Civil Rights era a watershed change has taken place in the institutional environment (Skrentny 2002; Alexander 2006). Immigrant minorities other than African Americans have derived considerably more benefit from institutional change, in part because their relationships to the mainstream are much less burdened by the legacies of the historic norms and etiquette governing race relations. The examples of the Asian American groups offer the most compelling testimony in this respect. Among freshman in selective universities, Asian Americans comprise the largest group of nonwhite students (Massey et al. 2003). Native-born second and third generation Asian Americans have achieved parity with non-Hispanic whites with respect to educational and occupational and show high rates of intermarriage (Qian 1997; Qian, Blair and Ruf 2003).

To summarize, the theory of assimilation claims that if the institutional matrix extends to the descendants of immigration formal equality of rights, including the full ensemble of rights and beliefs entailed in citizenship, and political actors make credible commitment to enforcement, immigrants and their children will through their everyday choices strive to assimilate to optimize on chances for intergenerational success, even in the face of informal societal opposition. Moreover, if informal (or illegal) barriers to entry block legitimate pathways to assimilation, the theory predicts that co-ethnic networks will be used to mobilize collective action in order to secure entry into opportunity structures of the mainstream economy and society. However, if ethnic enclaves provide a richer opportunity structure than the mainstream economy and society, the theory predicts voluntary segregation in ethnic niches (Esser 2008). The theory can be readily extended to explain why immigrants and their descendants are likely to assimilate in some societies but not in other societies, depending on the nature of the constitutional rules and their enforcement. In all modern nation states, the constitutional rules specifying the underlying structure of competition and cooperation are embodied not only in the law—the formal rules of the game, but in beliefs and norms enabling, motivating and guiding legitimate social behavior (Greif 2006).

The Civil Rights social movement led by Martin Luther King and the legislation extending full equality of rights to all citizens regardless of skin color, ethnic origin or gender led to transformative changes in the rules, norms, beliefs and organization of the American mainstream (Alexander 2006), which cumulatively and decisively lowered the informal and formal barriers to entry into the American mainstream for the children of immigrant minorities. The degree to which similar exogenous and endogenous institutional change is occurring in Western European societies, which during the same time frame also experienced mass immigration at a comparative volume and scale as the United States, is one of the central empirical questions in applying assimilation theory outside of the U.S.

4 Social Research on the Second Generation

We now turn to a case study of the second-generation experience in New York City for a test of our rational choice theory of assimilation. In *Inheriting the City*, Philip Kasintz, John Mollenkopf, Mary Waters and Jennifer Holdaway report results from a ten-year study of the children of immigrants involving 3,415 young adults, 18 to 32 years old, with at least one immigrant parent, living in the ten counties region of metropolitan New York. The sample was drawn from groups that make up 81 percent of the 12 million people who live in this metropolitan area: Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, Columbians, Ecuadorans, Peruvians, Chinese, Russian Jews, and, for purposes of comparison, native-born blacks, whites and Puerto Ricans. Of the telephone respondents, graduate students interviewed face-to-face 333 respondents for in depth accounts of their experiences growing up, going to school, finding jobs and starting up their own families. In assessing second-generation assimilation, the reference groups used for comparison were native-born Americans from similar ethno-racial backgrounds.

Kasinitz et al. (2008) provide a careful and nuanced review of the debate over assimilation briefly outlined in this chapter. They review the earlier social research on assimilation, from its origins in the Chicago School to the canonical studies of Warner and Srole (1943) and Gordon (1964) and the new assimilation theory proffered in Alba and Nee (2003). On the other side, they provide a detailed discussion of writings on second-generation decline and segmented-assimilation. In their summary account of this perspective, they write: "Gans, Portes and Zhou posit that the children of nonwhite immigrants would come to share the *native disadvantages* of racial minorities. Discrimination and racial segregation would block their access to educational opportunities and decent jobs. To avoid this tendency, some members of the second generation would retain the immigrant advantages stemming from their parents' positive selection, their embeddedness in ethnic networks and economies, and their cultural orientations (Rumbaut 2004)" (p.20).

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a detailed account of the rich veins of empirical findings reported in *Inheriting the City*. Suffice to say, Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, Waters and Holdaway provide an authoritative comparative analysis of the family and neighborhood, educational, labor market and inter-generational mobility of the second-generation in their sample. We instead quote summary statements of their findings:

On educational attainment: “First, all the second generation groups fared better than native born minority young people in high school and college graduation rates…Even more strikingly, two second generation groups—Chinese and Russians—substantially outpaced native born whites in college graduation rates” (p.137).

On jobs and economic assimilation: “No group works in places where co-ethnic form a majority….Why does the ethnic economy play such a small role for the second generation? Many second generation New Yorkers avoided ethnic economy jobs for the simple reason that they do not pay well. Figure 6.6 compares the weekly earnings of people working where they are surrounded by co-ethnics with those who are not; the latter situation yielded higher pay for every group except native whites” (p. 198).

“In sum, ethnic enclave jobs were much more like safety nets than springboards….While ethnic enclaves have clearly been useful for the immigrant first generation, we find little support for the idea that they will be a significant source of upward mobility for the second generation. Even for the children of Chinatown, ‘moving up’ generally means ‘moving out’” (p.202).

“The work lives of the second generation also provide little evidence of second generation decline into an underclass marked by persistent poverty and unemployment….Indeed, all of the children of immigrants are more likely than those of native minority respondents to be either in the labor force or in school, and the earnings in most groups are closer to those of the native whites than to those of native minority respondents. The children of immigrants also earn more when they work in the mainstream economy, not in ethnic niches or enclaves" (p.203).

On culture: "Overall, the young adults we spoke with look far more 'American' than some debates about immigration would lead one to expect. They almost universally speak English well, they do not sustain strong transnational ties, and they pick and choose their religious identities and attend churches that are diverse….they are far more likely to believe in and practice gender equality than their parents' generation" (p.273).

On race and discrimination: Kasinitz et al. (2008) report that many of their respondents have personal experiences of discrimination. "On balance, however, the majority of our second generation respondents did not perceive either America or being American as something racial. Even those who had experienced a great deal of discrimination tended to see themselves as American and to see America as a place that accepted their culture and their identity" (p.339).

Overall assessment of social research on second generation: "Our research was initially motivated by worries about second generation decline. Like many other social scientists, we were concerned that the children of recent immigrants might be at risk of downward assimilation as they become Americans….Many scholars have speculated that the larger patterns of racial inequality and discrimination in America will force those children of immigrants who are not classified as white into the ranks of persistently poor native minorities...[Portes and Zhou's] segmented assimilation model stands the standard assimilation model on its head. For at least some immigrants, the argument goes, coming quickly and easily to share American (or at least lower class American) ways is bad for the second generation. Holding on to immigrant distinctiveness can be an advantage….Few of our respondents followed either of the two most theoretically innovative predictions of the model. Few experienced downward assimilation resulting from overly rapid Americanization, and few also experienced upward mobility by maintaining their place in an ethnic enclave. When downward mobility does occur, it is not correlated with rapid differential loss of parents' ethnic language or culture….To the contrary, upward mobility is associated with the use of English, employment outside of an ethnic enclave, and learning American ways faster than one's parents. Indeed, joining the mainstream is the most common route to success in this study (Alba and Nee 2003)" (p.347).

5 Conclusion

The theory of assimilation proffered in this essay specifies a repertoire of proximate and distal mechanisms. In combination with the forms of capital immigrants bring with them the theory explains why assimilation is likely to remain a central social process in the adaptation of immigrants and their descendants and why it will encompass divergent outcomes in American society. It indicates that institutional mechanisms enforcing equal rights rules open the way for assimilation of ethnic minorities by providing predictability in the chances for success for those who try.

Prior to World War II the formal rules buttressed racial separatism, especially in the American South under Jim Crow, and reinforced by informal norms of color line between whites and nonwhites (Shibutani and Kwan 1965). American soldiers fought in segregated units during the War. Far-reaching institutional changes have opened the way for predictable chances of social mobility for ethnic and racial minorities into the

American mainstream, not possible before changes in the formal rules and public ideology (Skrentny 2002). Consequently, the scope and extent of assimilation has opened up to provide pathways for intergenerational educational, occupational, residential and social mobility for many descendants of the post-1965 immigration. Indeed, a case can be made that the pace of assimilation has never before been faster for the second generation, especially evident in the case of children of human capital immigrants (Kasinitz et al 2008). Children of immigrant minorities are well represented in America's most selective universities and professional schools (Massey et al. 2003).

The theory outlined in this essay addresses the need to explain why immigrants and their descendants seek to assimilate and/or so frequently end up assimilating, as an unintended consequence of their pursuit of other goals. Unlike the earlier literature on assimilation, the theory of assimilation does not assume that assimilation is inevitable, nor for that matter do we assume it is even irreversible. Instead assimilation must be explained as a contingent outcome stemming from the cumulative effect of individual choices and collective action in close-knit groups, occurring at different rates both within and across ethnic groups. Assimilation is caused by a repertoire of mechanisms, the precise mix of proximate ones varying considerably across groups. For some groups, especially human capital immigrants, assimilation is shaped mainly by individualistic adaptation conforming to a "straight-line" or perhaps "bumpy-line" intergenerational pattern. Others—traditional labor migrants with low stocks of human and financial capital in particular—follow a collectivist pattern in which network mechanisms shape the trajectory of adaptation. Such groups also include middlemen minorities that adapt through reliance on ethnic solidarity to achieve economic security and success, and then employ their resources through collective action to fight barriers to entry and gain acceptance in mainstream institutions. Various combinations of individualistic and collectivist adaptation emerge through the mix of purposive action of individuals and reliance on network mechanisms of close-knit groups.

This essay draws on and extends the assimilation literature spawned by the early Chicago School of Sociology to construct a rational choice approach to understanding assimilation as a social process. We focus on the American experience of assimilation, the institutional context of which is broadly similar to other settler societies such as Australia and Canada. The theoretical framework can be extended to global cities elsewhere by taking into account the differing institutional contexts, especially with respect to cultural beliefs and the informal and formal rules governing citizenship. The theory of assimilation turns on distal causes stemming from the institutional mechanisms of monitoring and enforcement that structure incentives in the institutional environment. The state and political actors who monitor and enforce the rules of the game determine the nature and effectiveness of institutional mechanisms. They are the deeper causes insofar as they determine whether purposive action of individuals and network mechanisms result in blending or segregating behavior on the part of both majority and minority groups.

REFERENCES

Alba, Richard. 2009. *Blurring the Color Line: The New Chance for a More Integrated America.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Alba, Richard, and Victor Nee. 2003. *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Alexander, Jeffrey C. 2006. *The Civil Sphere*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Barzel, Yoram. 2002. *A Theory of the State: Economic Rights, Legal Rights and the Scope of the State.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bean, Frank D., and Gillian Stevens. 2003. *America's Newcomers and the Dynamics of Diversity*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Becker, Gary. [1957] 1971. *The Economics of Discrimination.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

_____. 1976. *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bobo, Lawrence D. ,Melvin L. Oliver, James H. Johnson Jr., and Abel Valenzuela Jr. 2000. *Prismatic Metropolis: Inequality in Los Angeles.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Bonacich, Edna, and John Modell. 1981. *The Economic Basis of Ethnic Solidarity: Small Business in the Japanese-American Community.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Borjas, George J. 1999. *Heaven's Door: Immigration Policy and the American Economy.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Burstein, Paul. 1985. *Discrimination, Jobs, and Politics: The Struggle for Equal Employment Opportunity in the United States since the New Deal.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Coleman, James S. 1988. "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital." *American Journal of Sociology* 94 S95-S121.

_____. 1990. *Foundations of Social Theory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Diehl, Claudia and Rainer Schnell. 2006. "'Reactive ethnicity' or 'assimilation'? Statements, arguments, and first empirical evidence for labor migrants in Germany," *International Migration Review* 40: 786-816.

DiMaggio, Paul J., and Walter W. Powell. 1983. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields. *American Sociological Review* 48:147-60.

Dobbin, Frank, John R. Sutton, John W. Meyer, Richard Scott. 1993. "Equal Opportunity Law and the Construction of Internal Labor Markets." *American Journal of Sociology* 99:396-427.

Edelman, Lauren. 1990. "Legal Environments and Organizational Governance: The Expansion of Due Process in the American Workplace." *American Journal of Sociology* 95:1401-40.

_____. 1992. "Legal Ambiguity and Symbolic Structures: Organizational Mediation of Civil Rights Law." *American Journal of Sociology* 97:1531-76.

Ellickson, Robert. 1991. *Order without Law: How Neighbors Settle Disputes* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Esser, Hartmut. 2008. “Assimilation, ethnische Schichtung oder selektive Akkulturation? Neuere Theorien der Eingliederung von Migranten und das Modell der intergenerationalen Integration,” *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 48 (Sonderheft): 81-107.

Fehr, Ernst, Schmidt . 1999. “A Theory of Fairness, Competition, and Cooperation.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 114:817-868.

Fernandez, Roberto, Emilio Castilla, and Paul Moore. 2000. “Social Capital at Work: Networks and Employment at a Phone Center.” *American Journal of Sociology* 105:1288-1356.

Gans, Herbert. [1962] 1982. *The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans*. New York: The Free Press.

_____. 1992. “Second Generation Decline: Scenarios for the Economic and Ethnic Futures of the Post-1965 American Immigrants.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 15:173-192.

Gibson, Margaret. 1989. *Accommodation without Assimilation: Sikh Immigrants in an American High School.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Glazer, Nathan. 1997. *We Are all Multiculturalists Now.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Gordon, Milton. 1964. *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Greif, Avner. 2006. *Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy: Lessons from Medieval Trade.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Grusky, David, and Robert Hauser. 1994. “Comparative Social Mobility Revisited: Models of Convergence and Divergence in 16 Countries. Pp. 275-288 in *Social*

Stratification: Class, Race, & Gender in Sociological Perspective. Boulder: Westview Press.

Handlin, Oscar. 1952. *The Uprooted*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap.

Hannan, Michael T. 1979. "The Dynamics of Ethnic Boundaries in Modern States." Pp. 253-275 in *National Development and the World System: Educational, Economic, and Political Change, 1950-1970.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Homans, George C. 1950. *The Human Group.* New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

_____. [1961] 1974. *Social Behavior: Its Elementary Form.* New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Huntington, Samuel P. 2004. *Who Are We?: The Challenges to America's National Identity.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Kasinitz, Philip, John Mollenkopf, Mary C. Waters, Jennifer Holdaway. 2008. *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kim, Illso. 1981. *New Urban Immigrants: The Korean Community in New York.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Light, Ivan H. 1972. *Ethnic Enterprise in America: Business and Welfare among Chinese, Japanese, and Blacks.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Lind, Michael. 1995. *The Next American Nation: The New Nationalism and the Fourth American Revolution.* New York: The Free Press.

Logan, John, Richard Alba, and Wenquan Zhang. 2002. “Immigrant Enclaves and Ethnic Communities in New York and Los Angeles.” *American Sociological Review* 67:299-322.

Lopez, Ian F. Haney. 1996. *White by Law.* New York: New York University Press.

Massey, Douglas S. 1999. “Why Does Immigration Occur? A Theoretical Synthesis.” Pp. 34-52 in *The Handbook of International Migration*, Charles Hirschmann, Philip Kasinitz, and Josh DeWind, eds. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

_____. 2002. “A Brief History of Human Society: The Origin and Role of Emotion in Social Life.” *American Sociological Review* 67: 1-29.

Massey, Douglas S., and Felipe Garcia Espana. 1987. “The Social Process of International Migration.” *Science* 237(August):733-738.

Massey, Douglas S., and Nancy Denton. 1993. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Massey, Douglas S., Rafael Alarcon, Jorge Durand and Humberto Gonzalez. 1987. *Return to Aztlan: The Social Process of International Migration from Western Mexico.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Massey, Douglas S., Luin Goldring and Jorge Durand. 1994. “Continuities in Transnational Migration: An Analysis of Nineteen Mexican Communities.” *American Journal of Sociology* 1994:1492-1533.

Massey, Douglas S., Camille Z. Charles, Garvey Lundy, and Mary F. Fischer. 2003. *Source of the River: The Social Origins of Freshmen at America's Selective Colleges and Universities*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Merton, Robert K. [1948] 1968. *Social Theory and Social Structure.* New York: The Free Press.

Myrdal, Gunnar. [1944] 1995. *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy.* New York: Transaction Publisher.

Min, Pyong Gap. 1994. *Caught in the Middle: Korean Merchants in America's Multiethnic Cities.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Nee, Victor, and Brett de Bary Nee. 1973. *Longtime Californ': A Documentary Study of an American Chinatown.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Nee, Victor. 1998. "Sources of the New Institutionalism." 1998. Pp. 1-16 in *The New Institutionalism in Sociology,* Mary C. Brinton and Victor Nee eds. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

_____. 2005. "The New Institutionalisms in Economics and Sociology." Pp. 49-74 in *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*, 2nd edition, Neil J. Smelser and Richard Swedberg, eds. Princeton and New York: Princeton University Press and Russell Sage Foundation.

Nee, Victor, Jimy M. Sanders and Scott Sernau. 1994. "Job Transitions in an Immigrant Metropolis: Ethnic Boundaries and Mixed Economy." *American Sociological Review* 59:849-72.

Nee, Victor, and Paul Ingram. 1998. "Embeddedness and Beyond: Institutions, Exchange and Social Structure." Pp. 19-45 in *The New Institutionalism in Sociology,* Mary C. Brinton and Victor Nee eds. New York: Russell Sage Foundation

Nee, Victor, and Jimy M. Sanders. 2001a. "Understanding the Diversity of Immigrant Incorporation: A Forms-of-Capital Model," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24: 386-411.

_____. 2001b. "Trust in Ethnic Ties: Social Capital and Immigrants." Pp. 374-392 in *Trust and Society*, edited by Karen Cook. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

North, Douglass C. 1981. *Structure and Change in Economic History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Qian, Zhenchao. 1977. "Breaking the Racial Barriers: Variations in Interracial Marriage between 1980 and 1990." *Demography* 34:478-500.

Qian, Zhenchao, Sampson Lee Blair, and Stacey D. Ruf. 2003. "Asian American Interracial and Interethnic Marriages: Differences by Education and Nativity." *International Migration Review* 35:557-586.

Park, Robert Ezra. 1930. "Assimilation, Social." In Edwin Seligman and Alvin Johnson, eds., *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences.* New York: Macmillan, p. 281.

_____. 1950. *Race and Culture*, edited by Everett C. Hughes. Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press

Parsons, Talcott. [1937] 1968. *The Structure of Social Action: A Study in Social Theory with Special Reference to a group of Recent European Writers.* New York: The Free Press.

Parsons, Talcott, and Neil Smelser. 1956. *Economy and Society: A Study in the Integration of Economic and Social Theory*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.

Perlmann, Joel. 1988. *Ethnic Differences: Schooling and Social Structure among the Irish, Italians, Jews & Blacks in an American City, 1880-1935*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Portes, Alejandro. 1995. "Economic Sociology and the Sociology of Immigration: A Conceptual Overview." Pp.1-41 in *The Economic Sociology of Immigration: Essays on Networks, Ethnicity, and Entrepreneurship,* edited by Alejandro Portes. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Portes, Alejandro, and Ruben G. Rumbaut. 2001. *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Portes, Alejandro, and Julia Sensenbrenner. 1993. "Embeddedness and Immigration: Notes on the Social Determinants of Economic Action." *American Journal of Sociology* 98:1320-1350.

Portes, Alejandro, and Min Zhou. 1993. "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and its Variants". *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 530 (November), pp. 74-96.

Posner, Eric A. 2000. *Law and Social Norms.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sanders, Jimy M. 2002. "Ethnic Boundaries and Identity in Plural Societies." Annual Review of Sociology 28.

Sanders, Jimy M, and Victor Nee. 1987. "Limits of Ethnic Solidarity in the Enclave Economy." *American Sociological Review* 52:745-67.

_____. 1996. "Social Capital, Human Capital, and Immigrant Self-Employment." *American Sociological Review* 61:231-49.

Sanders, Jimy, Victor Nee and Scott Sernau. 2002. "Asian Immigrants' Reliance on Social Ties in a Multiethnic Labor Market." *Social Forces* 81:281-314.

Saxenian, Annalee. 2006. *The New Argonauts: Regional Advantage in a Global Economy.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Schuman, Howard, Charlotte Steeh, Lawrence Bobo, Maria Krysan. 1997. *Racial Attitudes in America: Trends and Interpretations.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Shibutani, Tamotsu and Kian Kwan. 1965. *Ethnic Stratification: A Comparative Approach.* New York: Macmillan Company.

Simon, Herbert. 1957. *Administrative Behavior*. 2nd ed. New York: Macmillan.

Skrentny, John D. 2002. *The Minority Rights Revolution*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Soysal, Yasemin Nuhoglu. 1994. *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Spence, Michael. 1974. *Market Signaling: Informational Transfer in Hiring and Related Screening Process* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974).

Sutton, John R., Frank Dobbin, John W. Meyer and W. Richard Scott. 1994. "The Legalization of the Workplace." *American Journal of Sociology* 99:994-971.

Tribalat, Michèle. 1995. *Faire France: Une enquête sur les immigrés et leurs enfants.* Paris: Éditions La Découverte.

Tribalat, Michèle. 1996. *De l'immigration à l'assimilation: Enquête sur les populations d'origine étrangère en France*. Paris: Éditions La Découverte.

Waldinger, Roger. 1996. *Still the Promised City?: African-Americans and New Immigrants in Postindustrial New York*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Waldinger, Roger, and Mehdi Bozogmehr, Eds. 1996. *Ethnic Los Angeles*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.,

Waldinger, Roger and Michael Lichter. 2003. *How the Other Half Works: Immigration and the Social Organization of Labor*. Berkeley: University of California.

Walsh, Mary. 2000. "U.S. Joins in 2 Bias Suits against Lockheed Martin." *New York Times* (December 6, 2000):C1.

Warner, W. Lloyd, and Leo Srole. 1945. *The Social System of American Ethnic Groups.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Waters, Mary C. 2001. *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press and New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Weber, Max. [1922] 1978. *Economy and Society, Vol 1*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Wilson, William Julius. 1979. *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Whyte, William Foote. [1943] 1955. *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Yoon, In-Jin. 1997. *On My Own: Korean Business and Race Relations in America.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Zhou, Min, and Carl L. Bankston III. 1998. *Growing Up American: How Vietnamese Children Adapt to Life in the United States*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Zhou, Min, and Yang Sao Xiong. 2005. “The Multifaceted American Experiences of the Children of Asian Immigrants: Lessons for Segmented Assimilation.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28:119-1152.

Zolberg, Aristide R. 2006. *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.