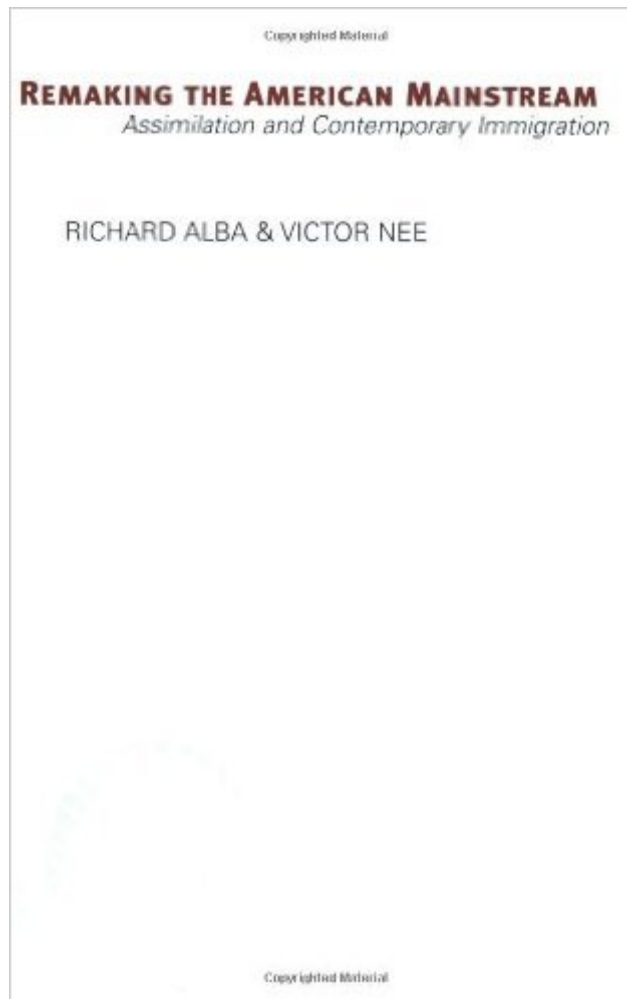


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# Remaking The American Mainstream: Assimilation And Contemporary Immigration



## Synopsis

In this age of multicultural democracy, the idea of assimilation--that the social distance separating immigrants and their children from the mainstream of American society closes over time--seems outdated and, in some forms, even offensive. But as Richard Alba and Victor Nee show in the first systematic treatment of assimilation since the mid-1960s, it continues to shape the immigrant experience, even though the geography of immigration has shifted from Europe to Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Institutional changes, from civil rights legislation to immigration law, have provided a more favorable environment for nonwhite immigrants and their children than in the past. Assimilation is still driven, in claim, by the decisions of immigrants and the second generation to improve their social and material circumstances in America. But they also show that immigrants, historically and today, have profoundly changed our mainstream society and culture in the process of becoming Americans. Surveying a variety of domains--language, socioeconomic attachments, residential patterns, and intermarriage--they demonstrate the continuing importance of assimilation in American life. And they predict that it will blur the boundaries among the major, racially defined populations, as nonwhites and Hispanics are increasingly incorporated into the mainstream.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This intelligently-written book contains a nuanced discussion of immigrant incorporation in the United States. It updates and clarifies "assimilation" theory, and describes how it can be applied to understanding how immigrants become part of American society. I recommend it to anyone

interested in a thoughtful discussion of these issues.

Another classic in the field. Highly recommended.

I recommend this book for anyone interested in a contemporary reformulation and revamping of assimilation theory. Alba and Nee do credible justice to the idea that America continues to be a Nation best characterized as a nation of immigrants and where assimilation into the mainstream is still, by and large, possible. However, the book minimizes the significance of factors related to transnationalism, racialization, and the dominant, emerging, and overarching impact of panethnicity in contemporary American society. Fundamentally, the discussion boils to this: does race continue to define and delineate American society and opportunity? Alba and Nee believe that while it has some impact, it is still residual. As a scholar coming from an alternative orientation, I disagree, and in a forthcoming book, my team of researchers will describe an alternative perspective that emphasizes the salience of race which we believe is more rooted in American experience.

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