

Book Reviews

From Many Strands: Ethnic and Racial Groups in Contemporary America. By Stanley Lieberson and Mary C. Waters. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1988. \$29.95.

ROBERT S. GREGG
University of Pennsylvania

In 1980, a new question relating to ethnic ancestry was introduced into the U.S. Census. In *From Many Strands*, Lieberson and Waters focus on the responses to this question and contribute to the debate over assimilation in the United States. This accessible and thought-provoking work will be of use to scholars of many disciplines.

The work begins with an excellent review of the conceptual problems involved in the ancestry question, the manner in which it was coded, and the many difficulties encountered in using the data. The authors point out that there are many problems with the data beginning with confusion over the purpose behind the ancestry question. The Census asked for "the person's ancestry", suggesting that the Bureau wished to determine actual ancestry, but the instruction guide's discussion of the ancestry question asked for "the ancestry group with which the person identifies". Clearly, individuals who read the guide before answering might have given an entirely different answer than they perhaps would have done had they ignored it.

The coding of the data was also a problem. Where there were multiple responses of more than two ancestral groups, coders merely included two of the ancestries listed, thereby reducing the level of ethnic mixing recorded. Some of the coding problems may have affected the findings greatly. For example, people who wrote "British" in answer to the question were coded "English", thus probably distorting the intention of those who answered the question in this way.

Despite being presented with these difficulties, the authors treat their findings with sufficient scepticism and the data's weaknesses with enough respect that their conclusions are generally convincing, falling between the clearcut "melting-pot" and "cultural pluralism" theses. They find that European ancestry groups become increasingly

hybridized as a function of their length of residence in the United States, and that marital patterns among the groups suggest that mixing will expand in the future. They also show how spatial concentrations influence assimilation, arguing that the early immigration patterns still affect the ethnic makeup of various areas of the nation, and that while differences between areas are slowly being reduced they are unlikely to ever be fully eliminated.

Regarding cultural differences, the authors argue that the level of variation among white ethnic groups in terms of fertility, education and economic attainment is relatively small and getting smaller. They avoid the "melting-pot" thesis, however, by recognizing that historic occupational concentrations of different ethnic groups have a definite impact on the jobs currently held by members of those groups. Concerning intermarriage, the authors find that white groups which initially had relatively strong propensities toward intermarriage have experienced substantial declines over time. They also show that descendants of mixed marriages are more likely to intermarry than are people of single ancestry. The authors then endeavor to determine which factors affect levels of intermarriage among different ethnic groups. Spatial concentration of an ethnic group, disposition of others towards a group, and a group's length of residence in the United States all influence levels of outmarriage. The authors do find a strong connection between education and intermarriage for the general population, but argue that there is no linkage between the level of an ethnic group's educational attainment and the number of its members who outmarry.

The analysis of education and intermarriage highlights an area of weakness in the book. Clearly, educational attainment and the college experience increase the incidences of intermarriage. This suggests that there may be an important class component to the question of assimilation that these authors do not explore. The middle class, for example, may be assimilating while the lower classes remain in their ethnic enclaves. If this is the case, then all ethnic groups would appear to be moving towards each other, even though sections

within each would remain distinct. To address this question, the authors could have compared all single-ancestry people to all mixed-ancestry people, something which they generally avoided doing.

Throughout the work, the authors make clear that blacks' and Puerto Ricans' experiences diverge considerably from those of white ethnics. They show, for example, that there is considerable occupational discrimination against blacks by pointing out that there are fewer blacks in high-level jobs than would be expected on the basis of the group's educational attainments. Also, while other groups' rates of intermarriages are usually lower than would be predicted on the basis of a random distribution of intermarriages, blacks' and Puerto Ricans' rates are extremely high.

Finally, the authors note the appearance of a new group of people who describe themselves simply as "American". However, the new appearance of this group and the difficulties inherent within the way the ancestry question was formulated lead the authors to make only tentative conclusions about this rapidly expanding group. We can only hope that problems of coding and conceptualization of the ancestry question will be eradicated for the 1990 census so that scholars can learn more about this group and can build on the impressive work found in *From Many Strands*.

Immigration and Ethnic Conflict. By Anthony H. Richmond. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988. Pp. 218. \$30.00.

RAY HUTCHISON

University of Wisconsin-Green Bay

Immigration and Ethnic Conflict presents a collection of recent essays by Anthony H. Richmond, the well-respected Canadian scholar of race relations and immigration policy in Canada and Great Britain. The volume is divided into three sections: "Immigration", dealing with the effects of immigration policy in post-industrial societies and majority group responses to racial diversification during periods of high unemployment; "Racism and Multiculturalism", which examines the impact of post-war immigration on Canadian society and the growth of racist ideologies against visible minorities; and "Ethnic Nationalism", where Richmond argues that ethnic identity, predicted to disappear in industrial and post-industrial society, has instead grown more

important in the modern transnational state.

The collection is drawn from papers presented at international conferences and previously published in a variety of social science journals. Richmond's framework for the comparative study of race and ethnic relations emphasizes changes in the economic structure of the modern state and relations between developed and less-developed countries. His insights into the consequences of post-war immigration has much to offer American scholars: immigration to Canada during this period has been similar in many respects to that of the United States — although with a notable difference in the extensive immigration from China and India — as has the absorption of Asian groups into the economy and the growth of racist ideologies against visible minorities.

Richmond is best in describing linkages between national economies and immigration policies which have been designed to bring technically trained and professional labor to the West. His comments on ethnic nationalism in the emerging transnational world are provocative — indeed, it is this broader, supra-national perspective on world immigration patterns, the brain drain and national development which makes sections of the book so distinctive.

Surprisingly, Richmond is less successful in discussing the impact of recent immigration from Southeast Asia and the growing undercurrent of racial antagonism in Canadian society. Immigration from Asia has been substantial, especially from the Philippines and China — yet neither group is discussed in any detail in this book. Given the author's previous work on race and ethnic relations in Great Britain, we might expect special attention to be given to Indian immigrants in Canada, but this group is also missing from the analysis. And while Richmond is clearly concerned with the potential for increased racism and racial conflict, a systematic discussion of the growth of right wing groups opposed to immigration and recent efforts for immigration "reform" in Ottawa is conspicuously absent.

Readers not familiar with Canadian immigration will find much information of interest, and Richmond's argument on the development of ethnic nationalism should be of interest to all persons working in race and ethnic studies. But this is largely a collection of published materials, not an edited volume, with the attendant problems: there are noticeable gaps in the coverage of some issues, and