

rial; others, on the other hand, seem to be more interested in the general emigration and migration patterns of the group they have chosen to write about. This is particularly true of the introduction and conclusion sections which tend to parrot the obvious. They state that people came to America for economic, religious, and/or social reasons in search of some of the vast amount of easily available inexpensive land. They also state that some did not stay long and that there have been various degrees of assimilation. In my opinion, these are judgements that are so obvious as to be banal.

Another slightly annoying matter is that—in opposition to most technical writing practice—new information appears in the Conclusion section in some of the chapters.

On the other hand, it is pleasant in these days of abstractness to find a book with a clear-cut and visual thesis. Most of those peoples who came to America brought with them some ideas of what housing should be. Throughout their various degrees of separateness and assimilation to the dominant culture, they tended to recreate dwellings both for people and for business purposes with various degrees of similarity to those of their former homeland.

This concreteness should be refreshing in courses that deal with a broad spectrum of ethnicities and, of course, it would be interesting for individual ethnic scholars to see what, if anything, the book has to say about their own group.

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Susan Olzak. *The Dynamics of Ethnic Competition and Conflict*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992) 271 pp., \$32.50.

Susan Olzak's work, *The Dynamics of Ethnic Competition and Conflict*, is informative and contributes to an understanding of ethnic violence from an historical perspective. The central finding is that ethnic/racial conflict arises from an increase in intergroup competition for social resources. Exploring economic and political competition in the United States from 1877 to 1914, Olzak concludes that violence is most apt to occur when members of a disadvantaged ethnic/racial group experience greater equality of opportunity. This new environment creates a situation whereby members of a formerly segregated group become rivals for social awards. An environment which contains several disadvantaged groups competing for rewards—a situation which existed in the period under investigation through a combination of racial migration from the south and

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European immigration—leads to attacks on groups least able to defend themselves. Thus, the “.....breakdown of racially and ethnically ordered systems unleash forces of competitive exclusion against the least powerful targets in the system” (224). Olzak suggests this situation occurred with African Americans as European groups achieved social mobility.

The potential audience for this work lies at the graduate level. The early chapters supply a detailed review of the literature, propositions, and arguments. The methodology utilized in the study and the subject matter discussed make the book appropriate reading in most advanced sociology courses. The study uses data collected at three levels: countrywide immigration and economic indicators, occupational segregation in seventy-seven cities, and the growth of ethnic/racial group organizations.

Notwithstanding these strengths, there are weaknesses. The book is at times extreme in stating over and over again its propositions and arguments. This gives the reader an impression that the book is a collection of conference papers bound together with weak transitions. This view is reinforced by a change in pronouns (“I” to “we” back to “I”) as the chapters progress. In any revision, the author may choose to correct this problem through eliminating any reference to self.

While the author goes to great lengths defining most concepts, indeed, a strength of the work in general, she shows little consistency in her application of the term “state,” a political entity, i.e., a country.

Overall, the work is valuable. The theoretical framework it contributes offers the student of ethnic rivalries an understanding of intergroup tensions in the United States at the turn of the century and might be used to explore conflicts among nationalities in the former states of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.

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Genaro M. Padilla. *My History, Not Yours: The Formation of Mexican American Autobiography*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993) xiv, 280 pp.

Genaro Padilla and University of Wisconsin Press should be commended for the publication of a much needed addition to the study of American autobiography, in general, and ethnic autobiography, in particular. Early Mexican American autobiographies remain largely ignored and forgotten. The importance of these autobiogra-