

(173). She skillfully explains how in Hmong culture "women's role is to be private and silent, men's is to be public and vocal" (163). Yet she also notes the ways in which Hmong culture acknowledges women's power. Women are valued for their reproductive capacity because new life enables ancestors' souls to reincarnate. Hmong women are also acknowledged for their skill in sewing "flower cloth" (embroidered garments) that protects against evil spirits and is used to dress corpses for their journey to the afterlife.

Although *Calling the Soul* only covers the Hmong in Thailand, traditional Hmong definitions of masculine and feminine have proved to be an especially important topic for understanding their cultural adjustment in the United States. They continue to define kinship through patrilineal clans and practice arranged marriages and bride wealth. Gender roles are also relevant for social problems in the Hmong community such as early marriage for female teenagers, polygamy, and domestic violence.

In addition to addressing gender roles, *Calling the Soul* adds to our understanding of Hmong religion and spirituality through its study of birth and funeral ceremonies, illness and medicine, and shamanic rituals. These are important topics because Hmong Americans are one of the few groups in the United States to practice animism. They have also experienced very high rates of conversion to Christianity, ranging from one-third to one-half in different Hmong communities. For both topics, gender and religion, *Calling the Soul* provides information that previously required consulting the decades old research of French anthropologists, some dating from the colonial era.

Reviewed by: Jeremy Hein
University of Wisconsin--Eau Claire

Andrew Pilkington, *Racial Disadvantage and Ethnic Diversity in Britain*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) xi, 318 pp, \$69.95 cloth..

Andrew Pilkington's *Racial Disadvantage and Ethnic Diversity in Britain* (2003) is a comprehensive and systematic study of race and ethnicity in contemporary Britain. The

approach taken is decidedly sociological but incorporates an inter-disciplinary perspective, drawing upon areas such as History, Politics, Geography and Cultural Studies. In Chapter 1 the author makes a fine conceptual distinction between core concepts such as race and ethnicity and theoretically subscribes to the more dynamic social constructionist approach to ethnicity as an acceptable alternative to previous models. Racialization is invoked as an alternative problematic of racism to alert the reader to the dangers of reification that the 'race' concept engenders. A relevant socio-historical sketch of the impact of post-war migration and development of racial discrimination in Britain follows. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 focus on forms of institutionalized racism in the labor markets, housing and education, and their impacts on the life chances of Britain's ethnic minority groups with specific attention paid to Britain's two prominent ethnic minority groups, South Asians and Caribbeans. Chapter 6 focuses on identity transformations as a result of globalization, demonstrating the idea that identities are not 'fixed' but essentially hybrid. The book's anti-essentialist perspective on racial and ethnic identities adds to its overall theoretical and analytical currency, illuminating the way in which globalization dissolves boundaries and its impact on the destabilization of established identities. The last two chapters address managing diversity such as Britain's policy on racial inequality, specifically the interaction between citizenship and ethnic minority status and further the debates regarding how Britain can become a genuine multi-ethnic society.

The book's most significant contribution, embodied in its title, is in its endorsement of a new theoretical framework for understanding diversity in the socio-economic positions of different minority groups. It represents a theoretical advance over the more hegemonic model, i.e. racial dualism – an approach that emphasized "race" or skin color, rather than ethnicity. A key theme in the book, supported by empirical research, is the idea that the diversity among the various ethnic minority groups in Britain is not the same. It argues that the positions of ethnic minority groups are not always structurally determined but may be related partially to their own actions. The differentials in socio-economic status among minority groups may be exempli-

fied by some opting for self-employment or by taking advantage of educational opportunities to achieve upward social mobility. The current position of South Asians, particularly Indians, is a case in point. Compared to their Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Caribbean counterparts, Indians can no longer be considered economically disadvantaged. Significantly, these findings debunk the underclass thesis that Asians and Blacks in Britain constitute a “Black” underclass.

Methodologically, the overall mood is quantitative, evident from the national data sets used: PSI, LFS, and YCS surveys. The author claims that they are based on large samples, yet their N's are not given. Also, qualitative ethnographic studies explicate the position of ethnic groups in the education system. Measuring “ethnicity” in Census data is again problematic in contexts where one broad “ethnic category” is used to define geographical/national origins. The heterogeneity associated with ethnicity entails significant commonalities and differences within these broad ethnic categorizations. Thus the use of the census category, “Black Caribbean,” to describe the various Caribbean ethnic groups residing in Britain tends to privilege the experiences of Afro-Caribbeans while simultaneously ignoring the experiences of say, Indo-Caribbeans. As a result the empirical findings are, at best, limited to a particular segment of the Caribbean community in Britain.

The book's main limitation is its lack of comparative focus. Though it paints a solid picture of the current ethnic situation in Britain, it ignores useful global comparisons such as the similar “ethnic experiences” of Caribbeans and South Asians in Toronto, Canada. The book's target audience is unstated, but given its theoretical, conceptual, and analytical sophistication, it may be appropriate for upper-level undergraduate courses in Sociology, Ethnic and Migration Studies and related areas, or as a reader in a graduate seminar in race and ethnicity

Reviewed by: Simboonath Singh
University of Michigan - Dearborn