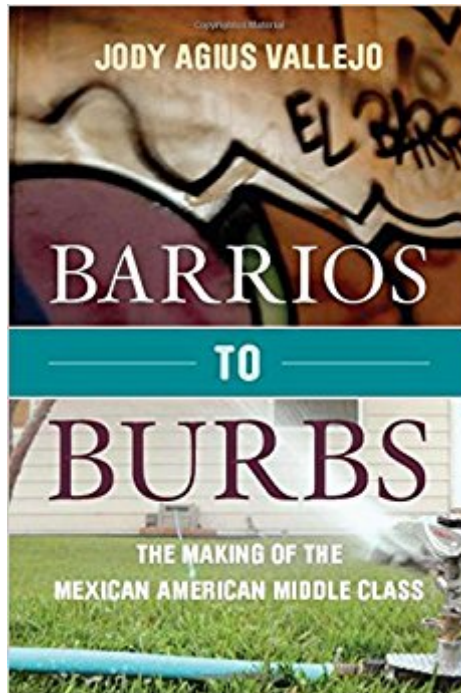




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Barrios To Burbs: The Making Of The Mexican American Middle Class



Synopsis

Too frequently, the media and politicians cast Mexican immigrants as a threat to American society. Given America's increasing ethnic diversity and the large size of the Mexican-origin population, an investigation of how Mexican immigrants and their descendants achieve upward mobility and enter the middle class is long overdue. *Barrios to Burbs* offers a new understanding of the Mexican American experience. Vallejo explores the challenges that accompany rapid social mobility and examines a new indicator of incorporation, a familial obligation to "give back" in social and financial support. She investigates the salience of middle-class Mexican Americans' ethnic identification and details how relationships with poorer coethnics and affluent whites evolve as immigrants and their descendants move into traditionally white middle-class occupations. Disputing the argument that Mexican communities lack high quality resources and social capital that can help Mexican Americans incorporate into the middle class, Vallejo also examines civic participation in ethnic professional associations embedded in ethnic communities.

Book Information

Paperback: 251 pages

Publisher: Stanford University Press; 1 edition (July 1, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0804788669

ISBN-13: 978-0804788663

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.8 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.7 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #51,723 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #30 in [Books > History > Americas > United States > Immigrants](#) #33 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Specific Demographics > Hispanic American Studies](#) #86 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Emigration & Immigration](#)

Customer Reviews

"This book should be required reading for students and advanced sociologists alike. With a focus on shifting the conceptualization of a monolithic Mexican American experience, *Barrio to Burbs* also serves as a significant resource for students and scholars interested in Latino/a sociology, racial and ethnic studies, and social stratification. Though it isn't the only book addressing the experiences of a Mexican American middle class, it certainly is now a seminal read for all those who would like to

complicate their understandings of Mexican Americans in the United States." (Daniel J. Delgado Social Forces)"Vallejo tackles an extremely important topic which others have not been willing or able to see—the rise of a Mexican American middle class. Challenging prevailing views, this book focuses not on predictions of downward assimilation, but on the real means by which children of Mexican immigrants are joining the middle class." (Rubén Hernández-León, University of California Los Angeles)" Not only a great read, but mandatory reading for anyone wishing to understand what the future of this country will look like." (Gustavo Arellano author of Ask a Mexican!)"A sensitive, compelling, and engaging account based on in-depth research of an overlooked and understudied population: the Mexican American middle class. Full of insights about patterns of family obligation and ethnic identification among them as well as different pathways to middle-class status—this richly drawn study is an important contribution to our understanding of immigration and diversity in 21st century America." (Nancy Foner Hunter College and Graduate Center of the City University of New York, author of In a New Land: A Comparative View of Immigration)"Barrios to Burbs is the important and largely untold story of the Mexican American middle class. By taking us inside the lives of middle-class Mexican Americans, Vallejo demonstrates how the socioeconomic diversity among people of Mexican descent offers both promise and potential peril for the people she studies. This is a landmark book and a must read for anyone who hopes to understand America's largest ethnic group in all of its complexity." (Tomás R. Jiménez Stanford University, author of Replenished Ethnicity: Mexican Americans, Immigration, and Identity)"Jody Vallejo's novel study fills a void in research that for too long has focused too narrowly on Mexican immigrants trapped at lower rungs of the mobility ladder to the neglect of their prospects of success. She makes a significant contribution to the understanding of segmented assimilation and offers a compelling story of the Mexican American middle class." (Min Zhou University of California, Los Angeles, author of Contemporary Chinese America)"This clearly organized, succinct book adds to a growing body of scholarship on the identities and experiences of Mexican Americans. . . . Recommended." (G. L. Ochoa)"Utilizing interviews, non-participant observation, participant observation, and ethnography, [Vallejo] provides a rich contextual description of middle-class immigrant life." (Cynthia E. Orozco)

Jody Agius Vallejo is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Southern California.

It is a great book from the scientific point of view. Remarkable study on the predominant majority within the latino minority. Not easy to read for a person unfamiliar with sociology studies. I believe

this study reflects more the interaction between Mexican Americans specifically in the context of Orange County than in Los Angeles County. Predominantly White communities in west Los Angeles are more tolerant in viewing middle class latinos. Their approach is not as prejudiced as the racist views that are described in the book of whites in Orange County. I will recommend this book to any person that is interested in interacting with the Mexican American community. Specially if that interaction is with the purpose of doing business with that segment of the population. I rated this book based on its practicality in the real world. I understand that this book is more a scientific report. Nevertheless, after such a great study, there are so few practical recommendations. The ones given are very general. It is a good step in the right direction to understand better the social mobility of such important community.

Excellent book from a Maltese sociologist! After reading so many depressing, but realistic books, about Mexican Americans, this book felt so refreshing and full of hope. Agius Vallejo argues that it is possible for Mexican Americans to become middle class, go figure! There is so much information in the book. My favorite chapter is the one on giving back. She explains middle class Mexican Americans who grew up low income feel the obligation to help their kin both with money and providing services (such as translation). However, those middle class Mexican Americans who grew up middle class don't feel any obligation to help their families financially. Go buy the book.

Well written informative and accurate as advertised. Obviously significant research with the right mix of quantitative data as well as qualitative analysis. I'm not an academic, so wasn't looking for a text book. Found exactly what I was looking for in terms of relevant data. If you are involved in the hispanic/latino marketplace, this is a must read for relevant current data and trends. I'll use it!

Dr. Agius Vallejo's book is a spectacular addition to academic inquiry and explores a topic long overlooked. "Barrios to Burbs: The Making of the Mexican American Middle Class" is about the pathways to middle class for Mexican Americans, and illuminates the nuances of an often prejudged minority. A book such as this (based upon statistical facts) is vital to society in bringing understanding to a misinformed citizenry, especially during a time when disinformation, intolerance, and animosity for people who are different runs rampant. The author reveals her research methods with meticulous detail, then defines what it means to be part of the middle class, and provides a historic chronology of Mexicans and how our past as Americans is inextricably intertwined with this population. Through her research, Agius Vallejo cogently reveals there to be multiple pathways to

the middle class (as opposed to previous theory which posits a more singular linear path). She also explores the internal and external hindrances to progress, which many Mexican Americans face in their quest for prosperity, such as familial obligations to help one another financially, and the social-political-institutional discriminations that come along with not being Caucasian in America. Highly recommended!

Great book for anyone who wants to understand what it means to be Mexican American in all its complexity. A great antidote to the negative hype about what's becoming of America's largest ethnic group.

An insightful look into a topic that is often forgotten. Very readable.

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