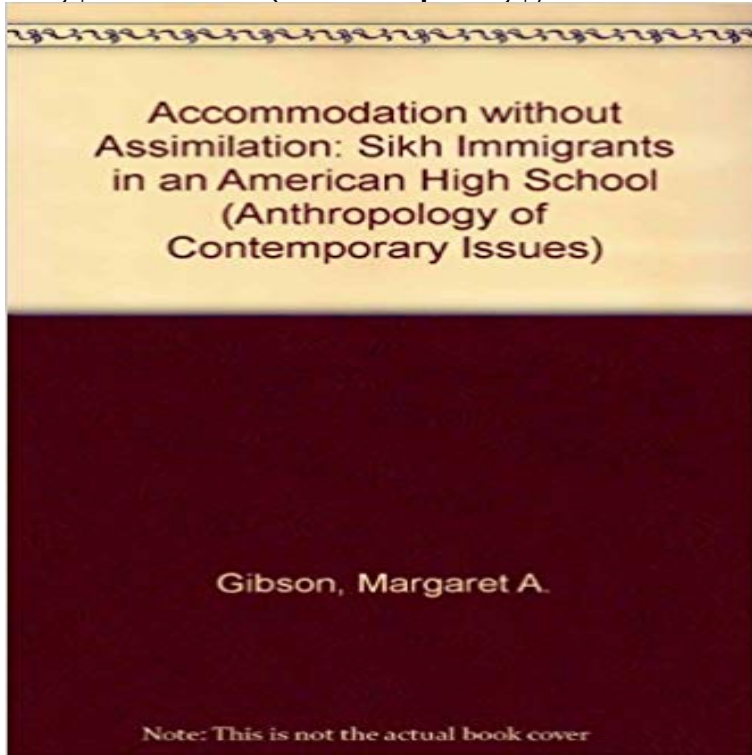


Accommodation Without Assimilation: Sikh Immigrants in an American High School (Anthropology of Contemporary Issues)



A new version of the old immigrant success story is circulating in America. It implies that the apparent academic progress of recent arrivals to our schools is the result of simple head work, opportunity, and a good attitude. Margaret Gibson has given us a complex antidote to this myth in a carefully researched and fully documented two-year study of Sikh children in a rural California educational setting. In addition to giving the reader the necessary cultural and religious background to understand this little known ethnic group, which originated in the Punjab area of northwestern India, the author details the context of their adjustment to life in America, particularly the factors that affect their progress in school. The micro-ethnographic detail on economic adaptation, home life, and family values is skillfully linked to both larger societal issues (immigration policy, assimilation, minority-majority relations) and to educational theory on school performance. The result is a holistic portrait which reveals why Sikh high school students, despite language barriers, prejudice, and significant cultural differences, often outperform their majority peers and other United States minority groups. One need not examine only the Japanese approach to education to find models to emulate. There are some immigrant patterns much closer at hand that are at least as relevant. This study of accommodation without assimilation is a very timely case in point and deserves a wide and critical readership. *Journal of American Ethnic History*

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