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Fall 2005

## Review of *Immigrants and the American Dream: Remaking the Middle Class* by William A. V. Clark

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Defrain, John, "Review of *Immigrants and the American Dream: Remaking the Middle Class* by William A. V. Clark" (2005). *Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences*. 778.  
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**Immigrants and the American Dream: Remaking the Middle Class.** By William A. V. Clark. New York: Guilford Press, 2003. xvii + 254 pp. Figures, tables, notes, appendix, bibliography, index. \$35.00 cloth.

In three decades the immigrant population in the U.S. has increased from 10 million to more than 28 million and continues to grow. In 1970 the foreign-born population was little more than 4%; today it has reached 11%. About 40% of the immigrant population growth in this 35-year period has occurred in the past decade alone. The consensus among demographers is that immigrants are the major contributor to the country's population growth.

Historically, immigrants tended to transform society in particular locations and were slow to diffuse across the nation as a whole. Today the process

is accelerating, and immigrants not only continue to flow into entry-port states like California, New York, Florida, and Texas, but are transforming many communities in the Great Plains. For this reason, the findings of this book are highly relevant to the Heartland.

William A. V. Clark, who teaches courses at UCLA on population and the environment as well as international migration and its outcomes in cities and neighborhoods, claims there are two competing perspectives on immigration in the U.S.: one celebrates the contributions newcomers make to their host communities; the other anguishes over the difficult circumstances immigrants grapple with every day and the perceived negative impact the influx of immigrants has on communities. Those who advocate opening the doors and welcoming immigrants see them as a significant new resource and focus on such gains as meeting the need for both cheap labor and skilled technicians and offering relief for other countries with too many workers and too few jobs as well as for refugees fleeing from desperate conflict.

Clark holds a middle ground in the debate between celebrators and the worriers. He argues that one can both celebrate the public gains from immigration and for individual immigrants, while simultaneously harboring concerns about local outcomes and impacts in various communities and noting that some new immigrants are having a hard time surviving in their new country. In the final analysis, he believes the data tell us there is both room for celebration and caution.

Much of the public debate swirling around immigration issues is shrill and unsettling. Clark's voice is measured and his arguments are sound, reasonable, and compelling. **John DeFrain**, *Department of Family and Consumer Science, University of Nebraska—Lincoln*.