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Race And Culture: A World View

Thomas Sowell

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RACE AND CULTURE



A World
View

THOMAS SOWELL

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ReadBy Robert A. HallEveryone involved in playing "gotcha" on race in America, on either side, should read this book. By putting these issues in a global context, Sowell demonstrates how important culture is to understanding these issues. You will not look on race the same way again.Robert A. HallThe Coming Collapse of the American Republic

Encompassing more than a decade of research around the globe, this book shows that cultural capital has far more impact than politics, prejudice, or genetics on the social and economic fates of minorities, nations, and civilization.

From Publishers WeeklySowell (*Ethnic America*) draws on a worldwide range of examples and more than a decade of research in this intriguing exploration of the role of cultural attributes on group advancement. He aims to demonstrate the "reality, persistence, and consequences of cultural differences--contrary to many of today's grand theories based on the supposed dominant role of 'objective conditions,' 'economic forces' or 'social structures.'" He tackles a host of issues: the costs and benefits of residential segregation; how affirmative action primarily helps better-off members of preferred groups; how prominent political leaders are not crucial to group success; how low-scoring groups on intelligence tests do their worst on abstract questions devoid of "cultural bias." Sowell's observations have force, but he sometimes sacrifices depth for breadth. Although he claims to avoid policy prescriptions, he includes facile swipes against multiculturalism and argues, with varying degrees of plausibility, against liberal policies on race. Conservative Book Club selection. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalSowell, a black conservative and senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, moves beyond the domestic focus of his *Ethnic America* (LJ 6/1/81) to analyze the interplay between the cultural capital and social position of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities around the world. Observing ethnic and racial minorities migrating from country to country, Sowell postulates that existing intergroup cultural values play a predominate role in social status. These values determine which groups follow advances in science, technology, and organization, which fall behind, and which become societal leaders. Sowell concludes that the economic and social condition of many minorities lies not in social and political programs such as affirmative action but in the internal cultural values of the group. Sowell's study undoubtedly will arouse controversy and provoke debate. A valuable addition to minority studies collections in public and academic libraries alike.Michael A. Lutes, Univ. of Notre Dame Lib., Ind.Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.From BooklistSowell, a b{ }ete noire of liberalism, here continues his high-octane flights against causal connections casually made between race and achievement. His dozen-plus titles tend to deal with specific aspects of racism (*Preferential Policies*, 1990), but here the whole world's his stage, and he plays his part as scholarly scolder of shibboleths and sloppy thinking. Unlike the ideologically minded, Sowell ventures no certain theory as to why, for example, certain groups have predominated as middlemen in retail trade, such as the Chinese in Malaya, Jews and then Koreans in America, or Indians in East Africa. Rather, he explains things by how a group's cultural values are manifested in economic terms; he looks at trade-off factors, such as a willingness to sacrifice for the future. From his empirical stance, Sowell dissects how slavery, and not just of Africans, was eradicated; the connection, if any, between race and intelligence; and the workings of conquests and immigration. Though far from a breezy read, this footnote-studded study is a welcome contribution to sober thinking about race. Sowell reminds us that appreciating a group's special and changing stock of "cultural capital" does not constitute prejudice. Gilbert Taylor