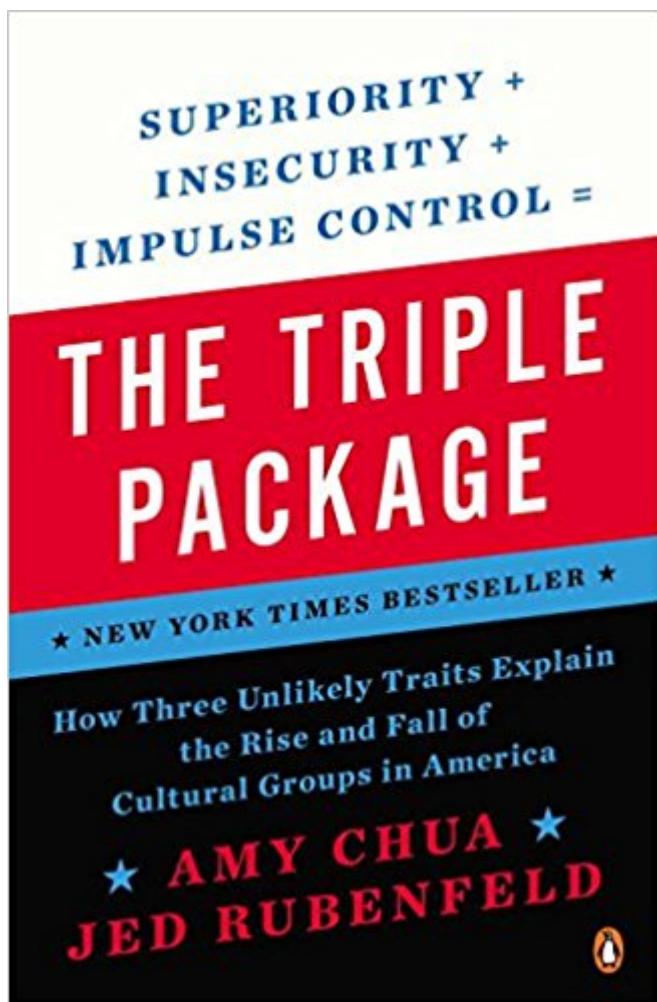


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The Triple Package: How Three Unlikely Traits Explain The Rise And Fall Of Cultural Groups In America



Synopsis

"That certain groups do much better in America than othersâ "as measured by income, occupational status, test scores, and so onâ "is difficult to talk about. In large part this is because the topic feels racially charged. The irony is that the facts actually debunk racial stereotypes. There are black and Hispanic subgroups in the United States far outperforming many white and Asian subgroups. Moreover, thereâ ™s a demonstrable arc to group successâ "in immigrant groups, it typically dissipates by the third generationâ "puncturing the notion of innate group differences and undermining the whole concept of 'model minorities.'" Mormons have recently risen to astonishing business success. Cubans in Miami climbed from poverty to prosperity in a generation. Nigerians earn doctorates at stunningly high rates. Indian and Chinese Americans have much higher incomes than other Americans; Jews may have the highest of all. Why do some groups rise? Drawing on groundbreaking original research and startling statistics, *The Triple Package* uncovers the secret to their success. A superiority complex, insecurity, impulse controlâ "these are the elements of the Triple Package, the rare and potent cultural constellation that drives disproportionate group success. The Triple Package is open to anyone. America itself was once a Triple Package culture. Itâ ™s been losing that edge for a long time now. Even as headlines proclaim the death of upward mobility in America, the truth is that the oldfashioned American Dream is very much aliveâ "but some groups have a cultural edge, which enables them to take advantage of opportunity far more than others.â ¢ Americans are taught that everyone is equal, that no group is superior to another. But remarkably, all of Americaâ ™s most successful groups believe (even if they donâ ™t say so aloud) that theyâ ™re exceptional, chosen, superior in some way.â ¢ Americans are taught that self-esteemâ "feeling good about yourselfâ "is the key to a successful life. But in all of Americaâ ™s most successful groups, people tend to feel insecure, inadequate, that they have to prove themselves.â ¢ America today spreads a message of immediate gratification, living for the moment. But all of Americaâ ™s most successful groups cultivate heightened discipline and impulse control.â But the Triple Package has a dark underside too. Each of its elements carries distinctive pathologies; when taken to an extreme, they can have truly toxic effects. Should people strive for the Triple Package? Should America? Ultimately, the authors conclude that the Triple Package is a ladder that should be climbed and then kicked away, drawing on its power but breaking free from its constraints. Provocative and profound, *The Triple Package* will transform the way we think about success and achievement.

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Customer Reviews

Publishers Weekly (starred and boxed): "In their provocative new book, Chua (Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother) and Rubenfeld (The Interpretation of Murder) "Yale Law professors and spouses" show why certain groups in the U.S. perform better than others. According to the authors, three traits breed success: a superiority complex, insecurity, and impulse control. Only when this "Triple Package" comes together does it "generate drive, grit, and systematic disproportionate group success." Supported by statistics and original research. This comprehensive, lucid sociological study balances its findings with a probing look at the downsides of the triple package "the burden of carrying a family's expectations, and deep insecurities that come at a psychological price." Kirkus Reviews: "Husband and wife professors at Yale Law School explore why some cultural groups in the United States are generally more successful than others. Chua and Rubenfeld argue that each of these groups is endowed with a "triple package" of values that together make for a potent engine driving members to high rates of success. [and] that the U.S. was originally a triple-package nation. However, while Americans still view their country as exceptional, in the last 30 years, the other two parts of the package have gone out the window, replaced by a popular culture that values egalitarianism, self-esteem and instant gratification, creating a vacuum for more motivated groups to fill. On a highly touchy subject, the authors tread carefully, backing their assertions with copious notes. Though coolly and cogently argued, this book is bound to be the spark for many potentially heated discussions." National Review Online: "Thinkers like Chua and Rubenfeld do us a service by reaching beyond the limits

of what we can quantify.â •Â J.D. Vance, National Review Online:â œTheir book is a sometimes funny, sometimes academic, and always interesting study of the cultural traits that make some groups outperform others in America. . . . the book asks a very important question: why are some of us doing so much better (or worse) than others? . . . Iâ ™m not sure that Chua and Rubenfeld have all the right answers. But I do know that by focusing on peopleâ " and the cultures that support and affect themâ " theyâ ™re asking the right questions. Thatâ ™s more than I can say for most of the social policy experts occupying the airwaves today.â •Â Logan Beirne, FoxNews.com:â œFilled with surprising statistics and sociological research. . . . From the nationâ ™s start, Washington and the Founders believed that hard work and sacrifice meant success for the future. This was the start of the American dream. â ^Triple Packageâ ™ contends that success is driven not by inborn biology, but is instead propelled by qualities that can be cultivated by all Americans. The book serves as an opportunity to discuss what has helped drive Americaâ ™s triumphs in the past â " and how we might harness this knowledge for our future.â •Â Elle:â œThe book meticulously documents that a variety of subgroupsâ " Chinese, Mormons, Jews, Iranians, Indians, and Nigerians, among othersâ " are higher-achieving than the average American; its 182 pages of text come with more than 100 pages of supporting notes. In analyzing how these groups, all of which identify as outsiders in some way, have done so well, the authors suggest that all Americans might profit from emulating these â ^model minorities.â ™â •Â David B. Green, Haaretz (Israel):â œTheir book is not racist. For one thing, they are drawing a correlation between success and certain psychological attitudes, not congenital characteristics. They also go out of their way to say that the Triple Package, or the material success it can help people attain, is no guarantee of happiness, and they give plenty of examples of the psychological damage it can do. Even more significantly, thereâ ™s no doubt that attitudes â " and performance â " can and do change over time. . . . As a reader, I enjoyed the extensively sourced statistics and anecdotes that provide the basis for Chua and Rubenfeldâ ™s argument, and was not especially troubled by the fact that â œThe Triple Packageâ • is not an academic book. For me, its main value is found in the final chapter, in which the authors examine where America has gone wrong.â •Â Business Traveller (UK):â œThe titles of these forces explain what they are clearly enough, although the detail is intriguing. As you'd expect, it's the individuals who have emerged from these groups that provide the best stories, however. . . . Interestingly, the authors are nuanced on what constitutes "success" and point out that there is a dark underside to the â ^advantagesâ ™ that those in these groups â ^enjoyâ ™. . . . It's hard to argue with the quantitative and qualitative data amassed hereâ | By and large, successful people are very ambitious, and don't mind you knowing the fact (they also often invite you to celebrate their

success). The authors are very good in their descriptions of this sort of ego. It is also an enjoyable read, and one which really should not be criticised for the wrong reasons. I think many will nod in agreement. . . .a dose of common sense, rather like Amy Chua's previous book, *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*.â •Â Kavaree Bamzai, *India Today*:â œ[the book] is implicitly critical of America's instant gratification disorder, and highlights the death of upward mobility among Americans. . . . The Triple Package is both a self-affirming anthem for those who need it as well as an anthropological exercise to understand what is going wrong with post-millennial America.â •Â Will Pavia, *The Times* (UK):â œThe Triple Package is backed up with reams of research and qualifications. They tiptoe mirthlessly over cultural egg shells yet still manage to stir up controversy."Â Katie Roiphe, *Financial Times* (UK):â œChua and Rubenfeldâ ™s explosive new meditation on success, *The Triple Package*, has already begun to enrage people, even those who, by their own admission, havenâ ™t read it but have simply heard about how shocking it is.â •Â The Independent (UK):â œThe book is not racist â “ it is well-written; seductive.â •Â Matthew Syed, *The Times* (UK), *Book of the Week*:â œOne of the most controversial books of recent years ... the authors are to be commended for dealing with a controversial subject, and for revealing some deep truths. It deserves a wide audience.â •Â Emma Brockes, *The Guardian* (UK):â œA lot to find interesting ... They draw on eye-opening studies of the influence of stereotypes and expectations on various ethnic and cultural groups ... The authorsâ ™ willingness to pursue an intellectual inquiry that others wouldnâ ™t be bracing.â •Â Jenni Russell, *Sunday Times* (UK):â œProvocative ... If you care at all about the social pressures underpinning success and failure, or relish fresh perspectives on how societies really work, you will want to read this.â •Â Allison Pearson, *Daily Telegraph* (UK):â œThe authors have already been accused of racism, mostly by people who havenâ ™t read the book ... Powerful, passionate and very entertaining.â •Â

Amy Chua and Jed Rubenfeld are professors at Yale Law School. Chua, one of *Time* magazineâ ™s 100 most influential people in the world in 2011, is the author of *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*, which unleashed a firestorm debate about the cultural value of self-discipline, as well as the bestselling *World on Fire*. Rubenfeld examined the political dangers of â œliving in the momentâ • in *Freedom and Time*; he is also the author of the international bestseller *The Interpretation of Murder*.

This book really resonated with me, even though I am at best a third-generation American. In my own youth, the Triple Package was very much present, although not named as such. Being raised

in a firmly Catholic household, with two parents who experienced the Depression (my mother had lost most of her teeth for want of funds to see a dentist, and never attended college despite being valedictorian of her high school class; my father never attained more than high school and a factory worker's livelihood), impulse control was a dominant part of my upbringing and I am glad it was. But being raised in a very religious environment also confers a belief in some kind of innate superiority versus the nonbeliever, the second of the three factors. And my awareness of the history of poverty in my family tree, reinforced my having to wear patched pants to school, and sitting in a family car with no radio, let alone air conditioning, gave me the third factor, insecurity. Inequality, I learned first hand, can be a spur as much as a hindrance, to attainment. But beyond personal affinity, an objective citizen cannot help but notice the data on certain population groups achieving above-average economic success in the face of daunting obstacles, including minority status and language differences, while other groups stagnate at and below the average. I admire the courage of the authors to discuss these inconvenient truths openly even though they clash with political correctness. I found many sections of the book eye-opening. I reject the slur that some left-wing reactionaries have flung at the book, that it is racist. Nothing in here treats persons of color differently than the white majority. In fact, you would be hard pressed to find anything in this book that treats the majority demographic group in the US favorably at all. Only Mormons and Jews as subsets of the white majority will find their values reinforced. The book is very, very easy to read. My only criticism of the book is that certain sections were a little too anecdote-driven. Where they had data to back up their arguments, those chapters were fantastic. I urge all persons considering the book to read it.

This book begins with the question of who is successful in America. The answer is not a list of individuals who have accumulated wealth, achievements, or fame. Instead the authors focus on groups whose members measure above average in business and other forms of "...material, conventional, prestige-oriented success." These cultural groups are defined similarly: "...their members tend to be raised with, identify themselves by, and pass down certain culturally specific values and beliefs, habits and practices." America's most successful groups include Mormons; immigrants from Cuba, Nigeria, India, China, Iran, and Lebanon; and Jews. These groups are not genetically superior or recipients of unfair advantages, argue authors Amy Chua and Jed Rubenfeld. They share three cultural characteristics the authors call "The Triple Package." Members of each group have a Superiority Complex, "...a deeply internalized belief in your group's specialness, exceptionality, or superiority." Members of successful groups are characterized by

Insecurity, "...a species of discontent--an anxious uncertainty about your worth or place in society, a feeling or worry that you or what you've done or what you have is in some fundamental way not good enough." Finally, these cultural subgroups value Impulse Control, "...the ability to resist temptation, especially the temptation to give up in the face of hardship or quit instead of persevering at a difficult task." Triple Package values run counter to three strong currents in contemporary American culture. Rather than regarding any person or culture as Superior to any other, Americans shy away from comparative judgments. Insecurity is seen as a threat to self-esteem, which has become a core value in public education where the competition which can lead to achievement is softened to reduce disappointment and negative self-esteem. Impulse Control is incompatible with the immediate gratification and unrestrained freedom valued in our indulgent, youth-oriented culture. Triple Package subcultures are successful in part because they contrast so sharply with the mainstream culture around them. The book explores how these values are manifest differently in the eight successful subcultures. There are analyses of how successive generations can lose their subcultural heritage, becoming simultaneously more mainstream and less successful. Contrasts with the values of poverty-stricken subcultures, such as those found in Appalachia and inner-city neighborhoods highlight the advantages of Triple Package values as a path to individual as well as group success. This is a well-researched and thoughtfully written book. The arguments and supporting evidence are clearly communicated. An extensive and usable chapter notes section allows readers to engage with the authors' main points in depth. This book is highly recommended for anyone interested in subgroup differences in contemporary American culture.

Most of this book's criticisms are unwarranted. The idea that we can't talk about how certain racial and ethnic groups do better or worse than others is part of why the USA still has significant racial problems. It's based off of information gathered from places like the US census for crying out loud! Whenever they mention a group that is not doing well (such as the Blacks and the people living in Appalachian Mountains) they are usually very generous and understanding. They also admit, very freely, that this is not as much about race as it is about culture. They argue that any culture that adopts these traits will find the same success as the others which have adopted these traits. They also mention the drawbacks of taking any one of these three traits too far. They also cite groups that used to have the triple package and then lost it. If it were racial/genetic then it could only be lost by inter-marriage. It's not about height, skin or eye-color. It's about your attitudes towards life--things you can change without surgery. If you are interested in why there are so many Mormon business executives, Cuban American factory owners, successful Jewish lawyers, African students at Yale,

etc. then you should definitely read this book.

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