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THE SECOND GENERATION IN THE UNITED STATES MIGRATION INFORMATION SOURCE SPECIAL ISSUE



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Assimilation Models, Old and New: Explaining a Long-Term Process

By Susan K. Brown and Frank D. Bean
University of California, Irvine

October 1, 2006

Assimilation, sometimes known as integration or incorporation, is the process by which the characteristics of members of immigrant groups and host societies come to resemble one another. That process, which has both economic and sociocultural dimensions, begins with the immigrant generation and continues through the second generation and beyond.

Although the experiences of European groups coming to the United States in the early-20th century suggest that full assimilation generally occurs within three to four generations, no fixed timetable governs completion of the process. For example, recent historical research by sociologist Sharon L. Sasser on European immigrants to the United States has shown that, in 1920, the educational attainment of even third-generation Irish and Germans lagged well behind that of whites who had been in the country more than three generations.

Indeed, groups may vary in the apparent *incompleteness* of their assimilation for a number of reasons, including the level of human capital (education) they bring with them and the social and economic structure of the society they enter.

Different aspects of assimilation may also vary in completeness at any point in time. For example, an immigrant may master a host-country language faster than he or she matches the earnings of the native born. Finally, the incompleteness of assimilation may be similarly affected across groups if economic or other structural changes were to reduce most people's chances of economic mobility.

Assimilation may be incomplete because it is blocked outright, delayed, or merely unfinished. But the type of incompleteness matters, because each type is freighted with different implications for theory, and thus for policy.

Some theoretical frameworks specify that certain factors block assimilation, while other theories emphasize factors that merely slow it down. Empirical analyses of assimilation need to consider whether a relative lack of convergence between newcomers and the native majority may stem from actual blockage or simply delays in assimilation. Blockage factors may be deeply embedded in society and thus lose their influence only slowly, making it hard to distinguish them from delays in assimilation.

For example, entry policies that admit large numbers of immigrants with low levels of education could exacerbate crowding in the labor market and thus slow economic mobility. Or, as sociologist Susan K. Brown's research shows, many immigrants and their children share resources with other coethnics out of economic necessity, thus delaying assimilation but not permanently forestalling it.

But incompleteness could just as well result from racial/ethnic discrimination, which would provide an example of blocked assimilation.

In the 19th and early-20th centuries, native-born Americans widely perceived immigrant groups, such as the Irish and Italians, as inferior national-origin groups. As a result, they were treated in "racialized" ways. But because these groups were non-black, they eventually came to be seen as

white, in part because their members segregated themselves from African Americans both residentially and occupationally. Academics are still debating whether today's new immigrant groups from Asia and Latin America will similarly be defined as "white."

One of the most difficult tasks in gauging group differences in the completeness of assimilation involves figuring out how much race and ethnicity — rather than other factors — affect economic mobility. Immigrants who become "racialized" and are treated as disadvantaged racial or ethnic minorities may find their pathways to economic mobility and assimilation blocked because of racial/ethnic discrimination.

Assessing the degree of racialization is important for reaching conclusions about assimilation, but it has not been an easy task for researchers. Policymakers and the public often want to know how well a particular immigrant group is doing in terms of education or employment, for example, and whether racial discrimination plays a part in causing such differences.

Yet empirical research on members of the first or second generation — long before assimilation can be completed — cannot provide a definitive answer about the progress of assimilation. However, such research can shed light on particular problems and, in some cases, allow policymakers to address them.

Theoretical Models and the Changing Nature of Assimilation

Assessing present levels of assimilation among today's immigrant groups requires considering the possibility that the process itself may be changing. To ascertain this, we must first understand three major theories of immigrant and ethnic-group integration. The theories are the *classic and new assimilation* models, the *racial/ethnic disadvantage* model, and the *segmented assimilation* model.

Classic and new assimilation models

The notion of the United States as a melting pot has been part of public consciousness for a century or more. In 1908, Israel Zangwill's play of that name captivated Broadway. The sociological paradigm that has constituted the most prominent perspective on immigrant group mobility is *classic assimilation* theory, which dates to the Chicago School in the 1920s. More recently it has been represented in the work of sociologists like Milton Gordon, Richard Alba, and Victor Nee.

In general, classic assimilation theory sees immigrant/ethnic and majority groups following a "straight-line" convergence, becoming more similar over time in norms, values, behaviors, and characteristics. This theory expects those immigrants residing the longest in the host society, as well as the members of later generations, to show greater similarities with the majority group than immigrants who have spent less time in the host society.

Early versions of the theory have been criticized as "Anglo-conformist" because immigrant groups were depicted as conforming to unchanging, middle-class, white Protestant values.

In 1964, Gordon postulated several stages that follow the acquisition of culture and language. First comes structural assimilation (close social relations with the host society), followed by large-scale intermarriage; ethnic identification with the host society; and the ending of prejudice, discrimination, and value conflict.

In what they call "new assimilation theory," Alba and Nee refined Gordon's account by arguing that certain institutions, including those bolstered by civil rights law, play important roles in achieving assimilation. They give the example of Jewish organizations that persuaded the New York City Council in 1946 to threaten the tax-exempt status of colleges or universities that discriminated on the basis of race or religion.

More so than in earlier versions of this theory, Alba and Nee stress that the incorporation of immigrant groups also involves change and acceptance by the mainstream population. Classic assimilation theory as a whole works best, however, when the mainstream is easily defined. While Alba and Nee acknowledge that assimilation takes place within racially and economically heterogeneous contexts,

this has led to the criticism that they are trying to define assimilation so broadly that the concept loses meaning.

The racial/ethnic disadvantage model

Other scholars argue that the assimilation of many immigrant groups often remains blocked. This stream of thought, called the *racial/ethnic disadvantage* point of view, is reflected in the writings of Nathan Glazer, Patrick Moynihan, and Alejandro Portes and his colleagues.

To be sure, some of these writers emphasize racial and ethnic pluralism as much or more than they do ethnic disadvantage. For example, Glazer and Moynihan's *Beyond the Melting Pot*, published in 1963 before the most recent wave of immigration, argues that ethnicity can constitute a resource as well as a burden for achieving economic mobility.

But in general, this literature, especially its more recent versions, argues that language and cultural familiarity may often not lead to increased assimilation. Lingering discrimination and institutional barriers to employment and other opportunities block complete assimilation.

Because immigrants compare socioeconomic opportunities in the host country to those in their countries of origin, they may not perceive these barriers. However, by the second or third generations, they may realize that the goal of full assimilation may be more difficult and take longer than originally presumed.

This realization can have social and cultural consequences, including sometimes the reemergence (or simply emergence) of racial/ethnic consciousness.

Critiques of this model suggest that it overstates racial/ethnic barriers and fails to adequately explain evidence of socioeconomic mobility.

The segmented assimilation model

Yet assimilation does appear to elude some immigrants' descendants, even as late as the third generation. However, uneven patterns of convergence do not necessarily indicate lack of assimilation, but rather may reflect a "bumpy" rather than "straight-line" course, as sociologist Herbert J. Gans described the process in 1992.

Others have noted that just as some members of immigrant groups become cut off from economic mobility, others find multiple pathways to assimilation depending on their national origins, socioeconomic status, contexts of reception in the United States, and family resources, both social and financial.

As a result, the assimilation experiences of recent immigrants are more variegated and diverse than the scenarios provided by the classic assimilation and the ethnic disadvantage models.

In 1993, Portes and Min Zhou combined elements of both the straight-line assimilation and the ethnic disadvantage perspectives into a framework they call *segmented assimilation*.

They theorize that structural barriers, such as poor urban schools, cut off access to employment and other opportunities — obstacles that often are particularly severe in the case of the most disadvantaged members of immigrant groups. Such impediments can lead to stagnant or downward mobility, even as the children of other immigrants follow divergent paths toward classic straight-line assimilation.

Heavily disadvantaged children of immigrants may even reject assimilation altogether and embrace attitudes, orientations, and behaviors considered "oppositional" in nature, such as joining a street gang. More advantaged groups may sometimes embrace traditional home-country attitudes and use them to inspire their children to achieve, a process Portes and Zhou call selective acculturation.

Consequently, segmented assimilation focuses on identifying the contextual, structural, and cultural

factors that separate successful assimilation from unsuccessful, or even "negative" assimilation.

Portes, Zhou, and their colleagues argue it is particularly important to identify such factors in the case of the second generation, because obstacles facing the children of immigrants can thwart assimilation at perhaps its most critical juncture.

Thus, while many children of immigrants will find pathways to mainstream status, others will find such pathways blocked, particularly as a consequence of racialization. Portes, Patricia Fernández-Kelly, and William Haller argue:

Children of Asian, black, mulatto, and mestizo immigrants cannot escape their ethnicity and race, as defined by the mainstream. Their enduring physical differences from whites and the equally persistent strong effects of discrimination based on those differences ... throw a barrier in the path of occupational mobility and social acceptance. Immigrant children's identities, their aspirations, and their academic performance are affected accordingly.

Critics of this model argue that the perspective may erroneously attribute poor economic outcomes primarily to racialization when they may actually stem from other constraints like family financial obligations or factors such as lackluster job growth that slow the rate of mobility.

They also point out that since the model has not been empirically tested beyond the current second generation (the members of which are still very young), segmented assimilation may misinterpret oppositional attitudes historically found among the young and misconstrue the pace of assimilation.

Racialization and the New Immigrants

As insightful and useful as the above theories of assimilation may be, some researchers believe they do not adequately explain the assimilation paths of today's immigrants in the United States.

Classic, racial/ethnic disadvantage, and segmented assimilation theories were constructed in the context of black-white models of racial/ethnic relations that apply much less forcefully to new arrivals from Latin America and Asia, whose histories and contemporary experiences differ considerably from those of both blacks and European immigrants.

Racial/ethnic disadvantage perspectives and segmented assimilation tend to perceive the new immigrant groups as nonwhite minorities subject to discrimination in the manner of African Americans. Classic assimilation tends to emphasize that the new immigrants are non-black. Therefore, classic assimilation envisions newcomers gradually becoming accepted and integrated into American society across time and generations.

The Mexican case in the United States exemplifies the difficulty of applying a strictly assimilation or ethnic-disadvantage perspective to new immigrants. Observers have often been uncertain how to characterize this group's experience and thus gauge the completeness of its incorporation.

Even though Mexican immigration dates back many generations, and even though current Mexican immigrants are diverse in terms of their migration status and modes of entry into the United States, theorists have tended to envision the group's experiences in one of two ways — either as similar to that of European immigrants (i.e., as different from that of blacks) or as similar to that of African Americans.

The assimilation perspective thus views Mexican-origin persons primarily as a recently arrived immigrant group whose integration will, in due course, mirror that of earlier groups. In this perspective, natural assimilation processes require sufficient time to occur, presumably over three or four generations.

The alternative frameworks envision Mexican-origin persons more as members of a disadvantaged racial/ethnic minority group whose progress toward full economic parity with other immigrant groups continues to be stalled by racial/ethnic discrimination.

In this view, substantial progress is not likely to occur simply with the passage of time but

necessitates new policies both to help eradicate discrimination and to compensate for its past effects. Research testing whether a downward trajectory as predicted by segmented assimilation theory applies to Mexican-origin persons has found inconsistent evidence for the existence of such a pattern.

A Model of Changing Identificational Assimilation

The shortcomings of the assimilation and the ethnic disadvantage models for describing the experiences of new Latino and Asian immigrants are particularly evident in relation to racial/ethnic identification.

The ways the new immigrants identify themselves, as sociologists Jennifer Lee and Frank D. Bean have noted, do not follow the trajectories implied by the old models. The bulk of new immigrants define themselves as neither black nor white, and the younger ones are more likely to identify themselves as multiracial.

The largest group, Mexicans, as well as many other Latinos, come mostly from mixed backgrounds, including in the Mexican case a history of *mestizaje* (mixing) that does not involve black-white hybridity, but rather a centuries-old melding of white and indigenous groups.

Therefore, traditional models reflecting a bipolar racial context are less relevant to the historical and contemporary experiences of Mexicans. And such dichotomies are scarcely more relevant for Asian immigrants, many of whom obtain legal permanent resident status by dint of their high skills. As a result, they often are better educated upon arrival than non-Hispanic whites.

Among the new immigrants, processes of racial/ethnic self-identification appear to interact with socioeconomic status in complex ways, much as Alba found among the descendants of early-20th-century European immigrants. As Bean, Gillian Stevens, and Susan Wierzbicki note, this means that ethnic identification does not relate in a straightforward way to social and economic mobility. Rather, ethnic identification appears strongest among the lowest and highest social classes of immigrant groups.

Stronger racial and ethnic identification can thus result from disparate mechanisms:

- reactive (becoming more racial/ethnic as a result of experiencing discrimination);
- selective (becoming more strongly racial/ethnic in some ways more than others to facilitate economic achievement); or
- symbolic (becoming more prominently but superficially racial/ethnic as a result of achieving success).

Reactive identification is most likely to arise from the repeated experience of discrimination and may also contribute to the hardening of oppositional attitudes and the occurrence of downward assimilation. While most common among the children of immigrants in lower socioeconomic classes, reactive identification can also develop among those in higher classes.

Selective assimilation tends to characterize the children of immigrants with better resources and socioeconomic prospects. Their parents' generally higher levels of education foster more opportunistic than oppositional orientations toward economic incorporation. Also, such parents and children usually belong to ethnic networks and institutions that have enough resources to offer support unavailable outside the ethnic community.

Symbolic ethnicity may emerge among those already largely incorporated economically. It seems most likely to occur among the children of immigrants of the highest class. But such individuals tend to rely on coethnic networks and expressions of racial/ethnic solidarity less for instrumental reasons than for fulfillment of expressive, individualistic needs. For them, racial/ethnic identification has become relatively optional.

Given such contingencies, it is not surprising that research has found that racial/ethnic identification seems to be strongest among those from either the lowest or highest social classes. The working class

and middle class generally would stand to gain the most from assimilation and might therefore shed much of their ethnic identity.

As sociologist Mary Waters notes, racial/ethnic identification, more than other aspects of assimilation, may be becoming both more subjective and autonomous as racial/ethnic and other ascriptive criteria become more volitional. Thus, some immigrants may maintain racial/ethnic identifications despite considerable economic incorporation. They may also maintain social networks and perhaps even marry across racial or ethnic boundaries, providing examples of identifications that do not correspond with economic mobility in a straight-line way.

Of course, such decouplings proceed most rapidly in the absence of strong discrimination or value conflict. Otherwise, external barriers could block assimilation and foster ethnic identification.

Among lower-class immigrants and immigrant descendants who face such external barriers and who do develop reactive ethnicity, racial/ethnic identification may remain more tightly linked to negative outcomes. The relative autonomy of identification and economic mobility appears more likely to occur among middle- and higher-class groups. This suggests that incomplete economic assimilation may reflect the operation of factors other than racial/ethnic discrimination.

It is still too soon for evidence in support of this perspective to have emerged among new immigrants. Thus, it is hard to tell whether the new model will ultimately more nearly reflect a neoethnic pluralist emphasis (involving several racial/ethnic groups displaying economic mobility but diminishing salience of race and ethnicity) or a neoassimilationist emphasis (involving several racial/ethnic groups showing economic mobility while also blending into a new hybrid category).

Conclusion

If classic assimilation was the predominant perspective on immigrant integration throughout most of the 20th century, the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s highlighted how this perspective had failed to depict the situation of African Americans. The Civil Rights movement also ignited decades of backlash that stressed racial disadvantage and the persistence of racial and ethnic identities.

In fact, in 1993, Nathan Glazer published an influential essay titled "Is Assimilation Dead?" But Glazer argued that, in general, the answer was no. That same year, Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou introduced the concept of segmented assimilation, which stressed a three-part path: assimilation for those with advantages in human capital, ethnic disadvantage for some because of poverty and racialization, and the selective retention of ethnicity for yet others. Thus began a reexamination of assimilation theory, with new stress on institutional roles and the contingent nature of ethnic identification.

The process of reconciling the relative importance of race/ethnicity with other factors that delay economic mobility will no doubt continue to dominate assimilation discussions. In the last two decades, gender has also emerged as a focus of incorporation studies, as some scholars have noted that girls whose parents come from traditionally patriarchal countries are excelling in the American schooling system and joining the workforce in large numbers.

As today's second generation begins to bear the third generation, the focus of research will become more longitudinal and cross-generational.

At the same time, studies of assimilation are becoming more comparative, as more traditional sending countries turn into immigrant-receiving countries. In countries where the mythic "melting pot" has never served as a national metaphor, the boundaries between immigrants and natives can be much clearer. A key question then becomes how governmental policies, such as those concerning resettlement and language training, can ease the economic mobility of immigrant groups.

The fact that some countries, such as Canada, have set forth official policies welcoming immigrant settlement brings up the final question: What is the end point of assimilation? Even after generations in North America, many people of European ancestry appear to retain a symbolic level of ethnicity. Since ethnic identity is dynamic, it thus remains unclear how today's second generation in the United

States will ultimately view itself. But opportunities for greater economic mobility will be critical to the outcome.

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Frank D. Bean is a Chancellor's Professor of sociology and economics at UCI and director of the center.

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The Second Generation in the United States

By David Dixon

October 1, 2006

The degree to which immigrant groups integrate is determined by many factors, including their educational backgrounds, work experiences and skills, and culture, as well as the communities in which they settle.

Therefore, it is important to examine variations in the characteristics of the second generation, defined as native born who have at least one foreign-born (first-generation) parent. The third-and-later generation includes native-born individuals with both parents born in the United States.

Members of the second generation whose parents came from Europe are more likely to be children of immigrants who arrived before 1960. They exhibit different characteristics than the children of more recent immigrants from Asia and Latin America.

This Spotlight examines the general social and demographic characteristics of the second generation in the United States by world region of origin. Those with origins in Canada have been grouped with those of European descent because they exhibit similar characteristics.

Distinctions are made between those with origins in Mexico and those with origins elsewhere in Latin America as Mexicans are the largest immigrant group in the United States and are of particular interest to policymakers. Members of the second generation with parents born in more than one world region are included in the figures for each region and are therefore counted twice.

Note: The results here are based on 2005 and 2006 Current Population Survey (CPS) data, which were averaged in order to provide a large enough sample size.

The second generation accounted for nearly 11 percent of the US population in 2006.

About 12 percent (35,436,774 individuals) of the US population are foreign born, 11 percent (30,994,680) are second generation, and 77 percent (226,068,824) are third-or-later generation.

Two of every three members of the second generation have parents born in Mexico, Europe, or Canada.

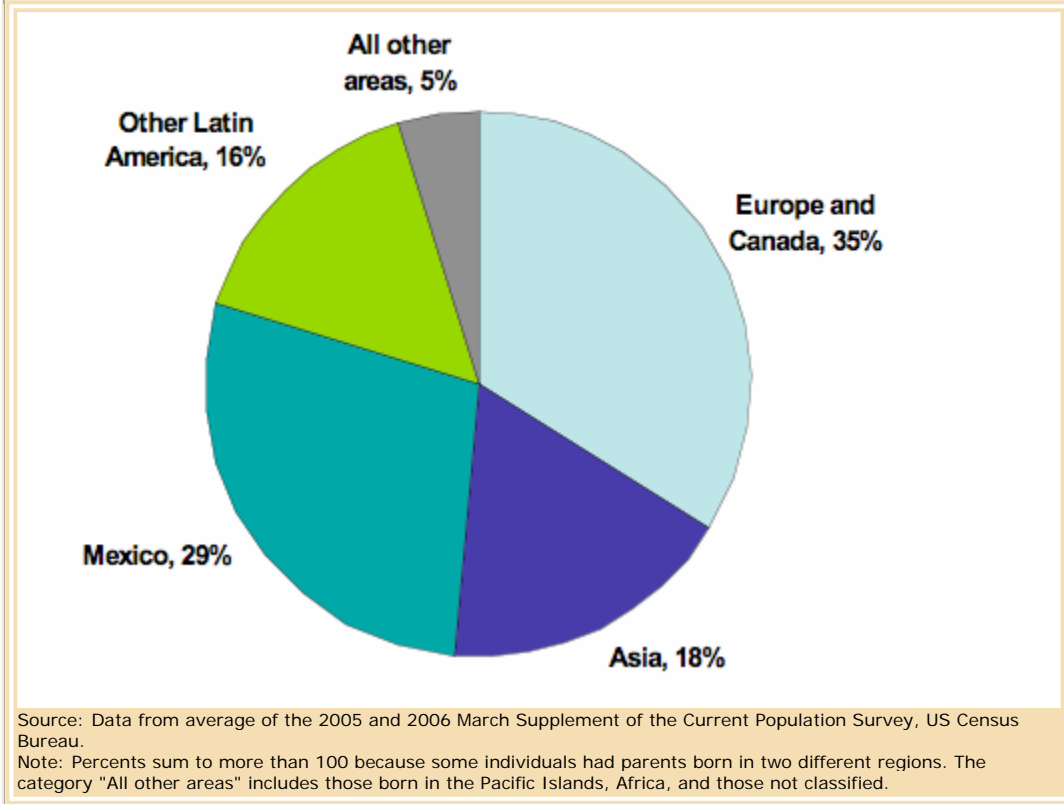
About 35 percent (10,759,486) of the second generation have parents born in Europe or Canada, while 29 percent (9,075,931) have parents born in Mexico (see Figure 1). Asia was the next largest birthplace of parents of the second generation with 18 percent (5,566,493), followed by Latin America (other than Mexico) at 16 percent (5,023,106), and all other regions at five percent (1,485,203).

Special Note

Data points in this article cite the most recent survey year (2006) although the numbers are based on an average of CPS data from 2005 and 2006.

The data reflect only the population living in households and exclude those living in group quarters, such as institutions and college dormitories.

Figure 1. World Regions of Origin Among the Second Generation

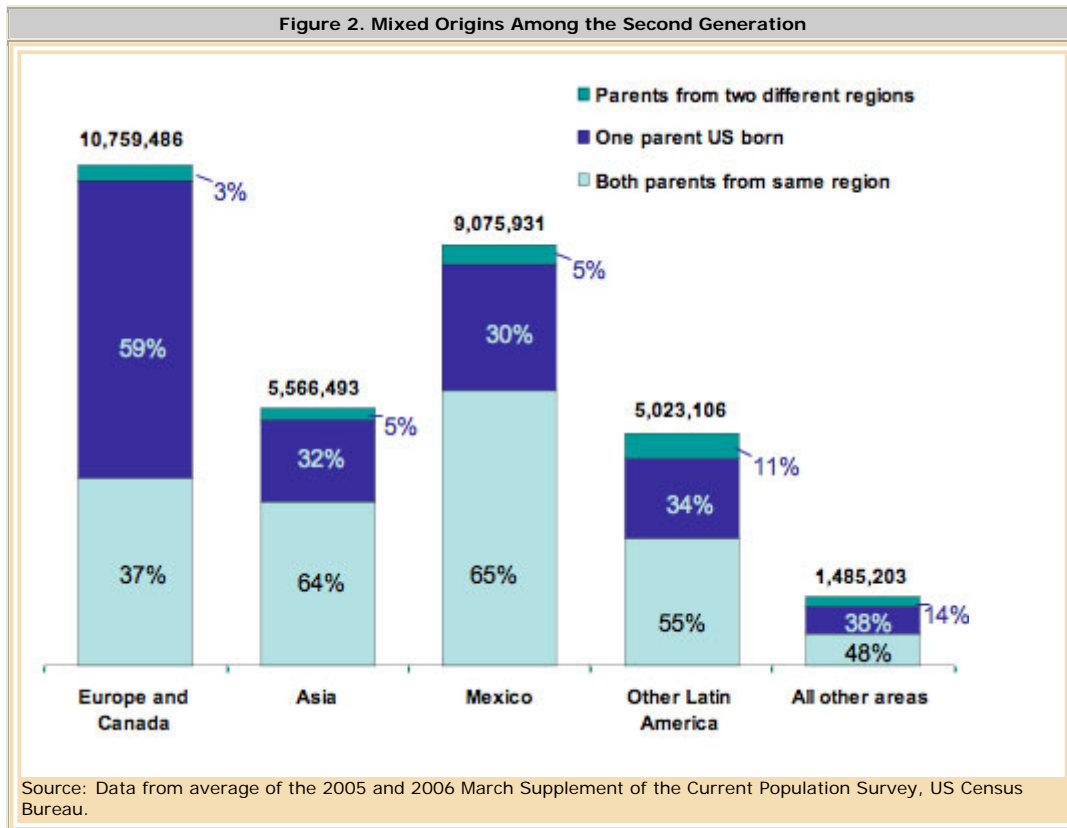


More than two of every five members of the second generation have a US-born parent.

Among the second generation, 42 percent (13,128,071) have one foreign-born parent and one parent born in the United States. Nearly 55 percent (16,951,070) have two foreign-born parents with birthplaces in the same world region, and three percent (915,539) have parents born in two different world regions (e.g., Europe and Latin America).

Members of the second generation with Mexican and Asian roots were more likely to have two parents born in the same world region.

As Figure 2 shows, the children of parents from Mexico and Asia are more likely to have both parents from the same region of birth, while those whose parents are from Europe and Canada are more likely to have one foreign-born and one US-born parent. Those with parents from Latin America (other than Mexico) and other world regions not individually classified were most likely to have two foreign-born parents from different world regions.



The second generation tend to be very young.

The median age of the second generation is 21 years, compared with 38 years among the foreign born, and 37 years among the third-and-later generation. The young age of the second generation reflects the large, recent wave of immigrants to the United States.

The second generation of European and Canadian origin are four times older than those with roots in other areas.

At 54 years, the median age of the European/Canadian-origin second generation is much older than second-generation members with origins in other areas. The median age for those whose parents are from Asia is 16 years, from Mexico 12 years, from elsewhere in Latin America 13 years, and from all other areas 14 years.

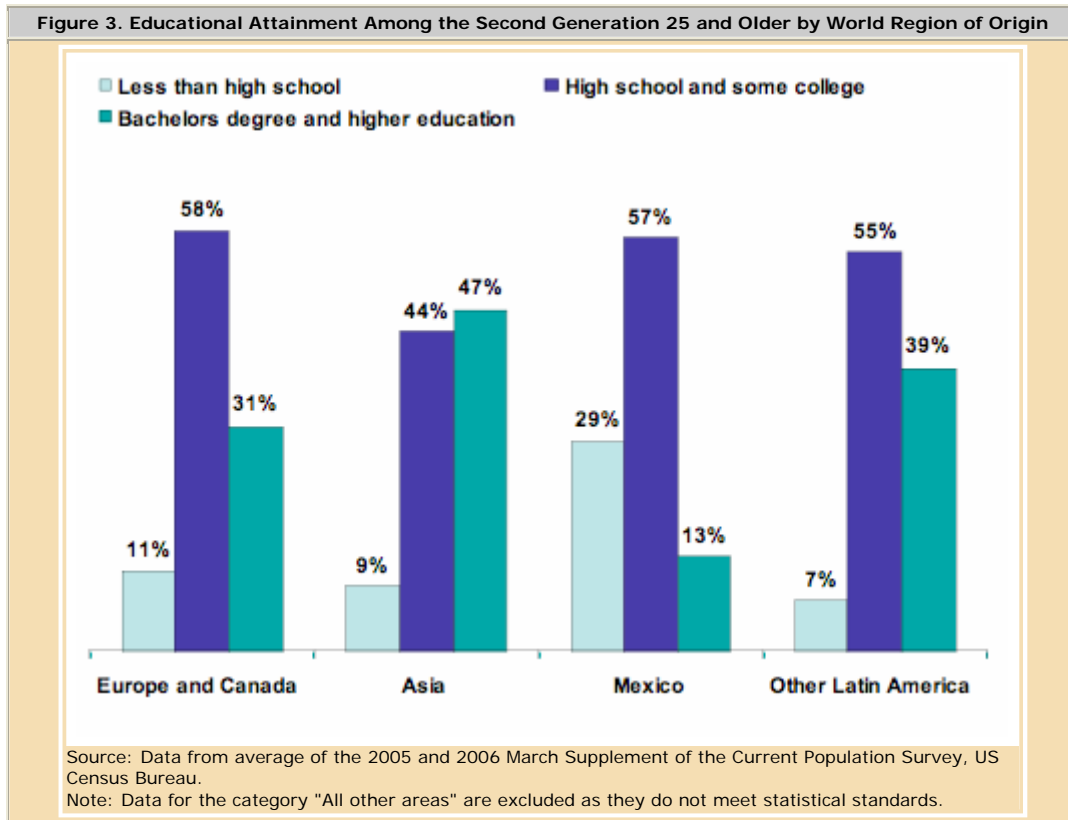
Members of the second generation are more likely to finish college than both the foreign born and members of the third-and-higher generation.

About 31 percent (4,299,844) of the second generation 25 and older have completed a four-year college degree or higher compared with 27 percent (7,882,782) of the foreign born and 28 percent (40,867,953) of the third-and-later generation.

At the lower end of the educational spectrum, 13 percent (1,862,569) of the second generation have less than a high school education compared with 32 percent (9,287,483) of the foreign born and 11 percent (16,805,676) of the third-and-later generation.

The second generation with origins in Asia and Latin America (other than Mexico) show high levels of educational attainment.

Among the second generation 25 and older, 47 percent (846,424) of those with Asian origins and 39 percent (425,055) of those with Latin American origins (excluding Mexico) have a bachelor's degree or higher (see Figure 3). Of those with one or more parents born in Mexico, 29 percent (690,543) have completed high school.



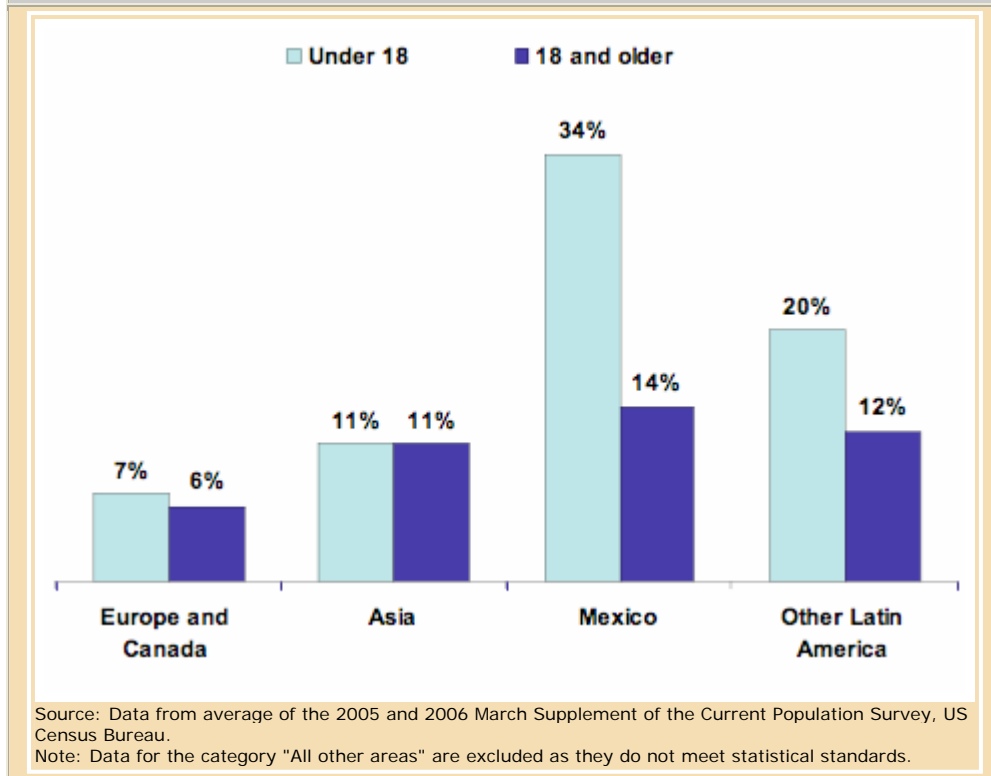
One in every five second-generation children and one in 10 second-generation adults are in poverty.

About 22 percent (3,068,753) of second-generation children under age 18 are in poverty compared with 31 percent (965,726) of foreign-born children and 17 percent (9,559,125) of third-and-later-generation children (see Figure 4).

About nine percent (1,548,025) of second-generation adults 18 and older are in poverty, while 16 percent (5,016,996) of foreign-born adults and 10 percent (17,460,798) of third-and-later-generation adults live below the poverty line.

A person's poverty status is determined by comparing the person's total family income with the poverty threshold appropriate for that person's family size and composition. According to the US Census Bureau, the poverty threshold in 2005 for a family of four was \$19,806.

Figure 4. Percent of Second Generation in Poverty by World Region of Origin and Age



More than a third of second-generation children with Mexican roots live in poverty.

As Figure 4 shows, 34 percent (1,934,061) of young second-generation children whose parents were born in Mexico live below the poverty line. The next-highest rate of poverty is among young children of those from elsewhere in Latin America (20 percent or 641,646 individuals). Second-generation adults with Mexican origins are also most likely to live in poverty at 14 percent (474,883), although the disparities flatten among the groups.

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The Second Generation from the Last Great Wave of Immigration: Setting the Record Straight

By Nancy Foner, Hunter College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York
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October 1, 2006

As a new second generation born to post-1965 immigrants comes of age and take its place in today's America, inevitably comparisons are made with the children of European immigrants in the last great wave. This is not surprising.

Beginning around 1880 and ending in the mid-1920s, the last wave brought more than 23 million immigrants to the United States; by 1910 almost 15 percent of the population was foreign born. These earlier immigrants, the majority from southern, central, and eastern Europe, left a lasting imprint on the nation, and the experiences of their children have shaped our understanding of the processes of assimilation and becoming American.

Today, this earlier second generation is usually portrayed as making rapid upward progress and achieving success with remarkable ease and speed. In popular accounts, it is a tale of rags-to-riches, as the second generation moved out of tenements and sweatshops to leafy middle-class suburbs and professional office suites.

The academic literature also mostly focuses on the positives. The children of European immigrants, sociologists Alejandro Portes and Rubén Rumbaut have recently written, "clawed their ways through schools and entrepreneurship into economic affluence."

For many commentators, this account helps to distinguish the previous era of incorporation of mainly European immigrants and their descendants from the current one, in which immigrants to the United States come mostly from Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. In contrast to the massive upward mobility and assimilation of the second generation during the mid-20th century, some researchers believe today's second generation faces far more uncertain and contingent prospects.

Such exclusively upbeat portrayals of the past, however, fail to capture the complexities of second-generation mobility paths then. To be sure, the story of yesterday's second generation overall is one of progress and advancement.

Yet the climb up was often slow and gradual rather than a matter of giant leaps forward, and some of the second generation suffered painful setbacks and difficulties along the way. Much of the time, the second generation of the new groups confronted prejudice and discrimination that bordered on racism.

Exclusionary barriers — for example, in educational institutions and in residential areas — were erected by more privileged Americans, especially white Protestants. Starting in the 1920s, government immigration policy was formulated to drastically limit the numbers of the new groups and hence their influence on American society.

In depicting this complex record, the focus here is on eastern European Jews and southern Italians, the two largest ethnic contingents in the turn-of-the-century immigration who were also heavily concentrated in the Northeast, especially New York. In 1910, more than half of the nation's foreign-born eastern European Jews and a quarter of the Italian born lived in New York City.

Jews were an unusually successful group — something that needs to be kept in mind in assessing the achievements of the second generation in the last wave, since the "Jewish success story" so often stands out in memories and accounts of the past.

Despite this unrepresentative record, Jews still need to be included, if only because their parents were a significant proportion of turn-of-the-20th-century immigrants — about one of seven of the approximately 12 million arrivals between 1899 and 1924 who did not return home — and because they faced strong exclusionary forces in their drive to succeed.

The Italians, who came mainly from southern Italy, are more representative of the overall character of the southern and eastern European immigration, and they were a large part of it, more than a third. They frequently entered the American labor market on its lowest rungs, and the wages of the immigrants fell well below those of their native-born American peers, thus representing a very low starting point relative to societal norms.

A Question of Historical Time

Before exploring the experiences of second-generation Jews and Italians, it must be noted that it is *not* correct to speak of a single second generation that passed through the 20th century together. This view puts a too rosy gloss on the second-generation experience.

American economic ascendancy, the expansion of higher education, suburbanization, and government assistance to veterans are specific historical conditions in the post-World War II years often mentioned as facilitating the prospects for mobility by members of the second generation.

What is generally overlooked is that a substantial part of this generation, by some estimates around a quarter, was born too early — before 1910, say — to benefit much from these forces. The influence of postwar prosperity on the second generation depended on their age and life stage at the time.

In fact, the earlier cohorts of the second generation matured during the Great Depression of the 1930s and suffered diminished opportunities as a result. In truth, the Great Depression affected all but the small number of the second generation who were born after it ended, and for most it meant economic and social dislocations and declines, even if these were temporary.

In other words, in the depths of the Depression, members of the second generation's prospects for mobility depended on whether they were children still in school, teenagers facing bleak job prospects, or adults in their prime working years, struggling to keep (or get) a job and support a family.

The Move Upward: Often through Modest Improvements

Assimilation, as sociologists Richard Alba and Victor Nee write in *Remaking the American Mainstream*, has been the master trend among the descendants of immigrants from Europe. Indeed, the children of eastern and southern European immigrants generally did better than their parents.

Furthermore, over time, there was a growing and impressive convergence with the average socioeconomic life chances of the descendants of the various European groups from still earlier immigrations. In particular, the disadvantages that were once evident for groups like the Italians, who had largely peasant origins in Europe, eventually faded, and their socioeconomic attainments increasingly resembled, and even surpassed, those of the average white American.

But if there was considerable second-generation progress, the ascent up the socioeconomic ladder was often more difficult — and less rapid — than is remembered. "My son the doctor" may have been a cherished phrase of Jewish immigrant parents, but "my grandson the doctor" is more accurate. Indeed, for turn-of-the-20th-century European immigrants, the leap into the professions was generally a third- or fourth- generation phenomenon.

Second-generation Europeans usually made relatively modest moves up the socioeconomic ladder when compared to their parents — as historian Joel Perlmann puts it, typically they did appreciably,

rather than vastly, better than their parents — and some, of course, did not move up at all but stayed at the same level.

In 1950, in New York City, a quarter century after the massive influx from southern and eastern Europe had ended, the majority of the Italian and Jewish second generation were clerks, skilled workers, and small-business owners. Only a small proportion of second-generation Jews — and an even smaller proportion of second-generation Italians — were then in the professions (see Table 1).

Occupational Distributions of First- and Second-Generation Italians and Jews, New York-New Jersey SMSA, 1950 (in percents)								
	Men				Women			
	Jews		Italians		Jews		Italians	
	1st gen	2nd gen	1st gen	2nd gen	1st gen	2nd gen	1st gen	2nd gen
professionals	9	19	3	6	8	16	2	5
managers & proprietors	32	27	13	10	12	8	4	2
clerical & sales workers	14	28	6	17	28	63	8	40
crafts workers	16	10	24	22	2	1	2	2
operatives	23	12	24	29	40	8	77	44
private household workers	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0
service workers	4	3	14	6	4	2	4	4
laborers	2	1	14	6	0	0	0	0
not reported	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Source: Miriam Cohen, *Workshop to Office* (Cornell University Press, 1992)

Blue-collar work in New York and elsewhere continued to be the mainstay in the Italian second generation among males and females alike; Jews were more likely to be found in clerical and sales jobs and as managers and proprietors. It was not until the 1950s that Jews really began a mass program of college education; for Italians it would not be until a decade or two later.

It took almost 100 years from the time the Italians' mass immigration began in the late 19th century before it became clear that as a group they would make it, educationally and occupationally, into the American mainstream.

The Context of Reception

The "context of reception," a concept elaborated by Portes and Rumbaut, calls attention to the complexity of the situation that immigrants enter and the disadvantages that they and their children confront: Success in the new society depends not only on what immigrants bring, such as skills of use in the new labor market, but also on how they are received.

From the late-19th through the early-20th century, the barriers in the context of reception can be identified in terms of the attitudes of native-born white Americans towards the new groups, government policy towards them, and the institutional policies intended to exclude them from critical societal arenas.

In terms of the comparison between past and present second-generation incorporation, some of the indicators of what sociologists Portes and Min Zhou have described as "downward assimilation," such as school failure and entry into criminal careers, illuminate forgotten similarities.

Attitudes of Native-born Americans

Nonwhite race is frequently seen as a characteristic that distinguishes today's immigrants and second generation from those of past eras, who could assimilate more easily because they were "white." However, as the "whiteness" literature makes clear, racial matters were not so simple at the turn of the 20th century, when huge numbers of immigrants were arriving.

These southern and eastern European immigrants were legally white — that is, they were not prevented from naturalizing as were Asians; and they were not subject to the antimiscegenation laws that existed in many states. But they were, socially and ideologically at least, of questionable whiteness — the "inbetween peoples," as historians James Barrett and David Roediger label them, or inferior or "probationary" whites, in historian Matthew Frye Jacobson's characterization.

In the late-19th and early-20th centuries, scientific racism flourished, and it took the southern and eastern European groups into its scope. They were believed to have distinct biological features, mental abilities, and innate character traits that marked them as inferior to northern and western Europeans, who were viewed as the genetic fundament of the American stock.

There is a considerable literature of the time that made these claims. One of the most famous is Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race*, which expressed widely felt anxieties about the genetic debasement of this stock by the addition of new groups, especially, for the socially patrician Grant, the Jews.

A Congressional study, the Dillingham Commission, even documented the inferiority of the new groups; the last portion of its 41-volume report was issued in 1911. One of the earliest uses in the United States of the newly invented IQ test was to demonstrate the mental deficiencies of the southern and eastern Europeans, Jews included.

This racism crept into popular attitudes towards the new groups. Undoubtedly, in light of descriptions of, say, Italians and Jews in terms of distinctive visible physical features — "swarthy skin" in one case and large noses in the other — many Americans believed them to be physically identifiable (whether they were right in this belief is another matter). Cartoons of the era often drew them in this way. The racist element in popular attitudes is conveyed also by a common epithet for the Italians — "guinea." This word refers to the African west coast and extends back into the history of American slavery.

The ferocity of popular antipathy towards the new groups is exhibited also in the violence to which they were sometimes subject. The 1913 lynching of Leo Frank, a second-generation German Jew, is still well known. But Italians were also the victims of lynchings, which took place in the North — in Colorado and Pennsylvania, for example — as well as the South. The lynching of 11 Italian immigrants in New Orleans in 1891 is among the largest mass lynchings in American history.

The immigrants and their children were also witnesses to symbolic violence directed against them. During the 1920s, the anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic Ku Klux Klan, then undergoing a "remarkable revival," according to historian Thomas Guglielmo, staged numerous rallies in northern cities like Chicago, where the new groups were denounced as "mongrel hordes" threatening "Anglo-Saxon civilization."

Government Policy

The lack of welcome towards the new immigrants and their children is revealed by the degree to which federal immigration policy was formulated to keep their numbers in check. The nativist agenda of limiting immigration and preserving privileges for the native born, which had waxed and waned in popularity during the 19th century without reaching a resolution, surged forward as the number of southern and eastern European immigrants grew. The xenophobia sparked by World War I also played

a role.

The immigration-restriction legislation of the 1920s was a direct result of nativism, buttressed by the scientific and journalistic portrayals of the inferiority of immigrants from certain countries and parts of the world.

While these laws did not entirely bar immigration from southern and eastern Europe, as they did from Asia, they drastically reduced it through the device of the national-origins quota. These quotas were designed in a way that was explicitly ethnic/racial. The immigration they allowed was intended to reproduce the ethnic composition of the white portion of the American people as of 1890, before the southern and eastern European immigration had really taken hold.

Thus, practically overnight, the number of legal arrivals from Italy plummeted from over 200,000 a year, its average during the first two decades of the 20th century except for the wartime period, to 15,000 a year.

The laws of the 1920s, which introduced numerical limits on European immigration, created for the first time a large-scale problem of illegality among the new European immigrant groups. Lack of legal status was especially a problem in the Italian community, and periodic immigration raids captured some of them, including the mother of Senator Pete Domenici (R-NM), as Americans learned during immigration reform debates in April 2006.

The Italians were also subject to government surveillance during World War II, at least until 1943, when Italy surrendered. At the outbreak of war, there were 600,000 noncitizen Italian immigrants residing in the United States whose loyalty was open to suspicion. While the number who were interned — no more than a few thousand — was small compared to what Japanese Americans experienced, many more suffered restrictions on their movements and activities. This happened even to the father of baseball's Joe DiMaggio, at the time a national hero.

Italian-American communities, increasingly composed of second-generation families by the 1950s, came in for further surveillance when government policy singled out southern Italians as the source of the nation's organized-crime problem. The Kefauver hearings in the US Senate in 1951 claimed the existence of a national crime group, the Mafia.

The link between Italian Americans and organized crime reached its apogee in the 1968 Report of the President's Crime Commission, which identified the "core" of the organized-crime problem as 24 Italian-American crime families. Their structure, the report declared, "resembles that of the Mafia groups that have operated for almost a century on the island of Sicily."

Institutional Barriers

As members of the second generation sought to advance, they often faced discrimination and exclusionary policies by largely Protestant middle and upper classes who attempted to preserve their privileges. Considerable struggle was involved as the second generation sought to overcome barriers.

Jews were frequently the target of attempts at social closure, largely because of their relatively early educational gains. During the 1920s, when second-generation eastern European Jews acquired the educational credentials to gain entrance to Ivy League schools in large numbers, efforts were made to keep them out; Harvard imposed a quota on the number of Jewish students who could be admitted and, in one form or another, many other elite colleges followed its lead.

From the 1920s onward, many Jews were denied admission to professional schools. Elite law firms would not hire them, universities denied them faculty positions, and elite social clubs systematically excluded them. During the Depression, New York City's largest employers — including public utilities, banks, insurance companies, and home offices of major corporations — rarely hired Jews.

Consequently, Jewish professionals fell back on a pattern of self-employment, setting up their own practices and catering to largely Jewish clientele. In New York City, many Jews entered the civil service after Mayor LaGuardia implemented a merit system in the 1930s for hiring and promotion.

In the postwar decades the barriers began to fall, partly because of the robust and expanding economy, which provided new opportunities, and because the legal and social environment had changed both during and after the war.

But it was not just outside forces and altered circumstances that opened doors. Jewish organizations, in which the second generation played an important role, fought to overturn rules and regulations blocking advancement. Jewish organizations campaigned against the use of religious and racial criteria in admissions; they pressed the case for antidiscrimination legislation, especially in New York State, where a good number of prestigious, exclusionary institutions, such as Columbia and Cornell, were located.

An initial success was achieved in 1946, when the New York City Council adopted legislation threatening the tax-exempt status of nonsectarian colleges and universities that discriminated based on race or religion. Columbia was thereby forced to revise its admissions procedures, and some other schools, seeing the handwriting on the wall, did the same.

New York State followed with an antidiscrimination statute in 1948. By the mid-to-late 1960s, Yale and Princeton finally had ended their unofficial quotas that had severely limited the number of Jewish students.

Jews and Italians both faced impediments to living in the most desirable neighborhoods. Restrictive covenants, which the US Supreme Court did not ban until 1948, frequently excluded Jews from the purchase of homes in privileged neighborhoods.

Italians were also viewed as undesirable neighbors and, according to Guglielmo, were listed just above African Americans and Mexican Americans on a ranking of groups that realtors and the federal government commonly used to determine neighborhood suitability for investment.

Signs of Second-Generation Distress

Though the extent of second-generation upward mobility was quite different between eastern European Jews and southern Italians, both groups showed signs of distress.

These signs were much more varied among the Italians and very much in evidence in their educational record, something that was not the case for the Jews. Second-generation-Italian educational attainment was on average well below that of other US-born whites. Southern Italian parents frequently took their children out of school as early as the law allowed and sometimes earlier.

The historian Thomas Kessner has estimated that as many as 10 percent of Italian children living in New York City during the first decade of the 20th century did not attend school at all.

In Providence, Rhode Island, the low educational achievements of second-generation Italians relative to other groups, as Perlmann notes, was glaring. In 1915, only 17 percent of native-born Italian boys and nine percent of the girls entered high school and only a third of them graduated.

In the early 1940s, the New York educator Leonard Covello found that Italian youngsters had a much lower rate of high-school graduation than did the city's other groups, as well as higher rates of truancy and delinquency.

For both second-generation Jews and Italians, the lure of crime often competed quite successfully with mainstream opportunities. Remarkable as this may seem from today's perspective, there was a Jewish "crime wave" in early-20th-century New York. As described by sociologist Stephen Steinberg, about a sixth of the city's felony arrests were Jews; his analysis does not make clear whether these criminals belonged to the second generation or the 1.5 generation (generally defined as children who immigrate before their early teens). In the eyes of Jewish community leaders at the time, the arrests made clear that Jewish immigrant parents had lost control of their children.

Many young Jewish criminals gravitated toward the "rackets," where they met up with the children of

Irish, Italian, and other immigrants. During Prohibition and afterwards, the more successful of these gangsters formed organized-crime groups that monopolized trade in the various realms of vice, such as gambling.

For several decades after World War II, the dominant figures in organized crime were second-generation Jews and Italians, often working in concert. The notorious Murder, Inc. was led by Charles "Lucky" Luciano, who came to the United States at the age of 10, and Louis "Lepke" Buchalter, born on New York's Lower East Side.

The identity dilemmas the second generation confronted were depicted by psychologist Irvin Child in *Italian or American?* Studying second-generation Italian Americans in New Haven, Connecticut, during the late 1930s, when American hostility toward Fascist Italy was rising, Child found both loyalty to the Italian identity and assimilation to the American one to entail a high degree of risk and anticipated loss. The American identity, in particular, required Italians to relinquish their ties to the group without any guarantee of acceptance by native white Americans. Many Italian Americans lapsed into what Child deemed an "apathetic" identity state.

Conclusion

If there is one lesson to be learned from the experiences of the earlier second generation, it is to be wary about romanticizing the past. A common tendency is to emphasize only the positives in looking back to the European second generation's mobility paths. As shown, the ascent up the socioeconomic ladder was not problem-free for the children of southern, central, and eastern Europeans whose parents arrived on America's shores a century ago.

Views of the past matter partly because they inform our understandings of the present. When the story of the earlier second generation portrays only the positives, it suggests that the contemporary second generation and its incorporation difficulties are altogether unique.

An awareness of the complexities involved in the path to mobility in the past — and the stumbling blocks along the way — provides a realistic basis for comparison. An historical perspective also makes clear that the second generation's ascent up the socioeconomic ladder was not inevitable, but, rather, the outcome of specific historical forces.

Recognizing the possibility of similarities and continuities between the second generation of southern and eastern Europeans and today's second generation opens up the possibility for learning lessons from the past that have significance for the present and future.

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The Second Generation and Self-Employment

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Since the 1970s, social scientists have understood the importance of self-employment as a vehicle for economic advancement among immigrant populations. Studies reveal that the foreign born have higher rates of self-employment than do natives, and that self-employed immigrants have greater wealth, earnings, and returns to human capital than immigrants who find jobs in existing firms.

While the foreign born in general have higher rates of self-employment than the native born, certain nationality groups have especially high rates of self-employment. Research suggests such groups are characterized by a combination of disadvantages and resources in the US economy that propel them to high rates of entrepreneurship.

Disadvantages include lack of English proficiency, membership in an ethnic/racial group that experiences discrimination, and a lack of credentials (or credentials from unrecognized foreign universities). Resources include skills, education, and access to networks that provide labor, capital, information, advice, imported goods, and customers.

These findings have been replicated in studies conducted in a variety of nations, locations, and economic activities. However, the greatest body of literature on immigrant entrepreneurship has concerned the first generation. Far less is known about patterns of self-employment among the descendents of recent immigrants — about 30 million in all, including those who arrived before the age of 13, as of 2005.

Accordingly, a study of the second generation's involvement with self-employment promises to yield valuable insights into this group's experience of assimilation and, as such, broader social and economic patterns in US society for years to come. By analyzing data on self-employment in New York and Los Angeles, it is possible to determine if self-employment is a trend among the second generation.

Background on Immigrant Entrepreneurship

Much of the early research and theorizing on immigrant entrepreneurship focused largely on the *supply* of entrepreneurs. This work was little concerned with the contexts in which such businesses functioned.

However, in the last decade, scholars have directed their attention to the societal and communal conditions that shape *demand* for entrepreneurship. Such work examines the growth of entrepreneurship within a changing opportunity structure, a clear improvement over earlier formulations that disregarded context in assessing prospects for immigrant self-employment.

Research has determined that the conditions fostering increased demand for ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship are quite complex and not simply a consequence of general economic trends.

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- [Self-Employment by First and Second Generation in Los Angeles and New York City](#)

As sociologist Saskia Sassen argues, despite the apparent decline in stable employment opportunities for less-educated laborers in major cities, transitional and even impoverished neighborhoods often need the kinds of goods and services that immigrant entrepreneurs are willing and able to provide. Given that corporate businesses are largely uninterested in servicing such markets, it is immigrant entrepreneurs who often meet this demand.

Low-income migrants and economically dislocated native workers, however, are not the only consumers of goods and services sold by immigrant shop owners. In recent years, affluent workers and the firms that employ them also increasingly consume goods and services — from prepared food, remodeling services, and childcare to packaging, delivery, and garment assembly — that are conveyed by immigrant entrepreneurs.

At the same time, it is important to note that prospects for immigrant self-employment are not universally positive. For example, during the late 1990s, corporations that had long ignored inner-city customers began to recognize the profits available in servicing this market. As a consequence, immigrant-owned businesses that could not stand up to such well-financed competitors lost some of their traditional control over this niche.

Data on Second-Generation Mobility

Sociologists Reynolds Farley and Richard Alba's national-level study of the second generation revealed encouraging findings in educational achievement, occupational prestige, and economic mobility.

First, the proportion of every second-generation group with college or advanced degrees was greater than the first. Second, there was evidence of a rise in occupational prestige across the board for all comparisons of second to first generations. Third, second-generation groups had lower poverty rates, a higher percentage of people in a comfortable economic position (meaning incomes five times higher than the poverty rate), and substantially higher per-capita incomes than the first generation.

The data also showed that nationality groups characterized by relatively high levels of education in the first generation demonstrated better second-generation progress in terms of income and educational advancement than those groups, such as Mexicans, who entered the United States with less education. This finding is sobering since the Mexican-origin population is the largest of all nationally defined migrant groups; low levels of mobility could affect a large fraction of the second generation.

Models of Second-Generation Self-Employment

There are a number of reasons the US-born children of immigrants are less likely than their parents to pursue self-employment. A large body of research on intergenerational immigrant adaptation confirms that while first-generation migrants reveal high rates of self-employment, their children obtain a college education and secure professional jobs in existing firms or the public sector.

This pattern is called the *classic model* of generational succession in self-employment. The children of self-employed immigrants who arrived in the late-19th and early-20th centuries (commonly called the last "great wave") generally fit the classic model.

Unlike their parents, members of the second generation then and now are often more proficient in English, have more knowledge of American society, and have higher levels of education, with degrees earned from US educational institutions.

At the same time, members of the second generation often lose certain ethnic entrepreneurial resources, such as access to migrant networks and skills, including competence in the parents' language and an appreciation of earnings differentials with the country of origin. Finally, the second generation may lack the motivation and determination of their parents, who made the conscious choice to take advantage of opportunities in a new environment largely unfamiliar to them.

Considering the great diversity in levels of skill, access to resources, demographic characteristics, cultural propensities, and contexts of reception among contemporary migrant populations, it is likely

that various patterns of generational change in self-employment rates occur. Below are other possible models.

Second-generation starters. Given that entrepreneurship requires resources, it is conceivable that some members of the first generation lack sufficient assets to start their own businesses, even if they would like to do so. However, as a consequence of growing up in the United States, members of the second generation may acquire such resources while retaining a desire to become self-employed. Accordingly, members of the second generation may reveal higher rates of self-employment than their parents' generation. Historically, this pattern was observed among Jewish immigrants in New York.

The middleman model. In this pattern, the second generation of groups with high rates of first-generation self-employment retain high levels of self-employment. Some members of the second generation of these highly entrepreneurial groups are not heavily oriented towards educational achievement because they plan to enter the accessible ethnic economy where a large fraction of their coethnics find work. The most dramatic configuration of this model is revealed among contemporary, public-school educated Cubans in South Florida and Chaldeans in Detroit.

Second-generation decline model. Children of marginally successful self-employed parents may reveal lower rates of self-employment than the first generation, but they may not experience the upward mobility predicted by the classic model. Rather, in a process described as "niche shrinkage," ethnic-owned economies decline over time, because demand for goods and services reduces or because competition from other entrepreneurial groups and corporate businesses cuts into consumer demand.

The second-generation decline scenario is evidenced by the second generation having relatively low rates of education, self-employment, and income as compared with the first generation. While not a broad trend, this did occur to the owners of urban businesses — especially from the 1950s until the 1980s — when sizeable areas of cities such as New York, Newark, Detroit, Chicago, and Los Angeles lost their economic base and population.

Some displaced second-generation entrepreneurs (children of immigrants who entered the United States prior to 1930) were able to reestablish enterprises in suburban regions, the Sunbelt, or in gentrifying neighborhoods, but others were unable to do so. As a result, some worked as employees in coethnics' stores in order to supplement their depleted retirement funds.

Transnational entrepreneurs. In this pattern, the second generation of groups with relatively high resources retains high rates of self-employment because of ample rewards available from businesses that operate in the United States and the parents' country of origin. For example, Portes and colleagues reported in 2002 that more than five percent of the Salvadoran, Dominican, and Colombian first-generation migrants they studied followed this pattern.

These first-generation transnational entrepreneurs relied on frequent travel and constant contact with other countries, earned higher incomes, and were more likely to be citizens than conational migrants who were not self-employed. Scholars have documented similar patterns among second-generation Chinese and South Asian populations.

A related phenomenon involves the children of migrants leaving the United States permanently to engage in self-employment in the parents' country of origin or a third national location.

Methodology

In order to examine intergenerational patterns of self-employment, five years' worth of annual data files (1998 to 2002) from the Current Population Survey (CPS) from New York City and Los Angeles County were analyzed. Data were prepared by Charlie Morgan for the Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles project. These cities were chosen because they are the two largest points of migrant settlement in the United States and are home to large numbers of the second generation.

The CPS data are rich, and, unlike the 1990 and 2000 Census, provide information about parents' birthplace, allowing respondents' generation to be considered. On the other hand, given the relatively

small number of individuals sampled and the young age of the second generation, the number of self-employed of particular nationalities residing in each city was so small that it would be very difficult to make broader generalizations on the basis of these data, especially when considering gender.

In order to increase the size of the second generation for analysis, the 1.5 generation (those who arrived in the United States before age 12) were included. As a consequence, some of the patterns that may reflect the experience of the 1.5 generation rather than a US-born cohort per se.

Further, given that self-employment rates increase with age, the relative youth of the second generation itself is likely to be associated with lower rates of self-employment than would be the case if their mean age were greater. With the exception of the British in both cities and Mexicans in Los Angeles, the size of every second-generation group (age 20 and above) was smaller than the first generation.

The survey defines the self-employed as those persons who work for profit or fees in their own business, profession, trade, or farm. Because only the unincorporated self-employed are included in the self-employed category, neither small, part-time "side" businesses nor large incorporated enterprises are included in these data.

A final problem is that of comparison between the two cities. Different nationality groups settle in New York and Los Angeles. Accordingly, it is difficult to find large enough samples of the same group in both cities to make appropriate comparisons.

Self-employment is an incredibly diverse activity, including very small-scale, home-based businesses and considerably larger operations. Hence, without further analysis, the nature and economic impact of the various kinds of businesses included in these data cannot be determined.

These limitations accepted, the following groups were selected for analysis: Salvadoran, Mexican, Filipino, Chinese (including persons from Hong Kong, Taiwan and China), Korean, Iranian, British, and native white. In both cities, at least a minimal number of each group is self-employed.

In addition, the various groups represent social and economic characteristics that the broader literature on ethnic economies has identified as relevant to patterns of self-employment. Most Mexican and Salvadoran immigrants are less-educated migrants who may lack legal status and hence are likely to have low rates of self-employment. Since Filipinos generally have high educational profiles and know English, they often find employment in existing firms.

Chinese, Koreans, and Iranians are noted for high rates of self-employment and developed ethnic economies. In New York and Los Angeles, all three groups are associated with garment firms and various professions. Both Chinese and Korean immigrants run restaurants and import-export firms. Koreans are active in retail sales, small grocery and liquor stores, and dry cleaners; Iranians are active in real estate.

British represent the "old" second generation whose parents arrived prior to the mid-20th century; they are not subject to racial discrimination. Finally, native-born whites provide a baseline for comparison between migrants and the majority population.

Findings

In general, most groups retained a fairly stable rate of self-employment between the first and second generations.

In Los Angeles, there was a trend towards increases in rates of self-employment among the 1.5 and second generations. Koreans and British were the only LA groups that revealed a generational reduction in rates of self-employment ([see Table 1 on pg 34](#)).

In New York, where the native-white rate of self-employment is considerably lower than Los Angeles, four of the seven migrant groups showed declines in self-employment. This can be seen among second-generation Filipinos, Chinese, Koreans, and British. However, the rates of decline for Koreans

and Chinese in New York were quite small, less than 0.5 percent.

Interestingly enough, all of the groups that saw intergenerational rates of decline in self-employment are highly educated, defined as having above 25 percent or more college graduates in the second generation. In this, the classic model (in which rates of self-employment are predicted to decline among the second generation) appears to most directly apply to groups with ample educational resources.

In contrast, increasing rates of self-employment over the generations may suggest that the second-generation-starters model applies to less well-educated groups like Mexicans and Salvadorans.

While highly educated, Iranians showed rates of intergenerational increase in self-employment in both New York and Los Angeles. Their experience conformed to the middleman model in which groups retain high levels of self-employment across generations.

Although levels of self-employment decreased in the second generation, Koreans and Chinese also revealed high rates of entrepreneurship in both generations, and could be classified as adhering to the middleman model as well.

Despite important exceptions, rates of self-employment among these immigrant groups rarely exceeded those of native-born whites for either generation, especially in New York. Hence, these groups may be making intergenerational progress towards the rate of self-employment associated with native-born whites. This pattern is consistent with the predictions of straight-line assimilation, where, with the passage of time, immigrants behave more like the native born.

There are some interesting gender differences as well. The women of several groups in both New York and Los Angeles revealed decreasing rates of self-employment, (including rather drastic reductions among Korean and British women in both New York and Los Angeles).

However, among Salvadoran and Filipino women in Los Angeles, there was a large generational increase in self-employment. For Salvadoran women, self-employment increased from 11.8 percent for the first generation to 17.6 percent for the second generation. Filipino women in Los Angeles nearly doubled their rate of self-employment from the first to second generation, from 7.6 percent to 14.1 percent.

City Differences

For all groups (immigrants, the second generation, and native-born whites), Los Angeles reveals significantly higher rates of self-employment than New York (15.8 percent for Los Angeles, versus 11.2 percent for New York). Of the seven groups, the average rate of self-employment for the first generation in New York was 8.5 percent. This is considerably below the rate of 11.2 percent for native-born whites.

Among the second generation in New York, the rate of self-employment rises to 13 percent. This figure exceeds the average for native-born whites in New York. However, excluding the tiny number of New York Iranians who showed a six-fold increase in self-employment between the first and second generations, the average rate of self-employment for the second generation in New York is 9.9 percent, still well below the average rate of self-employment for native whites in New York.

In contrast, the average rate of self-employment for first-generation Los Angeles immigrants is 16.7 percent, a figure greater than the 15.8 percent rate for native-born whites. Second-generation LA immigrants reveal a very small reduction in the self-employment rate, to 16.4 percent, still above the rate for native-born whites.

Hence, self-employment rates for both natives and the foreign-born are considerably higher in Los Angeles than New York. Moreover, in Los Angeles, these seven foreign-born nationalities and their descendents maintain rates of self-employment that, on average, exceed the self-employment rate of native whites.

In contrast, in New York, these seven groups and their descendants, on average, have lower rates of self-employment than do native-born whites. However, they show a greater generational increase in their rates of self-employment than is found in Los Angeles.

Conclusions

This preliminary examination of self-employment among the second generation suggests that rates of self-employment remain relatively stable over generations. Consequently, the classic model of immigrants' children pursuing professional work instead of self-employment — though relevant to Chinese, Koreans, and British in both New York and Los Angeles — may not apply to all groups in this study.

Conforming to the category of second-generation starters, second-generation Mexicans and Salvadorans, among those with the least-educated parents, showed consistent patterns of generational increase in self-employment. Second-generation Iranians conformed to the middleman model in which groups retain high levels of self-employment across generations.

On a positive note, there was little evidence of second-generation decline, the model that expects relatively low rates of education, self-employment, and income among the second generation as compared with the first generation.

Since the involvement of these populations in activities outside the United States cannot be determined from CPS data, there is no way to evaluate the extent to which they are involved in transnational entrepreneurship. However, case studies and anecdotal evidence do offer some evidence for the existence of this pattern.

There is also a clear indication of regional differences in rates of self-employment. A possible explanation for Los Angeles's higher rates of self-employment across all groups is population growth. From 1990 to 1998, the population of the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area increased nearly three times as rapidly (8.6 percent) as did that of the New York Metropolitan Area (2.9 percent). During that time period, Los Angeles added some 1,250,000 new residents while New York City (which is 22 percent larger) added only 559,000 new residents.

Future research might further consider additional reasons for different regional rates of self-employment. Are they due to regional economic trends, the characteristics of local migrant populations, or other differences between the two cities?

These results should be interpreted with caution because of the small sample size and the low average age of the second generation. That said, if rates of second-generation self-employment continue to grow, then their economic adaptation can be considered distinct from that of the children of the last great immigrant wave, whose actions were typified by the classic model.

Recent economic changes, including economic globalization and the decline in well-paid, unionized jobs, may encourage immigrants and their children to turn to self-employment in order to acquire higher wages and more control over working conditions than is available from jobs in existing firms and the public sector.

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Table 1. Self-Employment by First and Second Generation in Los Angeles and New York City

Los Angeles	ALL		(Age 20+)								Self-Employed							
Ethnic Group	N	N	M%	M%	F%	F%	Mean Age		% BA or more		N	N	All%	All%	M%	M%	F%	F%
	1st gen	2nd gen	1st gen	2nd gen	1st gen	2nd gen	1st gen	2nd gen	1st gen	2nd gen	1st gen	2nd gen	1st gen	2nd gen	1st gen	2nd gen	1st gen	2nd gen
Salvadoran	664	421	43	47	57	53	44.17	29.2	2.76	5.23	75	70	11.3	16.6	10.6	15.6	11.8	17.6
Filipino	402	254	41	47	59	53	50.3	34.1	60.45	29.53	36	24	9	9.4	11	12.6	7.6	14.1
Mexican	3,714	4,431	48	51	52	49	42.56	34.6	2.93	6.28	351	425	9.4	9.6	9.3	10.5	9.6	8.7
Chinese	373	186	46	47	54	53	52.38	34.2	43.97	55.38	48	25	12.9	13.4	11	15.9	14.8	11.2
Korean	345	80	44	49	56	51	51.98	29.1	40	55.41	108	20	31.3	25	33	33	29.7	17.1
Iranian	167	74	44	54	56	46	51.2	32.5	39.52	27.47	33	18	19.8	24.3	23.3	30	17	17.7
British	68	182	50	44	50	56	53.35	47.8	42.65	34.31	16	30	23.5	16.5	20.6	17.5	26.5	15.7
Native White	9,557		48		52		48.16		34.31		1,507		15.8		17.6		14	
Average of Ethnic Groups													16.7	16.4				

New York	ALL		Age 20+								Self-Employed							
Ethnic Group	N	N	M%	M%	F%	F%	Mean Age		% BA or more		N	N	All%	All%	M%	M%	F%	F%
	1st gen	2nd gen	1st gen	2nd gen	1st gen	2nd gen	1st gen	2nd gen	1st gen	2nd gen	1st gen	2nd gen	1st gen	2nd gen	1st gen	2nd gen	1st gen	2nd gen
Salvadoran	207	124	42	48	58	52	41.34	33	5.32	7.26	10	8	4.8	6.4	2.3	5.1	6.7	7.7
Filipino	204	63	42	57	58	43	49.06	30.5	67.15	36.5	15	2	7.4	3.2	7.6	2.8	7.6	3.7
Mexican	454	257	57	63	43	37	33.65	28	4.84	3.5	14	21	3.1	8.2	3.9	11.1	2.1	3.2
Chinese	388	213	49	41	51	59	49.46	36.2	40.5	57.51	27	14	7	6.6	7.4	6.8	6.6	6.4
Korean	189	53	46	40	54	60	46.4	29.9	41.8	54.72	35	9	18.5	17	19.5	23.8	17.7	12.5
Iranian	28	12	57	58	43	42	53.39	31.4	35.71	50	2	5	7.1	41.7	12.5	42.9	0	40
British	129	317	43	51	57	49	47.99	52.3	44.82	34.7	15	26	11.6	8.2	16.1	11.8	8.2	4.5
Native White	21,322		47		53		48.43		36.52		2,395		11.2		12.1		10.5	
Average of Ethnic Groups													8.5	13				

Notes: Second generation is 1.5 plus all later generations; China includes China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong

Source: Current Population Survey, 1998 to 2002



MIGRATION INFORMATION SOURCE

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Studying Second-Generation Immigrants: Methodological Challenges and Innovative Solutions

By Douglas D. Heckathorn
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October 1, 2006

How many second-generation children are not fluent in English? Which ones have earned college degrees? Why have members of the second generation chosen certain types of occupations and not others?

These questions are not only interesting to researchers but also relevant for policymakers. In order to study the US-born children of immigrants, commonly called the second generation, researchers need both demographic information and qualitative information that can only be learned through surveys and interviews.

Although imperfect, demographic information is readily available from the US Census Bureau. In contrast, researchers have no easy "list" they can use to find and contact second-generation immigrants they would like to survey or interview.

The first part of this article will discuss Census Bureau data and the second part will examine ways to survey and interview the second generation, with a particular focus on a relatively new methodology called respondent-driven sampling (RDS).

Demographic Information

The US Census Bureau provides three types of data relevant to studying the second generation: the decennial census, the American Community Survey (ACS), and the Current Population Survey (CPS).

The decennial census, last conducted in 2000, aimed to reach every person in the United States, regardless of their status. The 2000 census asked respondents for their country of birth but did not ask for their parents' country of birth. As a result, the 2000 census did not identify the number of adults born in the United States who have one or more foreign-born parents. Therefore, the 2000 census can only tell researchers about second-generation members who still live with their parents; the majority of this population is under age 18.

On a positive note, the 2000 census provides detailed information about the children's parents. The education level and income of parents, for instance, can help researchers understand trends among the youngest members of the second generation.

Meant to provide up-to-date statistical "snapshots" of communities between decennial census years, ACS was fully rolled out in 2005 and will be conducted each year through 2010 and beyond. ACS, which is sent to 250,000 addresses per month, does not have as broad a sample size as the decennial census but will have collected enough information by the summer of 2010 to report data on individual census tracts, the smallest geographic unit.

Like the decennial census, ACS also does not ask for parents' country of birth and thus can only be used to gather information about children of immigrants who live with their parents.

The following information about the second generation is available from 2000 census and 2005 ACS data:

- Where the children of immigrants and their parents live (state and certain levels of geography for 2000 census; areas with populations of 65,000 or more for 2005 ACS)
- Ages of children and parents
- Country of origin of children's parents
- Year in which the parents arrived in the United States
- Level of self-reported English ability of the children and their parents
- Grade level of children
- Parents' employment
- Parents' occupation
- Parents' education level
- Parents' income level and whether they are above or below the federal poverty line

CPS, specifically the March supplement, does ask respondents about their parents' country of birth. This makes it possible for researchers to obtain information about members of the second generation of any age. However, second-generation adults who have established their own households cannot be "matched" with their immigrant parents, and thus nothing can be said about parents' characteristics.

It must also be noted that CPS surveys only 50,000 households per month — a far smaller sample than ACS. Consequently, data can only be analyzed at the national level for any given year. By combining CPS years together, the sample size can be increased and researchers can conduct analysis at the state or large metro area level. However, the sample size would still be too small to examine characteristics of, for example, second-generation Dominican adults in a particular suburb.

The following information about the second generation is available from the CPS March supplement:

- Age
- Marital status
- Employment
- Occupation
- Education level
- Income level and whether the individual is above or below the federal poverty line
- Welfare status

Interview and Survey Methodology

If a researcher is interested in surveying foreign-born Chinese parents and their US-born children in a particular New York City neighborhood, census data can only be so helpful. By law, the Census Bureau must protect and keep confidential the information respondents provide. In other words, researchers cannot obtain from the Census Bureau the addresses or phone numbers of those who meet the research criteria.

Indeed, a challenge to the study of second-generation immigrants is the lack of a comprehensive public list, termed a "sampling frame," from which representative samples can be drawn.

In contrast, general population surveys can draw on telephone records, property tax roles, voter registrations, and other public lists of residents or residences. Similarly, studies of special groups such as physicians or lawyers can use lists of those who hold professional licenses. However, no comparable lists exist for immigrants, including the second generation.

Of course, lists can be constructed based on general population surveys, but in some settings this is infeasible because the target population (e.g., immigrants from a particular country or region) is such a small part of the general population that costs would be prohibitive. Another reason, also relevant to

immigrants and their children, is that some groups' social networks are difficult for outsiders to penetrate.

For all these reasons, immigrants are an example of what is now termed a "hidden" or "hard-to-reach" population. The importance of developing means for sampling these populations has been recognized for several decades because these populations are important to many research areas, including arts and culture, public policy, and public health.

Sampling hard-to-reach populations has its problems. One approach relies on institutional records to find population members. However, using such records has limitations because institutions never sample randomly.

Voluntary associations, such as social clubs and professional associations, tend to oversample the more fortunate within a population. For example, in a study of jazz musicians, union members earned 50 percent to 100 percent more than nonmembers, and they were nearly 10 years older.

In contrast, it is well known that involuntary institutions, such as prisons and jails, tend to oversample the dispossessed. Similarly, location-based samples are valid only for geographically concentrated populations. Samples of ethnic communities, for example, miss those who live in other communities.

Despite these limitations, samples drawn from an institution or location provide a valid statistical basis for generalizing to the entire institution or location. However, this provides a valid sample only of that nonrandom portion of the population that is accessible via institutions or locations.

The second approach to sampling hidden populations relies on social networks, as in snowball sampling (referrals from initial subjects generate additional subjects) and other chain-referral methods. These methods are appealing because respondents are reached through connections to relatives, friends, and acquaintances, and hence the sample can reach even those who lack institutional affiliations or those who reside outside of ethnic communities.

Chain-referral methods also tend to reduce nonresponse bias, because respondents are referred by those with whom they already have trusting relationships. This is especially important when studying vulnerable or stigmatized groups, such as unauthorized immigrants. Consequently, network-based samples have more comprehensive coverage than institutional or location samples.

However, these samples have been seen as convenience rather than probability sampling methods due to biases inherent in snowball-type methods, such as oversampling those who are well-connected (i.e., those with larger personal networks), since more recruitment paths lead to them. Biases also result when some groups recruit more effectively, and hence their distinctive recruitment patterns shape the sample.

Owing to these biases, results from a chain-referral sample cannot be validly generalized to the population from which the sample was drawn. Hence the dilemma: statistical validity with limited coverage of the target population, or broader coverage but conclusions that cannot be generalized.

Respondent-Driven Sampling: A New Approach

Respondent-driven sampling (RDS) resolves this dilemma by converting chain-referral into a probability sampling method, thereby providing the means for combining broad coverage of the target population with the ability to generalize study results to the population from which the sample was drawn. This method has been used to study jazz musicians and Vietnam War era draft resisters, and in more than 20 other countries to study intravenous drug users, gay men, prostitutes, and street youth.

In RDS, as in other snowball-type samples, respondents recruit peers, who then recruit their friends and acquaintances who qualify for entry into the sample, who in return recruit their peers, so that the sample expands through successive waves of peer recruitment.

Tests of RDS have shown that if referral chains are sufficiently long — that is, if the chain-referral

process consists of enough waves or cycles of recruitment — the composition of the final sample with respect to key characteristics and behaviors will become independent of the seeds from which it began. To create long chains, respondents need to be recruited by their peers rather than by researchers. Also, the researchers need to set a recruitment quota so a few respondents cannot do all the recruiting.

The researchers keep track of who recruited whom and their numbers of social contacts. A mathematical model of the recruitment process then weights the sample to compensate for nonrandom recruitment patterns, thereby producing statistically unbiased results.

RDS analyses can also provide information on the social network connections among respondents. In the case of the Chicago Latino data set, compiled by Jesus Ramirez-Valles in 2004, it is possible to measure immigrant groups' insularity (see Table 1). Here insularity is measured by the homophily index (the degree to which people tend to resemble one another).

Table 1. Recruitment by Immigration Status (Recruitment Count; Transition Probability)				
Immigration Status of Person who Recruited	Immigration Status of Recruit			Total
	First Generation	Second Generation	Native	
First Generation (number)	172	34	15	221
	77.8%	15.4%	6.8%	100%
Second Generation (number)	28	16	7	51
	54.9%	31.4%	13.7%	100%
Native (number)	9	14	11	34
	26.5%	41.2%	32.4%	100%
Total Distribution of Recruits	209	64	33	306
Sample Distribution	68.3%	20.9%	10.8%	100%
Equilibrium	67.1%	21.7%	11.1%	100%
Mean Network Size	7.1	6.5	9.2	
Homophily	0.316	0.099	0.26	
Population Estimate	67.6%	23.9%	8.6%	100%
Standard Error	3.4%	1.9%	0.0%	

The first generation is the most insular, with a homophily index of .32. This indicates that 32 percent of the time they form a tie to another member of the first generation, and the rest of the time form ties consistent with random mixing (i.e., forming ties without regard to immigration status). Natives have a similar index of .26, so they are also substantially insular. In contrast, the second generation has a minimal index of .10, indicating that it serves as a bridge connecting the first generation to natives because 90 percent of their ties are formed irrespective of immigration status.

The applicability of RDS to study an immigrant group depends on the density of ties through which they are linked. For studies of the second generation, the empirical question is whether ties among them are dense enough to sustain a robust chain-referral process; and, if not, members of the first generation or natives may also have to be included in the sampling frame to provide indirect links among members of the second generation. Establishing a sense of trust, important in other RDS studies, will be equally important in RDS studies of immigrant groups.

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Becoming American/Becoming New Yorkers: The Second Generation in a Majority Minority City

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October 1, 2006

Immigration has profoundly transformed the population of metropolitan New York, just as it has the populations of other gateway cities like Los Angeles and Miami. According to the March 2005 Current Population Survey, the foreign born now make up 36 percent of the city's population and the second generation another 20 percent. Native-born whites with native-born parents make up only 20 percent of the city's population. Roughly 70,000 new legally admitted immigrants arrived in the most recent year on record, 2003.

In short, New York City is overwhelmingly a city of minorities and immigrants. Unlike its main rival, Los Angeles, where Mexicans alone make up 40 percent of the immigrant population, New York receives immigrants from all of the world's sending regions — including Europe and the Caribbean as well as Latin American and Asia.

This article explores how growing up in and around New York has affected the experiences of young, second-generation adults in school and on the job, how they feel about their progress, and where they think they fit within American society. Given that they come largely from non-European ethnic origins, we ask what it means to grow up in a "majority minority" city.

Methodology

This large-scale study of the adult children of immigrants began in 1999. Telephone interviews were conducted with random samples of 3,415 men and women aged 18 to 32 living in New York City (except Staten Island) or the inner suburban areas of Nassau and Westchester Counties, New York, and northeastern New Jersey; in addition, about 10 percent of respondents were interviewed at greater length in person.

Respondents' parents can be divided into five groups: Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union; Chinese immigrants from the mainland, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the Chinese diaspora; immigrants from the Dominican Republic; immigrants from the English-speaking countries of the West Indies (including Guyana but excluding Haiti and those of Indian origin); and immigrants from Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru (subsequently designated South Americans). These groups composed 44 percent of the 2000 second-generation population in the defined sample area.

For comparative purposes, native-born people with native-born parents — whites, blacks, and Puerto Ricans — were also interviewed. About two-thirds of second-generation respondents were born in the United States, mostly in New York City, while one-third were born abroad but arrived in the United States by age 12 and had lived in the country for at least 10 years, except for those from the former Soviet Union, some of whom arrived past the age of 12.

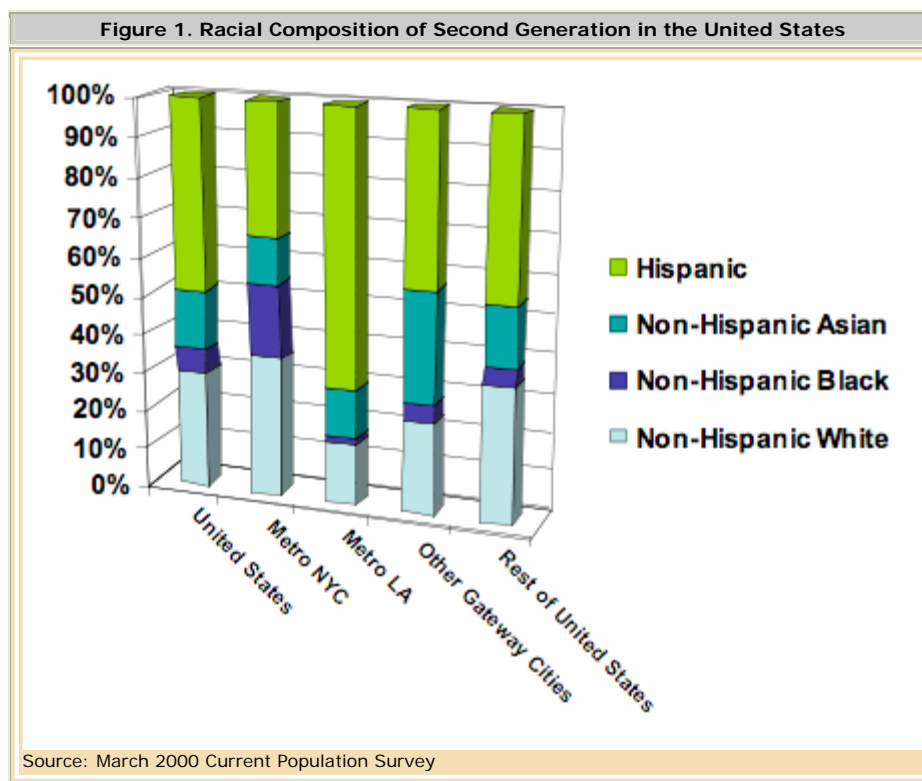
In addition, six ethnographies were fielded at institutions and sites where second generation and native young people were likely to encounter each other, including a City University of New York (CUNY) community college, a large public service employees union, a retail store, several Protestant

churches, and community political organizations. Finally, a substantial number of those giving in-depth interviews were reinterviewed about their experiences during the economic downturn in the wake of September 11, 2001.

Together, these data sources provide the best picture yet available of the life situations of a representative cross-section of the major racial and ethnic groups in metropolitan New York.

Who Are the Second Generation in New York?

Compared to Los Angeles County and other gateway cities like San Francisco, Chicago, Houston, and Miami, the native-born children with immigrant parents living in New York City are less likely to be Hispanic, though New York is still home to many second-generation Hispanics (see Figure 1).



The Asian and non-Hispanic white shares of its second generation resemble those of the nation as a whole, while New York also has a large, black second generation. Note that Figure 1 shows that metropolitan New York is home to many white children of immigrants, unlike Los Angeles.

For fiscal year 2000, what was then the Immigration and Naturalization Service (now reorganized within the Department of Homeland Security as US Citizenship and Immigration Services) reported that the top 10 countries sending immigrants to New York City (a total of 85,000) were the Dominican Republic, China, Jamaica, Haiti, the Ukraine, Bangladesh, Ecuador, India, and Russia.

The large flow of black and Hispanic immigrants into New York has strongly affected the city's traditional "minority" groups. In 2000, the foreign born and their children constituted more than half of all blacks and Hispanics and almost all of the Asian population in the city.

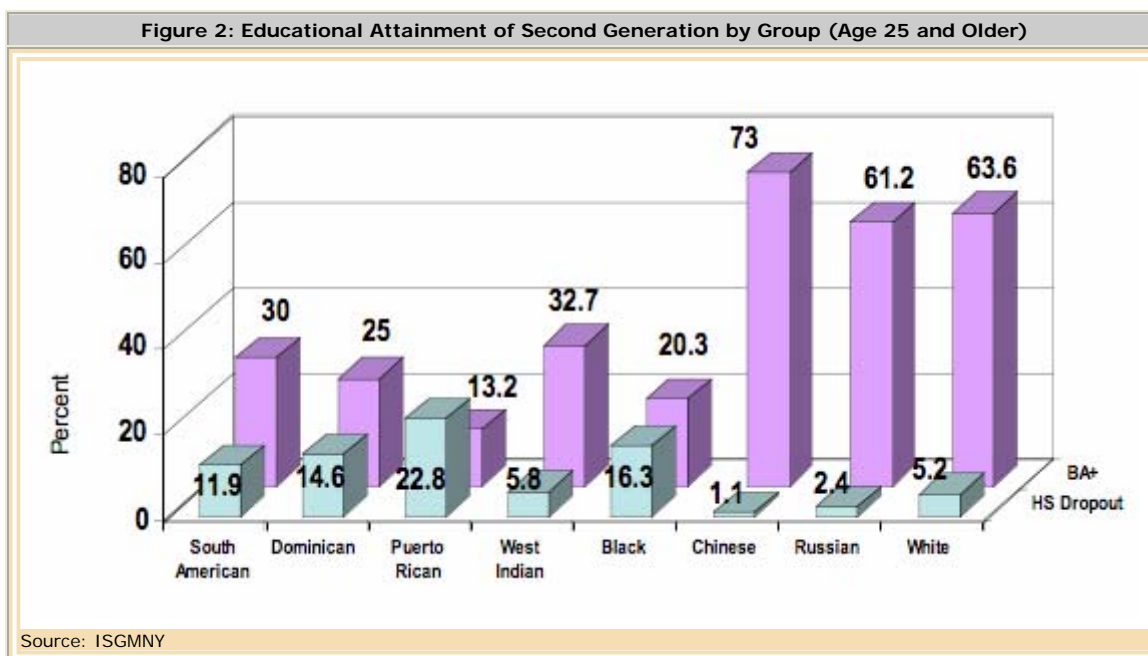
Of course, this is a tradition in New York. Between 1892 and 1924, thousands of immigrants arrived at Ellis Island every day. In 1910, two out of five New Yorkers were born abroad, mostly in Europe, but also in the West Indies in the Caribbean. In 1920, a quarter of the city's black population was West

Indian. Thus, both the white and black residents of New York have a strong immigrant tradition.

In short, when new immigrants and their children encounter white Americans in New York, they do so along a continuum, not across a sharp boundary between nonwhite immigrants and native whites, as they do in other immigrant destinations, such as Southern California, Texas, and Florida.

School and Work

Among the older respondents in the survey, the native whites, Russian Jews, and Chinese were significantly more likely to have completed a four-year college degree or to have attained a post-graduate education than the other groups; they were significantly less likely to have dropped out of high school (see Figure 2). Considering that some young whites in metropolitan New York are recent college graduates moving to the city to begin their careers, these two second-generation groups are clearly performing on a par with native whites.



On this score, the two native minority groups are faring the worst, with Puerto Ricans at the bottom. Indeed, more of the Puerto Rican respondents are high school dropouts than are college graduates, and the numbers are nearly equal among native blacks.

Even among Dominicans, who are doing the least well of the second-generation groups, the ratio of college graduates to dropouts is more favorable than among the two native minority groups. The educational profiles of the South Americans and West Indians, while not as strong as those of the Chinese and Russians, are clearly stronger than those of the native minorities.

This pattern remained surprisingly strong after controlling for parents' education, gender, and age, in part because the parents of Puerto Ricans had somewhat higher levels of education than parents of Dominican and South American respondents. Also, the education levels among Chinese parents were far lower than those of native white parents. Since Russian parents were well educated, the educational success of their children was hardly surprising.

Refining this analysis, it was also apparent that the quality of the colleges attended by our respondents, as indicated by *US News and World Report* college rankings, also varied systematically. This ranking categorizes national and regional schools into tiers of one (highest) to four (lowest).

In the study sample, 23 percent of the Chinese, 16 percent of Russian Jews, and 38 percent of native

whites attended "national tier-one" colleges, which include Ivy League universities, compared to only six percent of native blacks, eight percent of Puerto Ricans, seven percent of Dominicans and seven percent of West Indians.

By contrast, 22 percent of college-educated Dominicans, 38 percent of native African Americans, 35 percent of Puerto Ricans and 39 percent of West Indians attended "regional tier-four" schools; only four percent of Chinese and nine percent of Russian Jewish respondents went to such colleges. Thus, the quality as well as the quantity of the education varied greatly across the groups of respondents.

The study also compared the occupation and industry profile of the respondents with those of their parents and the city as a whole. As one might expect, the parents of second-generation respondents were highly concentrated in ethnic "niches" and segmented by gender. For example, 38 percent of the fathers of Chinese respondents worked in restaurants, while 31 percent of the mothers of the West Indian respondents worked as nurses or nurse's aides or in housekeeping in healthcare or nursing home settings.

But the children were making their way upward in the labor force by fleeing these niches in favor of the mainstream economy. Only three percent of the Chinese male respondents worked in restaurants, while nine percent of West Indian female respondents worked in health care. Other second-generation groups moved even further from their parents' industries and occupations.

While economic opportunity has pulled the second generation away from their parents' jobs, they also had a distaste for stereotypical "ethnic" occupations. When asked what job he would never take, one Chinese respondent replied, "Delivering Chinese food."

Even respondents with less education have largely exited their parents' employment niches. The drop off between generations was particularly striking in manufacturing employment. While many fathers, and particularly mothers, worked for manufacturing companies (often in the garment industry), fewer second-generation respondents worked in manufacturing than was true of their overall age group in the metropolitan economy. As one Colombian respondent put it when asked if he would consider taking his father's job, "Hey, I don't do that factory thing."

Where did they work? Many have been attracted to New York's large finance, insurance, and real estate (FIRE) sector. Indeed, Chinese and Russian respondents were more likely to be in this sector than native whites or New York City residents as a whole. The sector also employed many South American respondents. Interestingly, every second-generation group was more likely than their parents to work in FIRE except West Indians, where the parents had already made good inroads into this prosperous sector of the New York economy.

For the most part, however, second-generation respondents held the kinds of jobs that most young people find. Given their age and the era in which they entered the labor market, the most likely occupations were retail sales or clerical work for every group except native whites, where they were the second- and third-most common after managerial jobs.

Intergroup Contact and Conflict

Because minority and second-generation immigrant young people dominate their age cohort, our second-generation respondents had a great deal of contact with one another but sometimes had little contact with native-white New Yorkers. Recalling their experiences of discrimination in the multiethnic worlds in which they grew up, members of the second generation often found themselves at odds not with whites but with other nearby groups.

While the second generation was less likely to live in first-generation immigrant neighborhoods than their parents, many still lived in such areas. Since blacks and whites are the most segregated groups in metropolitan New York, the West Indian and native black respondents were more segregated than others, living near African Americans in central Brooklyn and southeast Queens, as well as in the north Bronx; Roosevelt, Long Island; and Jersey City, New Jersey.

Dominicans remained heavily concentrated in Washington Heights, with lesser concentrations on

Manhattan's Lower East Side, Sunset Park and Bushwick in Brooklyn, and Elmhurst and Jackson Heights in Queens. The South Americans mostly lived in more middle-class areas in Jackson Heights, Queens, and in Jersey City. Although many Chinese immigrants still lived in Chinatown, Chinese second-generation respondents were spreading through South Brooklyn, and Corona, Elmhurst, and Flushing in Queens. Russian Jews were concentrated in the Brighton Beach section of Brooklyn.

Table 1 summarizes responses that our survey and follow-up interviews gave to a series of questions about experiences of prejudice and discrimination. Blacks and West Indians reported facing the highest levels of discrimination from the police and while shopping, looking for work, or working; Hispanic groups were not far behind. The Chinese, Russians, and whites experienced the least discrimination in these realms.

Table 1. Second Generation's Experience of Discrimination by Group

	Work	School	Store	Police
South Americans	19.8	17.2	41	22.4
Dominicans	18.9	13.9	37.5	25.1
Puerto Ricans	25.8	15.2	40.5	22.4
West Indians	30	17.3	43.5	35
Native Blacks	35.1	14.8	55.5	33.7
Chinese	13.8	25.1	40.9	13.6
Russians	7.8	11	12	8.4

Source: Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, Waters, and Holdaway

Chinese respondents reported experiencing higher levels of prejudice in school than any other group. In-depth interviews indicated that this experience did not stem from interaction with whites but with African Americans. The Chinese also reported experiencing relatively high levels of prejudice in stores.

Respondents were also asked whether parents had ever talked with them about discrimination against their group. Three-quarters of native blacks said their parents had talked with them about discrimination.

But about two-thirds of the Russian and Chinese respondents also reported talking to their parents about discrimination. Even though the Russians and the Chinese were doing the best in terms of educational attainment and labor market outcomes, they were also the most likely to spontaneously tell in-depth interviewers that discrimination had been an impediment to their success.

The in-depth interviews also revealed that native blacks and West Indians, as well as the Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, and some South Americans, reported that whites often discriminated against them or showed prejudice in public spaces, such as on the streets or in stores. These experiences included police harassing them, "driving while black," whites moving across the street to avoid passing near them, and store clerks following them to make sure they do not shoplift.

In contrast to this "minority experience" in public settings, Chinese and upwardly mobile black and Hispanic respondents often met a more personal form of discrimination from whites while attending school or working. This "face-to-face" prejudice was more common for better-off respondents who leave their neighborhoods, shop in more upscale stores, and work in predominantly white settings. As a result, they were more likely to encounter, and compete with, native whites.

Many of the upwardly mobile respondents reported that they needed to try harder when encountering what was in effect a "glass ceiling." Instead of disengaging, they reacted with increased effort and a sustained focus on success.

Finally, given that native whites with native parents make up no more than one in five New Yorkers, many members of the second generation encountered other immigrant and minority-group members in ways that involved conflict, prejudice, and discrimination. They often reacted to this type of conflict with distancing behaviors, as when West Indians try to distance themselves from African Americans or Dominicans seek to distinguish themselves from Puerto Ricans, or when Chinese and Russians distance themselves from blacks and Hispanics of various backgrounds.

Institutional Impact

The struggle for minority empowerment established new points at which native minority group members could enter mainstream institutions and created new, minority-run institutions. Because respondents operate in contexts where "American" means African American or Puerto Rican, they have developed ethnic solidarity with native blacks or Hispanics and received signals that they would be easily accepted into "America."

This dynamic has put native blacks and Puerto Ricans in the strange position of managing the ethnic succession of second-generation individuals in colleges, labor unions, and political groups while continuing to see themselves as outsiders to these power structures. Although community-based social services or "second chance" entry points into white institutions were initially meant for blacks and Puerto Ricans, the second generation is well situated to take advantage of them.

Two ethnographic tales illustrate this point. One, written by sociologist Alex Trillo, involved a Puerto Rican studies class at a community college in Queens. Founded in the late 1960s in the first wave of open admissions to the City University of New York, this college was designed to be particularly sensitive to New York City's Hispanic population, then overwhelmingly Puerto Rican.

A Cuban-American professor taught this class to students who were Colombian, Ecuadoran, Peruvian, and Dominican. In other words, an immigrant professor was using the Puerto Rican experience to teach first- and second-generation Latino immigrants what it means to be American.

Another ethnographer, Amy Foerster, studied a public-employee union that had been founded in the 1960s by Jewish radicals for a largely African-American membership with origins mostly in the American South. Today, its leaders are mostly African Americans who rose through the civil rights movement, but the rank-and-file members have become overwhelmingly first- and second-generation West Indians.

At a union meeting celebrating its members' Caribbean heritage, they shouted out recognition for each of the various islands. Listening to this response, the African-American leader asked plaintively, "Isn't anyone here from Alabama?"

Originally designed to advance native minorities, this community college and social service union are now "Americanizing" and "ethnicizing" immigrants and their children. In quite practical material and symbolic terms, they are promoting upward mobility through skills, credentials, and financial support. As they make educational progress, especially compared to native blacks and Puerto Ricans, second-generation West Indians, Dominicans, and South Americans are well positioned to inherit leadership positions within minority institutions and gain greater access to mainstream institutions. It seems becoming identified as a member of a racial minority can have tangible benefits for second-generation New Yorkers.

Creating Hybrid Minority Cultures

Finally, respondents used the term "American" in two different ways. The first was to describe themselves as American compared to the culture, values, and behaviors of their parents. For example, they were not inclined to endorse physical punishment of children. They definitely thought the United States had influenced them to approach the world differently than their parents.

They were not inclined to return to their parents' home countries, where they sometimes found conditions to be too primitive. "I couldn't live there, the electricity goes off at eight o'clock!" said a

respondent whose family came from the rural part of a Caribbean island.

But they also used the term to distinguish themselves and their peers from the "American" native whites they encountered at school, the office, in public places, and on television. They saw those "Americans" as part of a different world that would never include them because of their race/ethnicity.

Many respondents sidestepped this ambivalence about being American by describing themselves as "New Yorkers." This identity was open to them even as blacks, Hispanics, or Asians, and it embraced them as members of the second generation.

A "New York" identity reflects the dynamic cultural creativity familiar to them, but not necessarily the larger white society. "New Yorkers," for the respondents, could come from any immigrant or native minority group. Perhaps the individual changes necessary to become a "New Yorker" are not nearly so great as those required to become an "American."

As immigration continues to transform the United States, New York may serve as a positive model of creative multiculturalism and inclusion. While some skeptics might argue New York is unique and not likely to be replicated other places, New York, as the quintessential immigrant city, is at its core very American.

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The Second Generation in Early Adulthood: New Findings from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study

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During the last four decades, a large new "second generation" formed by children of immigrants born in the United States or brought at an early age from abroad has emerged. Most of its members are still in school, but many entered adulthood during the 1990s and the first years of this century.

According to data from the 2005 Current Population Survey (CPS), that mushrooming post-1960 population already totaled more than 30 million people, including over a quarter of all immigrants in the United States who arrived as children under 13 (a "1.5" generation totaling more than 9 million), and another 21 million born in the United States since the 1960s who had either one or two foreign-born parents (see [Table 1](#)).

The median ages of virtually all of those US-born children of immigrants from Latin America and Asia range between 9 and 13 years old. In other words, they consist still largely of children. But as their presence is already being felt in the nation's public schools today, it will be felt increasingly tomorrow in higher education, in labor markets, and at the ballot box.

The 2000 Census, like its predecessors in 1980 and 1990, omitted questions about the nationality of parents, thus preventing a full description of the size and characteristics of today's second generation. CPS, although it contains questions on ancestry and country of birth, does not collect data on language use or proficiency. The survey does not provide a large enough sample to analyze smaller immigrant populations, or to make comparisons based on national origin and generational cohorts in particular metropolitan areas. However, combining data from more than one survey year can make some analyses and comparisons possible.

The Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS)

The Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS), a decade-long panel survey conducted in San Diego, California, and Miami/Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, was designed to accomplish what government data alone cannot do: examine in-depth the interaction between immigrant parents and children and the evolution of the young from adolescence into early adulthood in these two metropolitan areas of immigrant concentration.

In total, 5,262 students took part in the first CILS survey in 1992 when they were in the 8th and 9th grades. With an average age of 14, they represented 77 different nationalities: Cubans, Haitians, Colombians, Nicaraguans, Dominicans, and Jamaicans in Florida, and Mexicans, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Chinese, Cambodians, and Laotians in California. Jointly, the largest nine nationalities in the CILS sample represented over three-fourths of total immigration to the United States during the 1990s.

The group was surveyed again in 1995-1996 as they completed high school (with 81.5 percent responding). At the same time, more than 2,400 separate, face-to-face interviews were conducted with their immigrant parents in both regions, obtaining detailed information on their backgrounds,

present socioeconomic situation, and outlooks for the future (see [Table 2](#) for some of the results of these 1995-1996 parental interviews).

The most recent survey took place in 2001-2003, by which time respondents had reached an average age of 24 (ranging from 23 to 27 years old). While most still resided in Southern California and South Florida, the rest were located in more than 30 states and even in military bases overseas. This survey retrieved data on 3,564 original respondents, representing 84 percent of the 1995-1996 group. In 2002-2003, 55 in-depth, open-ended interviews were additionally conducted with members of the CILS sample living in the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale metropolitan area, and with 134 respondents living in the San Diego area and elsewhere in California.

Results from the third survey represent the most compelling current evidence of how the adaptation of the second generation actually occurs. Such outcomes comprise educational attainment, language proficiency and preference, family incomes, employment and unemployment, marriage and parenthood, religion, and arrests and incarceration.

The results are broken down by major nationalities because of the wide differences among them. These differences, which show remarkable continuity from those observed in the two previous surveys taken during the adolescent years, demonstrate the resilient influence of parental human capital — meaning the skills and education of the parents — along with family structure and how the parents are incorporated into their communities.

The parents' "modes of incorporation" are defined by (1) the availability of official resettlement assistance for some groups; (2) legal entry but no assistance and a generally neutral reception for others; and (3) high levels of racial prejudice against certain immigrants, combined with governmental hostility toward groups regarded as sources of illegal immigration.

While actual modes of incorporation vary across families and over time, the relevant column in [Table 2](#) provides a summary measure (positive, neutral, negative) of the actual contexts encountered by different nationalities in the mid-1990s.

Educational Attainment

In Southern California, as shown in the first columns of [Table 3](#), the greatest educational disadvantage is found among children of Mexican immigrants and Laotian and Cambodian refugees.

By their mid-20s, these groups had achieved less than 14 years of education on average and close to 40 percent failed to go beyond a high school diploma. These results are far worse than those found in the South Florida groups and reflect the difficulties faced by children coming from families with very low levels of human capital.

A positive governmental context of reception for Cambodian and Laotian refugees did not suffice to lift their second generation to a position of educational advantage. In fact, the proportion of children who achieved no more than a high school education is about the same as among their parents (as shown previously in [Table 2](#)).

In the case of Mexican youths, low levels of parental human capital, combined with a negative mode of incorporation — that is, with a history of exploitation and discrimination, a high proportion of undocumented immigrants, and the prevalence of negative stereotypes — produced high rates of school abandonment and low mean levels of academic attainment. However, in this case, the proportion that did not complete high school is only about half the figure among their parents.

View Related Tables

- [Table 1. The New Second Generation at a Glance, 2005](#)
- [Table 2. Human Capital, Modes of Incorporation, Present Situation, and Expectations of Immigrant Parents, 1995-1996](#)
- [Table 3. Key Outcomes of Second-Generation Adaptation in Early Adulthood, 2002-2003 \(Southern California and South Florida\)](#)

This and other results indicate that Mexican-American young men and women have made considerable progress relative to the adult first generation. However, having started from such a position of disadvantage, they still could not match the educational attainment of other second-generation or native-parentage youths (see [Table 3](#)).

At the other end, the combination of high parental human capital, a high proportion of intact families, and a neutral context of reception (as defined above), led second-generation Chinese and other Asians to extraordinary levels of educational achievement, only matched in South Florida by the offspring of upper-middle-class Cuban exiles who attended private schools. Vietnamese youths also did quite well despite low average levels of parental education.

In South Florida, all nationalities in the CILS sample managed to complete an average of 14 years of education or two years past high school graduation. Since 50 percent of the sample is still enrolled in college or vocational schools, this average can be expected to increase over time.

While variations among nationalities in average education are minor, those pertaining to school abandonment or lack of post-high school education are not. Just five percent of this sample dropped out of high school, but one-fifth quit after completing it.

Those who failed to pursue their studies range from a low of 7.5 percent among children of upper-middle-class Cuban families (those who had graduated from private high schools) to a high of 26 percent among Nicaraguans. As [Table 3](#) shows, Cuban children who attended public schools had much lower levels of educational attainment than their more privileged compatriots.

Importantly, the two black immigrant minorities in South Florida, Haitians and West Indians, were not particularly disadvantaged in this dimension. Thus, despite below-average academic performance during high school, 85 percent of Haitian children managed to graduate, and their mean educational attainment is only slightly below the sample average.

These results reproduce, in all the basics, those observed earlier on, showing both the importance of early academic performance and of national differences in modes of incorporation on educational achievement.

Language Preference and Proficiency

Language is a fundamental part of the adaptation process and, in this respect, the assimilative power of American society is overwhelming. Two-thirds of second-generation youths in both California and Florida indicated that they prefer to speak English only (see [Table 3](#)).

The bilingual alternative, speaking English and another language, was endorsed by a substantial number, including the young adult children of Mexicans (56 percent), Laotians and Cambodians (53 percent), and Vietnamese (43 percent). The two categories combined (English only and English plus another language) exceed 97 percent, leaving those choosing a foreign language as a tiny minority (less than 3 percent).

A different pattern emerges, however, when respondents are asked in what language they would like to raise their own children. In this case, 68 percent of youths in California and 82 percent of those in Miami indicated a preference for bilingualism. Whether that preference can be fulfilled and they can successfully raise a bilingual third generation —the grandchildren of the adults who immigrated to the United States — remains to be seen.

Still, second-generation adults understand the benefits of bilingualism, even if only a minority has opted to sustain it themselves. Exceptions are children of West Indian and Filipino immigrants, a majority of whom prefer to raise their offspring as English monolinguals. The result is not surprising since English is the predominant or official language in those countries.

Family Incomes

Family incomes only partially reflect respondents' personal earnings, since the majority of these youths still lives with their parents; the reported figures in **Table 3** are the sum of parents' and children's incomes. Still, these figures are important because they indicate that, on average, children of immigrants in South Florida live in relatively comfortable economic circumstances. Since parents generally help their offspring when they become independent, this favorable situation may be expected to continue in the future.

Seen from this perspective, national differences in family income are quite important. At one end of the spectrum are children of upper-middle-class Cuban exiles who, according to the last CILS survey, enjoy a median family income of \$70,395 per year compared with \$26,974 for Haitian-American families. These figures can be compared with the median household income for the overall population of Miami/Ft. Lauderdale in 2000, \$38,362.

While 46.5 percent of Cubans who went to private school and 25.2 percent of those who attended public schools have incomes over \$75,000, only 11.5 percent of West Indians and just 4.9 percent of Haitians do. The two mostly black groups concentrate in the bottom income categories, with about one-third receiving annual incomes of less than \$20,000. This is particularly noteworthy since, as seen in **Table 3**, most of these youths did manage to graduate from high school and achieve at least average levels of education.

In California, average second-generation family incomes are lower than those in South Florida, but the sample contains the "richest" nationality among all major immigrant groups considered — Filipino Americans, whose average family income is over \$64,000 per year. They are followed by Chinese Americans and other Asians (primarily Korean Americans).

At the other end are the same groups that lagged behind in education. The very low incomes of Mexican-American families (the median annual income is just over \$30,000) reflect again the many handicaps faced by both parents and their young adult children. The still lower figures for Laotians and Cambodians (the median annual family income is just over \$25,000) reinforce the conclusion that governmental assistance did not suffice to lift these groups out of poverty.

Only six percent of Mexicans and only eight percent of Laotians and Cambodians have family incomes above \$75,000, reproducing the situation of the most disadvantaged second-generation youths in South Florida.

Unemployment

Figures on unemployment range greatly: three percent or less among Chinese, Colombians, and private-school Cubans; almost 10 percent among West Indians, Laotians, and Cambodians; 14 percent among Vietnamese; and 17 percent among Haitians.

To put these figures into perspective, they can be compared with the 4.3 percent unemployment rate among the working-age population of Miami/Ft. Lauderdale in 2000, and an even lower rate of 3.0 percent in San Diego County in 2000.

Again, it is significant that high unemployment rates are found among children of black immigrants in South Florida, despite their relatively high educational achievement.

Marriage and Parenthood

The dictum that the "rich get richer and the poor get children" is well supported by the results of the 2002-2003 CILS survey. Only three percent of upper-middle-class Cuban Americans had children by early adulthood, while none of the Chinese Americans had children at the time of the survey (when they were 24 years old on average).

The rate then rises to about 10 percent for second-generation Vietnamese; over 15 percent for Colombians, public-school Cubans, and Filipinos; 25 percent for Haitians, West Indians, and Laotians

and Cambodians; and a remarkable 41 percent among Mexicans.

Thus second-generation groups with the lowest average education and incomes are those most burdened, in their transitions to adulthood, by the need to support children at an early age. The overall picture is compelling, pointing toward the cumulative effects of structural disadvantages in the first generation.

Arrests and Incarceration

Still more telling are differences in rates of arrest and incarceration (**shown in Table 3**). Compared with an arrest rate of 6.4 percent among persons 18 and over in Miami/Ft. Lauderdale and a crime index of 7.6 percent for this metropolitan area in 2000, only three percent of Cubans who attended private schools were incarcerated during the preceding six years. The figure then climbs steadily to six percent among public school Cubans and Colombians, seven percent among Haitians, and 8.5 percent among West Indians.

The highest and lowest rates of incarceration are found in California: exactly zero percent of Chinese Americans compared with 11 percent of Mexican Americans. Second-generation Laotians and Cambodians are not particularly high in these statistics, indicating that their poverty does not lead to confrontations with the legal system as often as some other groups.

Predictably, differences among males are still wider. Those incarcerated for a crime range from three percent among private-school Cubans to about 10 percent of Laotians and Cambodians and of other Latin groups in Miami, and up to 20 percent among second-generation Mexicans and West Indians. To put this last figure in perspective, it can be compared with the nationwide proportion of African-American males currently incarcerated by age 40: 26.6 percent. With an additional 16 years to go, on average, before they reach 40, it is possible that males from these two groups may catch up or exceed that figure.

Thus, in South Florida, no less than 10 percent and up to 20 percent of black second-generation youths live in poverty, are unemployed, and have already been in jail or on probation. In California, the same fate is suffered by Mexican Americans and, to a lesser extent, by children of Cambodian and Laotian refugees. The fact that Mexican Americans are, by far, the nation's largest second-generation minority adds to the weight carried by these figures.

Conclusion

By and large, despite their diversity of class and national origins, members of the new second generation in South Florida and Southern California are doing well: performing better academically than their native-parentage peers, graduating from high school and going on to college (where many are still enrolled), speaking accentless English, working hard at their first jobs, taking steps toward independent entrepreneurship, and beginning to form families of their own.

Optimistically, children of families with practically no money and little or no human capital can move forward, riding on their own determination and the support of their families or communities. A number of success stories from the CILS survey were grounded far more on social capital than on the education and economic resources of parents. Even the most alarming statistics — those concerning incarceration — show that 90 percent of second-generation males have managed to stay clear of that path.

However, this overall positive picture should not obscure the challenges faced by many second-generation young adults and the anomalies in their processes of adaptation. A sizable segment — a minority found mostly among the children of Mexican, Haitian, and West Indian immigrants — is being left behind. Young adults caught in a cycle of menial jobs, low incomes, early childbearing, and frequent confrontations with law enforcement face immense obstacles for the future, reinforcing the same racial and ethnic stereotypes that helped contribute to their situation in the first place.

Expert outside assistance can help young at-risk persons avoid this course. Second-generation youths at risk of such downward assimilation deserve special attention and support. There is a reservoir of

hope and ambition in them that can be readily tapped. "I'm so close to success, I can almost taste it," remarked a CILS respondent in Miami, despite having been in jail twice and having taken only the first fledgling steps toward independent entrepreneurship.

It may still be possible to overcome the worst effects of such downward trajectories by drawing on external support, a resilient drive, and role models provided by those second-generation youths who, like many in CILS, have managed to overcome the challenges of poverty and discrimination to carve a place in the sun for themselves.

*This article is based on chapter 8 of Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, **Immigrant America: A Portrait, new 3rd edition** (University of California Press, 2006); and on the latest results from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study, which was carried out with the support of research grants from the Russell Sage Foundation.*

*For more on the latest results of the CILS study, see the November 2005 edition of **Ethnic and Racial Studies** (Vol. 28, No. 6), a special issue edited by Portes and Rumbaut on "The Second Generation in Early Adulthood."*

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Table 1. The New Second Generation at a Glance, 2005

Characteristic	<i>New First Generation</i>		<i>New Second Generation</i>		<i>Third Generation and Higher</i>	
	<i>(post-1960)</i>		<i>(post-1960)</i>			
	<i>(Foreign-born (by age at arrival)</i>		<i>(US-born)</i>			<i>(Self and parents are US-born)</i>
	Arrived 13 or older	Arrived under 13	Two Foreign- born Parents	One Foreign- born Parent	Total ¹	
Number ² (in millions)	26.2	9.1	13.5	7.6	30.3	221.6
Age (mean years)	42.9	23.4	14.3	17.6	17.9	36.5
Metropolitan residence, %	95.4	93.7	95.7	90.9	93.9	79.2
Both parents present, % ³	NA	78.0	76.8	69.9	75.2	66.2
Own home, %	52.1	54.4	59.8	68.2	60.3	75.7
Poverty Rate, % ⁴	17.1	18.0	21.1	13.3	18.2	11.8
Education, %: ⁵						
Less than high school	34.6	17.3	9.6	5.8	12.1	11.3
High school graduate or more	65.4	82.7	90.4	94.2	87.9	88.7
Bachelor's degree or more	27.1	30.6	39.3	37.8	35	27.6
In labor force, % ⁶	68.6	71.4	66.4	73.5	70.2	66.0

¹ Total of foreign-born persons who arrived after 1960 as children under 13, plus children born in the United States after 1960 of at least one foreign-born parent.

² First and second generation totals exclude persons born in Puerto Rico or other US territories.

³ For children under 18 years old.

⁴ Below 100 percent of the federal poverty line.

⁵ For persons 25 years or older.

⁶ For persons 16 years or older.

Source: March 2005 Current Population Survey.

Table 2. Human Capital, Modes of Incorporation, Present Situation, and Expectations of Immigrant Parents, 1995-1996

Nationality	Percent Less than High School ¹	Percent College Graduates ¹		Mode of Incorporation ²	Annual Average Family Incomes	Percent in Professional, Executive Occupations		Percent Intact Families ³	Percent Expects Child to Graduate College	Percent Expects Child to Earn a Post-Graduate Degree ⁴
	CPS	CPS	CILS		CILS	CPS	CILS	CILS	CILS	CILS
Chinese	4.4	64.3	41.9	Neutral	\$58,627	47.9	20.3	76.7	87.8	69.2
Cuban	38.3	19.4	20.9	Positive	\$48,266	23.3	19.1	58.8	74.3	61.0
Filipino	12.0	44.8	45.5	Neutral	\$49,007	28.5	16.8	79.4	92.2	33.0
Haitian	35.5	12.6	9.3	Negative	\$16,394	-	9.3	44.9	76.7	65.2
Jamaican, West Indian	20.7	18.0	20.0	Negative	\$39,102	24.7	22.3	43.4	80.8	55.2
Laotian, Cambodian	45.3	12.3	2.6	Positive	\$25,696	14.7	1.8	70.8	57.1	38.5
Mexican	69.8	3.7	2.6	Negative	\$22,442	5.1	2.9	59.5	54.5	39.2
Nicaraguan	39.6	14.1	32.5	Negative	\$32,376	7.2	17.0	62.8	73.3	55.0
Vietnamese	30.8	15.3	7.6	Positive	\$26,822	12.9	5.6	73.5	86.9	18.8

¹ For persons 16 years or older.

² Modes of incorporation are defined and exemplified as follows:

Positive: Refugees and asylees receiving government resettlement assistance.

Neutral: Non-black immigrants admitted for legal permanent residence.

Negative: Black immigrants and those nationalities with large proportions of unauthorized (illegal) entrants.

³ Children living with both biological parents.

⁴ Among those parents expecting their child to graduate from college.

Sources: CILS 1995-96 parents' survey; merged 1994-97 Current Population Surveys (CPS).

Table 3. Key Outcomes of Second-Generation Adaptation in Early Adulthood, 2002-2003 (Southern California and South Florida)

<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Education</i>		<i>Prefers Foreign Language</i>	<i>Prefers English Only</i>	<i>Prefers Children Bilingual¹</i>	<i>Annual Family Income</i>		<i>Un-employed²</i>	<i>Has Children</i>	<i>Has Been Incarcerated</i>		<i>N</i>
	<i>Average Years</i>	<i>% High School or Less</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Mean \$</i>	<i>Median \$</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total %</i>	<i>Males %</i>	
<i>Southern California:</i>												
Cambodian, Laotian	13.3	45.9	3.8	43.2	86.6	34,615	25,179	9.3	25.4	4.3	9.5	186
Chinese	15.4	5.7	0.0	74.3	56.3	57,583	33,611	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	35
Filipino	14.5	15.5	0.3	90.2	46.0	64,442	55,323	7.8	19.4	3.9	6.8	586
Mexican	13.4	38.0	6.5	37.9	88.2	38,254	32,585	7.3	41.5	10.8	20.2	408
Vietnamese	14.9	12.6	0.5	56.1	82.9	44,717	34,868	13.9	9.0	7.8	14.6	194
Other, Asian	15.2	9.1	2.3	86.4	46.3	58,659	40,278	4.5	11.4	6.7	9.5	46
Other, Latin American	14.4	25.5	4.3	65.2	71.1	43,476	31,500	2.2	15.2	6.4	18.8	47
Total California sample	14.2	24.9	2.6	64.6	68.0	50,657	39,671	8.5	24.0	6.4	11.9	1,502
<i>South Florida:</i>												
Colombian	14.5	17.0	2.0	64.9	82.8	58,339	45,948	2.6	16.6	6.0	10.4	150
Cuban (Private School)	15.3	7.5	1.5	72.5	90.3	104,767	70,395	3.0	3.0	2.9	3.4	133
Cuban (Public School)	14.3	21.7	1.8	62.7	86.2	60,816	48,598	6.2	17.7	5.6	10.5	670
Haitian	14.4	15.3	5.2	63.5	78.4	34,506	26,974	16.7	24.2	7.1	14.3	95
Nicaraguan	14.2	26.4	2.7	61.8	85.8	54,049	47,054	4.9	20.1	4.4	9.9	222
West Indian	14.6	18.1	0.0	90.8	40.4	40,654	30,326	9.4	24.3	8.5	20.0	148
Other	14.6	20.8	0.0	0.0	81.4	59,719	40,619	7.3	16.4	4.9	8.3	404
Total Florida sample	14.5	20.1	2.3	65.0	82.0	59,797	44,185	6.6	17.4	5.4	9.6	1,822

¹ Among those with children.

² Respondents without jobs, whether looking or not looking for employment, except those still enrolled at school.

Source: CILS, third survey.

Intermarriage in the Second Generation: Choosing Between Newcomers and Natives

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Social scientists have long considered high levels of racial and ethnic intermarriage — along with language acquisition, socioeconomic attainment, and residential patterns — a bellwether of social integration into the larger American society. Intermarriage requires individuals in different groups to form intimate attachments, which suggests that group boundaries are fading in importance and that preferences for marriage within the group are weak.

Moreover, the children of interracially married couples have complex racial backgrounds and often identify with two or more races, which further blurs the boundaries between groups and leads to more intermarriage in the next generation.

In the mid-20th century, Milton Gordon, a noted sociologist, presented the "straight-line" theory of racial and ethnic assimilation. He argued that levels of racial and ethnic intermarriage would increase steadily over generations as the social barriers between racial and ethnic groups diminished and preferences for in-group marriage faded.

Over the course of the 20th century, levels of intermarriage increased steadily among European immigrant descent groups. Levels of ethnic intermarriage were very low among European immigrants near the beginning of the 20th century, higher among their native-born children (the second generation) in the middle of the century, and very high among their grandchildren and great-grandchildren (the third and later generations) by the end of the 20th century.

The increases in levels of intermarriage across generations thus tracked and helped accelerate the integration of European groups, which originally were considered to be racially distinct, into American society.

During the last 40 years, however, most immigrants have come from Asia and Latin America. Are their children — the new second generation — showing higher levels of intermarriage than their immigrant parents?

Causes of Intermarriage

The "straight-line" theory of racial and ethnic assimilation suggests that levels of intermarriage increase across generations as social boundaries between groups diminish and elements of cultural distinctiveness, such as fluency in a non-English language, fade between the first and second, and between the second and third generations.

Levels of intermarriage between groups are, however, also affected by demographic factors in addition to preferences. For example, all else being equal, members of larger groups are less likely to intermarry than members of smaller groups because there have more potential partners.

Members of racial and ethnic groups that are more geographically clustered or segregated are more likely to marry within their own group due to the higher likelihood of interacting with one another

within the shared space.

In addition, third parties can intervene. For example, some parents, especially immigrant parents, pressure their children to consider only prospective spouses of similar ethnic or racial descent.

The relative balancing of these forces varies according to generation. In some ways, the first generation is the most distinctive since many (although not all) marry before they arrive in the United States. Their marriages are thus not subject to the same demographic considerations as those of second and later generations.

Second-generation adults, who currently compose a relatively small number of people sandwiched between larger numbers of first- and third-generation adults, encounter relatively small numbers of prospective spouses who are also second generation.

Estimates from the March 2005 Current Population Survey (CPS) suggest that the first generation consists of about 35.3 million foreign-born Americans. The second generation, here defined as Americans with at least one foreign-born parent, consists of only about 21.1 million people, and the third generation, defined as Americans with native-born parents, contains over 221 million people.

If generation is a proxy for cultural distinctiveness, then many second-generation adults are pressured by demographic constraints to choose between first-generation immigrants who identify more strongly with their ethnic and racial origins and third-generation Americans for whom race and ethnicity are less important.

Methodology

Because high rates of intermarriage between two or more groups are viewed by scholars as evidence that the social boundaries between the groups are fading, social science research on intermarriage typically relies on survey or census data. These data provide an overview of levels and patterns of intermarriage.

Unlike the US census and most other major surveys, the US Census Bureau's CPS contains information on the birthplaces of respondents and of respondents' parents. Consequently, it is possible to determine whether respondents are members of the first, second, or third (and later) generations.

To increase the sample size, data from the 2003, 2004, and 2005 Annual Social and Economic Supplements of CPS were merged. Because CPS does not explicitly ask for information on respondents' spouses, the analyses presented here only refer to married men and women who were living in the same household and whose information could be linked, not to all married couples.

Respondents were defined as foreign born or first generation if they were born abroad and did not have American-born parents. They were considered to be second generation if they were native born (i.e., born in the United States, Puerto Rico, and outlying areas, or born abroad to American parents) and reported having either one or two foreign-born parents.

Respondents were considered to be third (or later) generation if they were native born and both of their parents were also native born. Some "third-generation" respondents could therefore trace their ancestry on American soil back four or more generations.

The 2003-2005 CPS files contain information on respondents' race and Hispanic origin. Race is measured using the major categories of white, black, Asian, American Indian and Alaskan Native, and other, plus some complex categories such as black-Asian or black-white. Because the racial categories do not apply very well to Hispanic respondents, the category "Hispanic" is treated as a separate racial/ethnic category.

Very few second-generation respondents chose American Indian or any of the complex racial categories, and so the intermarriage statistics presented here focus on Asian, black, and white respondents, and Hispanic respondents of any race.

Results

In 1970, just a few years after the US Supreme Court struck down all antimiscegenation laws, less than one percent of marriages were interracial. Since then, levels of racial intermarriage have steadily increased. In 1980, about two percent of marriages were interracial; by 2000, about 5.4 percent were interracial.

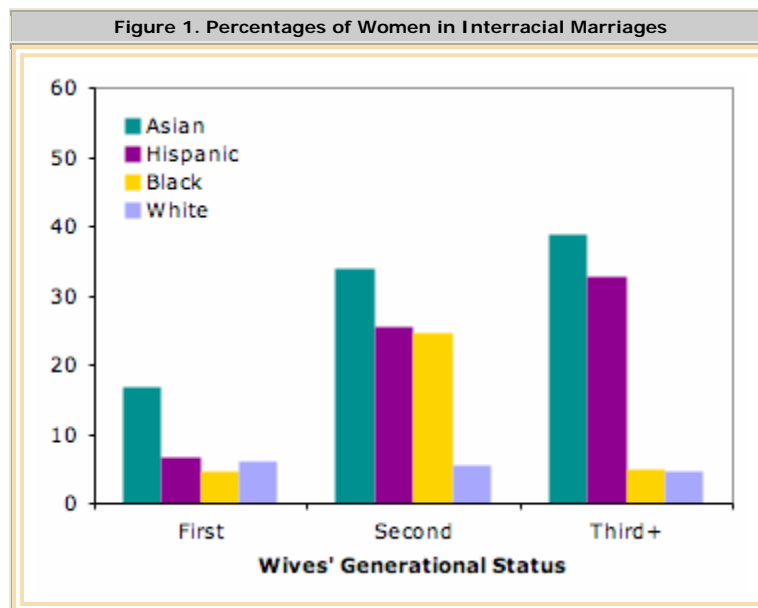
The upward trend in levels of racial intermarriage has continued into the first part of the 21st century. CPS data gathered between 2003 and 2005 show that about 7.5 percent of all marriages are interracial.

Whatever the generational statuses of the husband and wife, most of the interracially married couples consist of a white spouse with an Asian, Hispanic, or black spouse; less than one percent of interracially married couples consist of two non-white spouses.

The combinations of races among the interracially married couples do differ by gender. For example, there are more Asian wives with white husbands than Asian husbands with white wives, and more black husbands with white wives than black wives with white husbands.

By Generation

Figure 1 shows the percentages of married women by generation and race/ethnicity who have husbands of a different race or ethnicity than themselves.



The patterns of intermarriage across race and generation suggest that levels of racial intermarriage are strongly affected both by the differing opportunities and preferences for intermarriage within each generation and each ethnic/racial group. Levels of intermarriage are low among the first generation for all women. Except for Asian women, well over 90 percent of foreign-born women have husbands of the same racial or ethnic origins as themselves.

The low levels of intermarriage in the first generation are followed by higher levels of intermarriage in the second generation for all nonwhite women. Among Asians and Hispanics, the increase in levels of intermarriage continues into the third generation. For Asian and Hispanic women, then, the pattern fits the expectations generated by the "straight-line" assimilation theory, with steady increases in intermarriage across generations.

The picture differs for white women and black women. Levels of intermarriage among white women are relatively steady across generations, hovering around five percent. The steadiness can be attributed to the large numbers of whites in the American population — all else being equal, levels of intermarriage are always lowest among members of larger groups.

White foreign-born women are unlikely to be married to a man outside their ethnic/racial group because many arrive in the United States already married. Second- and third-generation white women are likely to meet and marry a native-born white man because the white population is still, by far, the largest racial group in the United States.

It is more difficult to explain why levels of intermarriage among blacks are substantially higher among the second generation than among the third-generation. Perhaps second-generation black women who grew up in a household with at least one foreign-born parent are less affected by the accumulation of racial discrimination in the American context and thus more open to marrying someone of another race. Second-generation blacks may also be more likely or be more able to emphasize their national or regional origins, e.g., Trinidadian, in lieu of identifying themselves as American-born black or African American.

Another possible reason for the gap is that second-generation black women are more likely than third-generation black women to live in major metropolitan areas, to have higher levels of education, and to have a racially complex ancestry — all attributes that lead to racial intermarriage.

And, finally, this result could be an anomaly generated by a small sample size: the level of intermarriage among second-generation black women is based on only 70 cases.

Since the results for men parallel those for women, those statistics are not presented here. Foreign-born men are very likely to have spouses of the same racial and ethnic origins as themselves. For Asian and Hispanic men, levels of intermarriage increase between the first and second, and the second and third generations. Levels of intermarriage among white men hover at low levels in every generation while levels of intermarriage among second-generation black men are higher than among first- or third-generation black men.

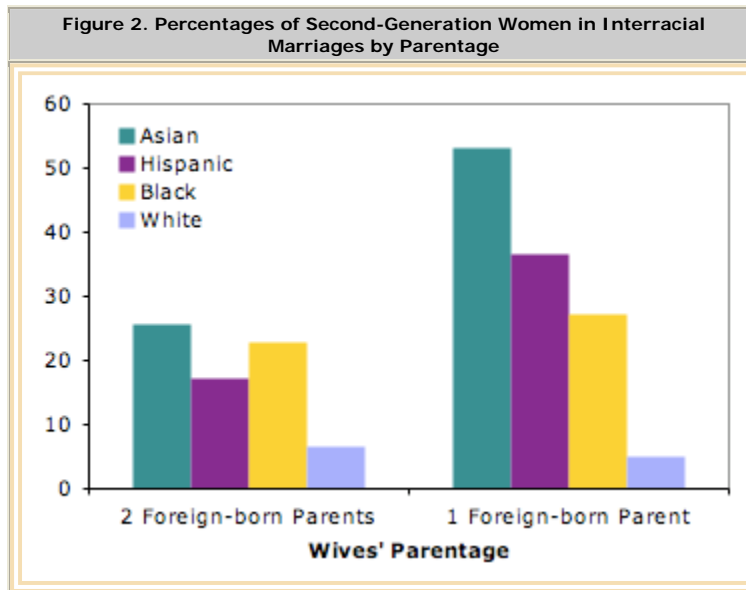
By Parentage

The next way to examine the data is by separating those with one foreign-born and one native-born parent from those with two foreign-born parents. The presumption is that those who grew up with two foreign-born parents identify more strongly with their racial and ethnic origins and so have stronger preferences for in-group marriage than those with one foreign-born and one native-born parent.

Second-generation Americans with one foreign-born and one native-born parent are also more highly educated and earn more than those with two foreign-born parents. This segment of the second generation is generally more integrated into American society.

In addition, many respondents with one foreign-born parent and one native-born parent are the children of racially intermarried parents, because marriages involving one immigrant and one native-born American spouse are likely to be interracial. Individuals with racially complex backgrounds are more open to the prospect of racial intermarriage than others.

Figure 2 shows that all racial/ethnic minority women with only one foreign-born parent and one native-born American parent are, in fact, more likely to be racially intermarried than second-generation women with two foreign-born parents. The same is true for men: racial/ethnic minority men with only one foreign-born parent are more likely to be racially intermarried than second-generation men with two foreign-born parents.



About half of Asian women with one foreign-born and one native-born parent, for example, are in interracial marriages versus a quarter of Asian women with two foreign-born parents. Asian women with one foreign-born and one native-born parent may be particularly likely to be intermarried because they are likely to be the daughters of Asian "war brides" and (white) American-born men who served in the military.

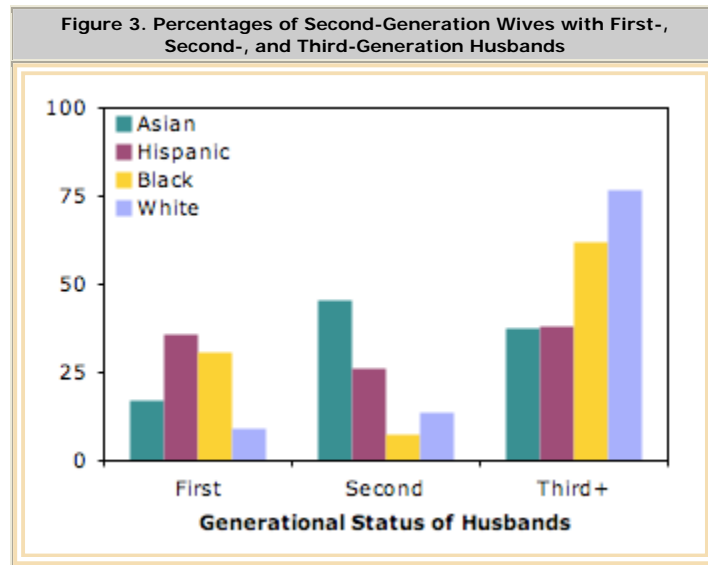
The difference in levels of intermarriage for second-generation women with two foreign-born parents versus those with one foreign-born and one native-born parent introduces complexities associated with "cross-generation" marriage.

The "straight-line" theory of assimilation presumes that marriage occurs within each generational cohort: immigrants marry other immigrants, members of the second generation marry other members of the second generation, and so on. This assumption is, however, simplistic.

Figure 3 shows the percentages of second-generation women of each racial/ethnic group with first-generation, second-generation, and third-generation husbands. Overall, relatively few second-generation women have second-generation husbands: the majority marry either first-generation or third-generation men.

However, there are striking differences across racial/ethnic groups. Over 75 percent of white second-generation women marry into the third generation. Black second-generation women are also very likely to marry into the third generation although some marry foreign-born men.

Hispanic second-generation women are fairly balanced with respect to marrying foreign-born, second-generation, or third-generation American men. Asian second-generation women are more apt than other women to marry someone of the same generational status as themselves.



The second generation thus appears poised between marrying either immigrants or third-generation Americans rather than other second-generation Americans. This pattern may be attributable to demographic constraints.

The adult second generation is still relatively small and so it is easier for white and black second-generation adults to marry into the very large third generation than to find prospective spouses among the smaller numbers of first- and second-generation white adults.

For second-generation Asians and Hispanics, the continuing high levels of immigration to the United States mean that the first generation is also fairly large.

Conclusions

The marriage behavior of the second generation lies between that of the first and the third generations in two ways. Levels of racial and ethnic intermarriage increase substantially between the first and second generations for black, Asian, and Hispanic Americans, and increase again between the second and third generations for Asian and Hispanic Americans.

Even when the focus is narrowed to differences within the second generation, levels of intermarriage increase as the distance from the immigrant experience lengthens. Second-generation Americans with one foreign-born parent and one native-born parent (who were thus in a cross-generation marriage) are more likely to marry interracially than those who grew up with two immigrant parents.

The second generation is also poised between reaching back into the first generation or reaching forward into the third generation for spouses. Currently, only a minority of second-generation Americans are married to other second-generation Americans. This pattern probably reflects, in part, the relatively small size of the second generation, which is sandwiched between a very large number of third-and-later-generation Americans, and, for Hispanics and Asians, a growing number of immigrants.

The increases in rates of racial/ethnic intermarriage across generation, and the common pattern in which members of the second generation marry third-generation Americans, suggest that Asians and Hispanics are being quickly integrated into the larger American-born population.

Intermarriage is often considered to be one of the most important signs of assimilation and integration of immigrant-descent groups for several reasons. First, high levels of intermarriage demonstrate and

accelerate the fading of cultural and social boundaries between immigrant descent groups and the larger American population. Second, high levels of intermarriage are also typically accompanied by growing similarities in the educational and labor force achievements of immigrant groups and the larger American population.

Gordon composed his theory of "straight-line" assimilation after observing marriage behavior among European-descent groups in the first part of the 20th century. The data presented here show that the two largest contemporary immigrant descent groups in the United States, Asians and Hispanics, are following the same generational patterns of intermarriage today.

Sources

Gordon, Milton M. 1964. *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*. New York: Oxford University Press.

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