

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Assimilation But Were Afraid To Ask

AS IF BY CENTENNIAL DESIGN the first and last decades of the twentieth century have been eras of large-scale immigration (see figures 1 and 2). During the first decade of the twentieth century, the United States saw the arrival of what was then the largest wave of immigration in history when a total of 8,795,386 immigrants, the vast majority of them European peasants, entered the country. By the 1990s, the wave of “new immigration” (which began in 1965) peaked when about a million new immigrants were arriving in the United States each year. By 1998 the United States had over 25 million immigrants, setting a new historic record.¹

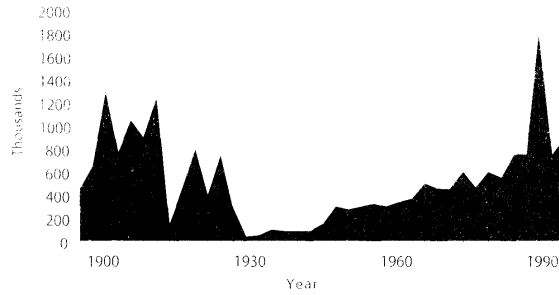
Two dominant features characterize this most recent wave of immigration: its intensity (the immigrant population grew by 30 percent between 1990 and 1997) and the somewhat radical shift in the sources of new immigration: up to 1950, nearly 90 percent of all immigrants were Europeans or Canadians; today over 50 percent of all immigrants are from Latin America, and 27 percent are from Asia (see table 1).

The recent U.S. experience is part of a broader—indeed, global—dynamic of intensified transnational immigration. As we enter the twenty-first century, the worldwide immigrant population is over 100 million people—plus an estimated 20 to

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Figure 1. Immigrants Admitted: Fiscal Years 1900-1996



Source: Adapted from U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1998).

30 million refugees. And these numbers reveal only the tip of a much larger immigration iceberg; by far the majority of immigrants and refugees remain within the confines of the “developing world” in individual nation-states. China, for example, has an estimated 100 million internal migrants.²

It is not surprising, then, that in recent years there has been renewed interest in basic research and policy in the field of

Table 1. Foreign Born as a Percentage of the Total U.S. Population

	1880	1900	1920	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	1997
% foreign born	13.3	13.6	13.3	6.9	5.4	4.7	6.2	8.6	9.3 ^a

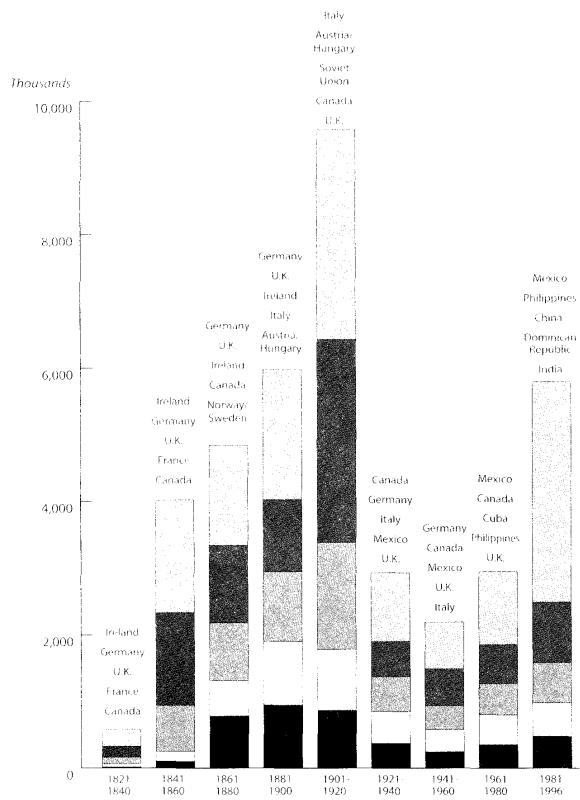
^a1998: foreign born population=25,208,000

Percentage of Foreign Born by Region of Origin

	1880	1920	1950	1980	1997
Europeans	97%	93.6%	89.3%	49.6%	17%
Asians	1.6	1.7	2.65	18	2.7
Latin Americans	1.3	4.2	6.3	31	5.1

Source: Harvard Immigration Project, 2000.

Figure 2. Immigrants Admitted: Country of Origin, Top Five Countries



Includes People's Republic of China and Taiwan; Sixteen-year period.
 Source: Adapted from U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1998).

immigration. While there is now robust scholarly activity on some aspects of immigration—for example, its economic causes and consequences—the scholarship on other important facets is somewhat anemic. For example, we know comparatively little about the long-term adaptations of immigrant children—the fastest growing sector of the child population in the United States. Data and conceptual work on their health, schooling, and transition to the world of work are quite limited.³ So is the work on the cultural processes of change generated by large-scale immigration. This is in part because labor economists, demographers, and sociologists have set the tone of the current research agenda—while anthropologists, psychologists, legal scholars, and scholars of the health sciences have played a more modest role.

Large-scale immigration is at once the cause and consequence of profound social, economic, and cultural transformations.⁴ It is important to differentiate analytically between the two. While the claim has been made that there are powerful economic interests in having a large pool of foreign workers (a major cause of large-scale immigration), immigration nevertheless generates anxieties and at times even fans the fires of xenophobia (a major consequence of large-scale immigration). Two broad concerns have set the parameters of the debate over immigration scholarship and policy in the United States and Europe: the economic and the sociocultural consequences of large-scale immigration.

Recent economic arguments have largely focused on 1) the impact of large-scale immigration on the wages of native workers (Do immigrants depress the wages of native, especially minority, workers?), 2) the fiscal implications of large-scale immigration (Do immigrants “pay their way” taxwise, or are they a burden, consuming more in publicly funded services than they contribute?), and 3) the redundancy of immigrants, especially poorly educated and low-skilled workers, in new knowledge-intensive economies that are far less labor intensive than the industrial economies of yesterday.⁵

Reducing the complexities of the new immigration to economic factors can, of course, be limiting. Indeed, there is an emerging consensus that the economic implications of large-

scale immigration are somewhat ambiguous. Research shows that immigrants generate benefits in certain areas (including worker productivity) and costs in others (especially in fiscal terms). Furthermore, we must not lose sight of the fact that the U.S. economy is so large, powerful, and dynamic that, ideologies aside, immigration will neither make nor break it. The total size of the U.S. economy is on the order of \$7 trillion; immigrant-related economic activities are a small portion of that total (an estimated domestic gain on the order of \$1 to \$10 billion a year, according to a National Research Council study).¹⁷

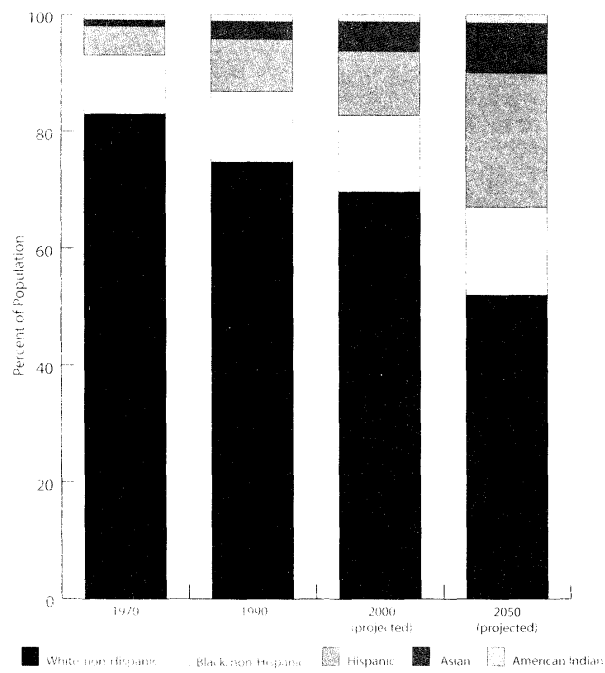
The fact that the most recent wave of immigration is comprised largely of non-European, non-English speaking “people of color” arriving in unprecedented numbers from Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America (see table 2 and figure 3) is at the heart of current arguments over the sociocultural consequences of immigration. While the debates over the economic consequences of immigration are largely focused on the three areas of concern discussed above, the debate over the sociocultural implications is somewhat more diffused. Some scholars have focused on language issues, including bilingual education (Are they learning English?). Others examine the political consequences of large-scale immigration (Are they becoming American in letter and in spirit?). Still others focus on immigrant practices that are unpalatable in terms of the cultural models and social practices of the mainstream population (the eternal issues here are female genital cutting, arranged marriages, and, in Europe especially, the veil).

Table 2. Region of Birth of Foreign-Born Population

Year	Total	Europe	Asia	Africa	Oceania	Latin America
1990	11,341,279	8,881,848	126,248	2,538	8,820	137,438
1980	9,738,091	7,256,141	490,796	35,355	34,730	960,309
1970	6,603,962	6,408,947	821,887	80,143	41,258	1,892,930
1960	3,096,000	3,149,372	2,339,777	199,724	77,877	432,439
1950	1,976,496	1,350,403	4,979,657	363,819	104,143	8,491,837

Source: Adapted from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P23-005, *People of the Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 1997* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1999).

Figure 3. Racial/Ethnic Composition of the Population



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1996).

RETHINKING ASSIMILATION

Old ideas about immigrant “assimilation” and “acculturation”—first articulated to make sense of the experiences of the transatlantic migrants of a century ago—have naturally been dosed off and tried out on the new arrivals. But in this case, applying the old to the new is not simply a reflex, a kind of intellectual

laziness. Rather, I think it suggests that thinking about immigration in the United States is always, explicitly or implicitly, a comparative exercise: the here and now of the “new immigration” versus what, for lack of a better term, we might call the “mythico-historic” record.⁷ This is a record in which equal parts of fact, myth, and fantasy combine to produce a powerful cultural narrative along the following lines: poor but hard-working European peasants, pulling themselves up by their bootstraps, willingly gave up their counterproductive old-world views, values, and languages—if not their accents!—to become prosperous, proud, and loyal Americans.⁸

Because the United States is arguably the only postindustrial democracy in the world where immigration is at once history and destiny, every new wave of immigration reactivates an eternal question: How do the “new” immigrants measure up to the “old”? This was asked one hundred years ago when the “new” immigrants were Irish, Italians, and Eastern Europeans and the “old” immigrants were English (see figure 2). The recurring answer to that question is somewhat predictable. New immigrants *always* fail the comparative test by falling short of the mythico-historic standards set by earlier immigrants. Hence, the most basic rule governing public attitudes about immigration: we love immigrants at a safe historical distance but are much more ambivalent about those joining us now.⁹

It is hardly surprising, then, what questions many are asking today: Are the new immigrants of color recreating the structures of the foundational mythico-historic narrative—the grammar of which was articulated in Irish, Italian, and Eastern European accents on the streets and docks of the Lower East Side of Manhattan one hundred years ago? Or is today’s unprecedented racial and cultural diversity—think of the over one hundred languages now spoken by immigrant children in New York City schools—generating an entirely new script? Is what we hear today an incomprehensible Babelesque story, which is not only unlike anything we have heard before but is quite likely to contribute to our already polarized race relations and chronic “underclass” problems? Will today’s new arrivals turn out to be like our mythical immigrant ancestors and assimilate,

becoming loyal and proud Americans? Or, conversely, will they by the sheer force of their numbers redefine what it is to be an American?

Much of the analytic—as well as the emotional—framework for approaching the topic of immigration was developed as the then-young nation was in the process of metabolizing the great transatlantic European immigration wave of a century ago. Ideas about “assimilation” and “acculturation,” terms often used interchangeably, were first introduced in the social sciences to examine the processes of social and cultural change set in motion as immigrants began their second journey: their insertion into mainstream American life.¹⁰ The basic theme in the narratives of “assimilation” and “acculturation” theories that came to dominate the social sciences predicted that immigration sets in motion a process of change that is directional, indeed unilinear, nonreversible, and continuous.

The direction or aim of the process was said to be “structural assimilation” (typically operationalized in terms of social relations and participation in the opportunity structure) and “acculturation” (typically operationalized in terms of language, values, and cultural identifications) into what was, implicitly or explicitly, the prize at immigration’s finish line: the middle-class, white, Protestant, European American framework of the dominant society.¹¹ The process as it was narrated in the social-science literature seemed to follow neatly the van Gennepian structural code: *separation* (from social relations and from participation in the opportunity structure of the country or culture of origin), *marginality* (residential, linguistic, economic; especially during the earlier phases of immigration and especially acute among the first generation), and, finally, a generation or two after immigration, *incorporation* into the social structures and cultural codes of the mainstream.

The process of change was said to be nonreversible in that once an immigrant group achieved the goals of acculturation and structural assimilation, there was, so to speak, “no going back.” This is in part because scholars of immigrant change conceptualized it as a dual process of gain (new culture, participation in new social structures) and loss (old culture, old social structures). The process was said to be continuous because it

took place transgenerationally. The immigrant generation (outsiders looking for a way in), the second generation (Americanized insiders), the third and fourth generations (the “Roots” generation in search of “symbolic ethnicity”), and so on all had their assigned roles in this telling of the immigrant saga.

The dominant narratives of immigrant assimilation were structured by three reasonable assumptions. I will call them the “clean break” assumption, the “homogeneity” assumption, and the “progress” assumption. These assumptions, I suggest, need reexamination in light of some of the distinct features characterizing the latest wave of immigration.

First, immigration was theorized to take place in clearly delineated waves (versus ongoing flows) between two relatively remote, bounded geopolitical and cultural spaces. Immigrants left country “A” to settle permanently in country “B.” When immigrants chose to return to their country of origin, and large numbers did, it was again seen as a permanent move.¹² The norm, however, was that immigrants leaving Ireland or Eastern Europe were not supposed to look back. This is hardly surprising, since the very idea of immigration was to look forward to a new start and better opportunities in a new country. The renaming rituals at Ellis Island, when immigrants traded—some voluntarily, others involuntarily—exotic names for “Americanized” versions, signified the beginning of a new life. A “clean break” was needed before the process of Americanization could begin.

The second assumption was that immigrants would, in due course, over two or three generations, join the mainstream of a society dominated by a homogeneous middle-class, white, European American Protestant ethos.¹³ While American society was never homogenous, “the color line” being a defining feature of its landscape, it was never assumed that the African-American culture played a significant factor in the immigrant equation. When assimilation was debated it went without saying: its very point was to join mainstream culture.

The third assumption dominating thinking about immigrant assimilation was structured by a powerful teleological reflex: immigration is about uniform progress, about going from “good” (first generation) to “better” (second generation), to “best”

(third and fourth generations). The immigrant's journey to success was the stuff of the American dream. *Ragtime*, the acclaimed Broadway musical, gives artistic form to this basic idea: the Russian family moves from the misery of the shtetl to glamorous Hollywood in one generation—assimilation in fast-forward, so to speak. Taken together with the two previous assumptions, a coherent narrative unfolds: as immigrants give up their old ways, and they assimilate to middle-class, white European American Protestant culture, they find enormous rewards.

THE "CLEAN BREAK" ASSUMPTION: A CRITIQUE

It may no longer be useful to assume that immigration takes place between remote, nearly bounded geopolitical spaces, where a "clean break" is, even if not desired, inevitable. Indeed, in recent years, anthropologists and sociologists have claimed that what is novel about the "new immigrants" is that they are actors on a transnational stage.¹⁴ The relative ease and accessibility of mass transportation (1.5 billion airline tickets were sold last year) and the new globalized communication and information technologies make possible a more massive back-and-forth movement of people, goods, information, and symbols than ever before.¹⁵ Compared to Mexican or Dominican immigrants today, the Irish and Eastern European immigrants of last century—even if they had wanted to—simply could not have maintained the level and intensity of contact with the "old country" that we are now witnessing.¹⁶ Furthermore, the new immigration from such places as Latin America and the Caribbean can be best characterized as an uninterrupted "flow" rather than neatly delineated "waves" typical of the earlier European transatlantic immigration. This ongoing, uninterrupted migratory flow is said to "replenish" constantly social practices and cultural models that would otherwise tend to be "lost" to assimilation.¹⁷ Indeed, in certain areas of the Southwest, Latin American immigration is generating a powerful infrastructure dominated by a growing Spanish-speaking mass media (radio, television, and print), new market dynamics, and new cultural identities.¹⁸

Another relevant feature of the new transnational framework is that even as they enmesh themselves in the social, economic, and political life in their new lands, immigrants remain powerful protagonists in the economic, political, and cultural spheres back home.²⁰ With international remittances estimated at nearly \$100 billion per annum, immigrant remittances and investments have become vital to the economies of most countries of emigration. A U.S.-Mexican Binational Study on Immigration estimates that remittances to Mexico were the “equivalent to 57 percent of the foreign exchange available through direct investment in 1995, and 5 percent of the total income supplied by exports.”²¹

Politically, immigrants are emerging as increasingly relevant actors with influence in political processes both “here” and “there.” Some observers have noted that the outcome of the most recent Dominican presidential election was largely determined in New York City—where Dominicans are the largest group of new immigrants. Likewise, Mexican politicians—especially those of the opposition—have recently “discovered” the political value of the seven million Mexican immigrants living in the United States. The new Mexican dual nationality initiative—whereby Mexican immigrants who become naturalized U.S. citizens would retain a host of political and other rights in Mexico—is also the product of this emerging transnational framework.²²

Because of a new ease of mass transportation and new communication technologies, immigration is no longer structured around the “sharp break” with the country of origin that once characterized the transoceanic experience. Immigrants today are more likely to be at once “here” *and* “there,” articulating dual consciousness and dual identities and, in the process, bridging increasingly unbounded national spaces.²³

THE “HOMOGENEITY” ASSUMPTION: A CRITIQUE

It may no longer be useful to assume that immigrants today are joining a homogeneous society dominated by the middle-class, white, European American Protestant ethos.²⁴ The new immigrants are entering a country that is economically, socially, and

culturally unlike the country that absorbed—however ambivalently—previous waves of immigrants. Economically, the previous large wave of immigrants arrived on the eve of the great industrial expansion in which immigrant workers and consumers played a key role.²⁴

Immigrants now are actors in a thoroughly globalized restructured economy that is increasingly fragmented into discontinuous economic spheres. Some have characterized the new postindustrial economy in terms of the “hourglass” metaphor. On one end of the hourglass there is a well-remunerated, knowledge-intensive economic sphere that has recently experienced unprecedented growth. On the other end, there is a service economy where low-skilled and semiskilled workers continue to “lose ground” in terms of real wages, benefits, and security. Furthermore, in the new economy there are virtually no bridges for those at the bottom of the hourglass to move into the more desirable sectors. Some scholars have argued that unlike the low-skilled industry jobs of yesterday, the kinds of jobs typically available today to low-skilled new immigrants do not offer serious prospects of upward mobility.²⁵

Another defining aspect of the new immigration is the intense social segregation between new immigrants of color and the middle-class, white, European American population. While immigrants have always concentrated in specific neighborhoods, we are witnessing today an extraordinary concentration of large numbers of immigrants in a handful of states in large urban areas polarized by racial tensions. Some 85 percent of all Mexican immigrants in the United States reside in three states (California, Texas, and Illinois). As a result of an increasing segmentation of the economy and society, large numbers of low-skilled immigrants “have become more, not less, likely to live and work in environments that have grown increasingly segregated from whites.”²⁶ These immigrants have, by and large, no meaningful contact with the middle-class, white, European American culture. Rather, their point of reference is more likely to be co-nationals, co-ethnics, or the African-American culture.

But perhaps the lethal blow to the homogeneity assumption comes from what I call a “culture of multiculturalism.” Rather

than face a “relatively uniform ‘mainstream’” culture,²⁶ immigrants today must navigate more complex and varied currents. The cultural models and social practices that we have come to call multiculturalism shape the experiences, perceptions, and behavioral repertoires of immigrants in ways not seen in previous eras of large-scale immigration. A hundred years ago there certainly was no culture of multiculturalism celebrating—however superficially and ambivalently—ethnicity and communities of origin. Indeed, the defining ritual at Ellis Island was the mythic renaming ceremony when immigration officers—sometimes carelessly and sometimes purposefully—renamed new arrivals with more Anglicized names, a cultural baptism of sorts. Others chose to change their names to avoid racism or anti-Semitism, or simply to “blend in.” Hence, Israel Ehrenberg was reborn as Ashley Montague, Meyer Schkolnick was reborn as Robert Merton, and Issur Danielovitch Demsky was reborn as Kirk Douglas.²⁷

Immigrants today enter social spaces where racial and ethnic categories are important gravitational fields—often charged—with important political and economic implications. The largest wave of immigration into the United States took place largely after the great struggles of the civil rights movement.

In that ethos, racial and ethnic categories became powerful instrumental as well as expressive vectors. By “expressive ethnicity” I refer to the subjective feeling of common origin and a shared destiny with others. These feelings are typically constructed around such phenomena as historic travails and struggles (as in the case of the Serbian sense of peoplehood emerging from their defeat five centuries ago at the hands of the Ottomans in the Battle of Kosovo), a common ancestral language (as in the case of the Basques), or religion (as in the case of the Jews in the Diaspora).²⁸

By “instrumental ethnicity,” I mean the tactical use of ethnicity. In recent years, “identity politics” has become a mode of expressive self-affirmation as well as instrumental self-advancement. This is in part because ethnic categories have become a critical tool of the state apparatus. Nation-states create categories for various reasons, such as to count people for census, taxation, and apportionment for political representation. Eth-

nic categories as generated by state policy are relevant to a variety of civic and political matters; furthermore, they are appropriated and used by various groups for their own strategic needs.

Pan-ethnic categories such as “Asian American” and “Hispanic” are largely arbitrary constructions created by demographers and social scientists for purposes of data development, analysis, and policy. The term “Hispanic,” for example, was introduced by demographers working for the U.S. Bureau of the Census in the 1980s as a way to categorize people who are either historically or culturally connected to the Spanish language. Note that “Hispanic,” the precursor to the more au courant term Latino, is a category that has no precise meaning regarding racial or national origins. Indeed, Latinos are white, black, indigenous, and every possible combination thereof. They also originate in over twenty countries as varied from each other as Mexico, Argentina, and the Dominican Republic.³⁰

For large numbers of new arrivals today, the point of reference seems to be the cultural sensibilities and social practices of their more established co-ethnics—i.e., Latinos, Asians, Afro-Caribbeans—rather than the standards of the increasingly more remote middle-class, white, Protestant European Americans.

THE “PROGRESS” ASSUMPTION: A CRITIQUE

The foundational narratives of immigrant assimilation typically depicted an upwardly mobile journey. The story was elegant in its simplicity: the longer immigrants were in the United States, the better they would do in terms of schooling, health, and income. As Robert Bellah once noted, “The United States was planned for progress,” and each wave of immigrants was said to recapitulate this national destiny. This assumption needs rethinking in light of new evidence. A number of scholars from different disciplines using a variety of methods have identified a somewhat disconcerting phenomenon. For many new immigrant groups, length of residency in the United States seems to be associated with *declining* health, school achievement, and aspirations.³¹

A recent large-scale National Research Council study considered a variety of measures of physical health and risk behaviors among children and adolescents from immigrant families—including general health, learning disabilities, obesity, and emotional difficulties. The NRC researchers found that immigrant youths tend to be healthier than their counterparts from nonimmigrant families. These findings are “counterintuitive in light of the racial and ethnic minority status, lower overall socioeconomic status, and higher poverty rates of many immigrant children and families.” The NRC study also found that the longer immigrant youths are in the United States, the poorer their overall physical and psychological health. Furthermore, the more “Americanized” they became, the more likely they were to engage in risky behaviors such as substance abuse, unprotected sex, and delinquency (see figure 4). While the NRC data are limited, they nevertheless should be cause for reflection.⁵²

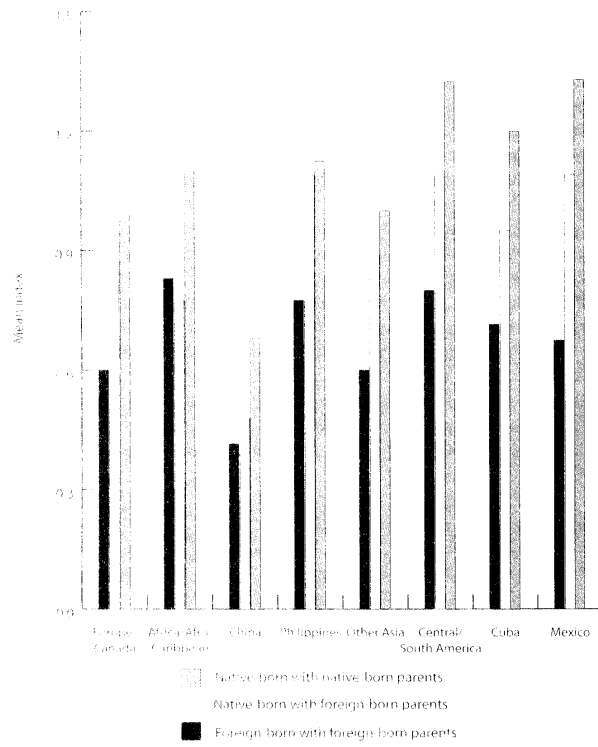
In the area of education, sociologists Ruben Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes surveyed more than five thousand high-school students in San Diego, California, and Dade County, Florida. Rumbaut writes:

an important finding supporting our earlier reported research is the *negative* association of length of residence in the United States with both GPA and aspirations. Time in the United States is, as expected, strongly predictive of improved English reading skills; but despite that seeming advantage, longer residence in the United States and second generation status [that is, being born in the United States] are connected to declining academic achievement and aspirations, net of other factors.⁵³

In a different voice, Reverend Virgil Elizondo, rector of the San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio, Texas, articulates this same problem: “I can tell by looking in their eyes how long they’ve been here. They come sparkling with hope, and the first generation finds hope rewarded. Their children’s eyes no longer sparkle.”⁵⁴

A number of scholars are currently exploring the problem of decline in schooling performance, health, and social adaptation of immigrant children. Preliminary research suggests that sev-

Figure 4. Mean Risk Behavior by Ethnic Group and Immigrant Status



Source: Adapted from National Research Council, *From Generation to Generation: The Health and Well Being of Children in Immigrant Families* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1998), 84. Copyright 1998 by the National Academy of Sciences. Courtesy of the National Academy Press, Washington, D.C. Reprinted by permission.

eral factors seem to be implicated. The various forms of “capital” that the immigrant families bring with them—including

financial resources, social class and educational background, psychological and physical health, as well as social supports—have a clear influence on the immigrant experience. Legal status (documented versus undocumented immigrant), race, color, and language also mediate how children and families manage the upheavals of immigration. Economic opportunities and neighborhood characteristics—including the quality of schools where immigrants settle, racial and class segregation, neighborhood decay, and violence—all contribute significantly to the adaptation process. Anti-immigrant sentiment and racism also play a role. These factors combine in ways that seem to lead to very different long-term outcomes. Until better longitudinal data are available, it is no longer safe to assume that immigration inevitably leads to measurable progress.

Indeed, it may be wise to think about what is taking place today in the United States as two very distinct migratory formations—formations that have different causes and generate divergent outcomes. In the long term, these distinct dynamics may turn out to be quite different from what we have seen in the field of immigration before.

Utopia

One migratory formation is made up of highly educated, highly skilled workers drawn by the explosive growth in the knowledge-intensive sectors of the economy. These immigrants thrive. They are among the best-educated and most skilled people in the United States. Immigrants today are overrepresented in the category of people with doctorates. Fully half of all entering physics graduate students in 1998 were foreign-born.³⁵ Thirty-two percent of all scientists and engineers working in California's famed Silicon Valley are immigrants.³⁶ Roughly a third of all Nobel Prize winners in the United States have been immigrants. In 1999, all (100 percent!) U.S. winners of the Nobel Prize were immigrants. Perhaps with the exception of the highly educated immigrants and refugees escaping Nazi Europe, immigrants in the past tended to be more uniformly poorly educated and relatively unskilled than they are today.³⁷

These immigrants are likely to settle in safe middle-class suburban neighborhoods—the kinds of neighborhoods that tend

to have better schools. Their children, nor surprisingly, are outperforming native-born children in terms of grades, as winners of the nation's most prestigious science competitions, and as freshmen in the nation's most exclusive colleges—two of the three top Intel Science prizes in March of 2000 went to immigrant youths. These highly educated and skilled immigrants are rapidly moving into the more desirable sectors of the U.S. economy, generally bypassing the traditional transgenerational modes of immigrant status mobility.³⁷ Never in the history of U.S. immigration have so many immigrants done so well so fast. For them, immigration means Utopia realized.

Distopia

The other migratory formation is made up of large numbers of poorly educated, unskilled workers—many of them in the United States without proper documentation (i.e., as illegal aliens). These immigrants come to survive—some are escaping economies that more or less “broke” during global restructuring; others are escaping violence or war. They are workers drawn by the service sector of the U.S. economy where there seems to be an insatiable appetite for foreign workers. They typically end up in poorly paid jobs that offer no insurance or basic safeties and no promise of upward mobility.

These immigrants tend to settle in areas of deep poverty and racial segregation. Concentrated poverty is associated with the “disappearance of meaningful work opportunities.”³⁸ Youngsters in such neighborhoods are chronically underemployed or unemployed and must search for work elsewhere. In such neighborhoods, with few opportunities in the formal economy, underground or informal activities tend to flourish. These kinds of economies often involve the trade of illegal substances and are associated with gangs and neighborhood violence. This ethos is the primary point of reference for many poor immigrant children of color today.

When poverty is combined with racial segregation, the outcomes can be devastating: no matter what their personal traits or characteristics, people who grow up and live in environments of concentrated poverty and racial isolation are more

likely to become teenage mothers, drop out of school, achieve only low levels of education, and earn lower adult incomes.⁴⁰

One hundred years ago, low-skilled immigrant workers with very little formal schooling could, through floor-shop mobility, attain living wages and a comfortable lifestyle. Today's global economy is unforgiving of immigrants without skills and credentials. Furthermore, low-skill service jobs not only lead nowhere in the status hierarchy but also fail to provide for the basic needs of a family. Indeed, new research suggests that among new immigrants, a general pattern of declining returns on education means that with more schooling they will be getting fewer rewards in the post-educational opportunity structure than ever before in the history of U.S. immigration.⁴¹ The high-school graduate who bypasses college and enters the workforce with no special skills has only a limited advantage over the high-school dropout.⁴²

Poor, low-skilled immigrants of color have few options but to send their children to schools located in drug-, prostitution-, and gang-infested neighborhoods.⁴³ All too many immigrant schools can only be characterized as sites overwhelmed by a "culture of violence."⁴⁴ Many newly arrived immigrant youths find themselves deeply marginalized in toxic schools that offer inferior education.⁴⁵

In the long term, many immigrant youths of color coming from low-skilled and poorly educated backgrounds will face serious odds. Intense segregation, inferior schools, violent neighborhoods, structural and interpersonal racism—all co-conspire to snuff the immigrants' most precious asset: hope and optimism about the future.⁴⁶

CULTURE AND ASSIMILATION: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This latest wave of immigration has rekindled the eternal American debate about the long-term consequences of large-scale immigration. Some worry about the economic implications, while many others have focused on its cultural implications. I turn now to some of these cultural concerns because, I think, they rest on a somewhat flawed understanding of culture.

Analytically, it is sometimes useful to differentiate between two broad spheres of culture: “instrumental culture” and “expressive culture.” By instrumental culture, I mean the skills, competencies, and social behaviors that are required successfully to make a living and contribute to society. By expressive culture, I mean the realm of values, worldviews, and the patterning of interpersonal relations that give meaning and sustain the sense of self. Taken together, these qualities of culture generate shared meanings and understandings, and a sense of belonging. In sum, the sense of who you are and where you belong is deeply patterned by these qualities of culture.

In the instrumental realm, there is arguably a worldwide convergence in the skills that are needed to function in today’s global economy. Whether in Los Angeles, Lima, or Lagos, the skills that are needed to thrive in the global economy are in fundamental respects the same. These include communication, higher-order symbolic and technical skills as well as habits of work, and interpersonal talents that are common in any cosmopolitan setting.

Immigrant parents are very much aware that if their children are to thrive they must acquire these skills. Indeed, immigration for many parents represents nothing more, and nothing less, than the opportunity to offer children access to these skills. Indeed, we have yet to meet an immigrant parent who tells us that he does not want his daughter to learn English or to acquire the skills and work habits that will prepare her for a successful career whether in the United States or “back home.”

While immigrant parents encourage their children to cultivate the “instrumental” aspects of culture in the new setting, they are decidedly more ambivalent about their children’s exposure to some of the “expressive” elements of culture in the new land. During the course of our research, it has not been difficult to detect that many immigrant parents strongly resist a whole array of cultural models and social practices in American youth culture that they consider highly undesirable. These include cultural attitudes and behaviors that are anti-schooling (“school is boring”) and anti-authority, the glorification of violence, and sexually precocious behaviors. Many immigrant parents reject and resist this form of acculturation.

Hence, I claim that the incantation of many observers—“acculturate, acculturate, acculturate”—needs rethinking. If acculturation is superficially defined as acquiring linguistic skills, job skills, and participation in the political process, then there is a universal consensus on these shared goals. If, on the other hand, we choose a broader definition of assimilation and acculturation as also including the realm of values, worldviews, and interpersonal relations, then a worthy debate ensues.

The first issue that needs airing is the basic question of “acculturating to what?” American society is no longer, if it ever was, a uniform or coherent system. Given their diverse origins, financial resources, and social networks, immigrants end up gravitating toward very different sectors of American society. While some are able to join integrated well-to-do neighborhoods, the majority of today’s immigrants come to experience American culture from the vantage point of poor urban settings. Limited economic opportunities, toxic schools, ethnic tensions, violence, drugs, and gangs characterize many of these settings. The structural inequalities found in what some social theorists have called “American Apartheid” are implicated in the creation of a cultural ethos of ambivalence, pessimism, and despair. Asking immigrant youths to give up their values, worldviews, and interpersonal relations to join this ethos is a formula for disaster.⁴

For those immigrants who come into intimate contact with middle-class mainstream culture, other trade-offs will be required. As our data suggest, immigrant children of color perceive that mainstream Americans do not welcome them and, indeed, disparage them as not deserving to partake in the American dream.⁵ Identifying wholeheartedly with a culture that rejects you has its psychological costs, usually paid in the currency of shame, doubt, and even self-hatred.

But even if the new immigrants were unambivalently embraced by middle-class mainstream Americans, it is far from clear that mimicking their behaviors would prove to be in the long term an adaptive strategy for immigrants of color. Mainstream middle-class children are protected by social safety nets that give them leeway to experiment with an array of distopic behaviors that can include drugs, sex, and alcohol. On the other

hand, for many immigrant youths, without robust socioeconomic and cultural safety nets, engaging in such behaviors is a high-stakes proposition in which one mistake can have lifelong consequences. While a white middle-class youth caught in possession of drugs is likely to be referred to counseling and rehabilitation, an immigrant youth convicted of the same offense is likely to be deported.

The current wave of immigration involves people from fantastically diverse and heterogeneous cultural backgrounds. Beneath surface differences, a common grammar can be identified among groups as culturally distinct from each other as Chinese, Haitian, and Mexican immigrants. The importance of family ties, the importance of hard work, and optimism about the future are examples of shared immigrant values.³⁷

These three realms are aspects of culture that become highlighted and come to the fore in the process of immigration. Consider, for example, the case of strong family ties among immigrants. Many immigrants come from cultures in which the family system is an integral part of the person's sense of self. These family ties play a critical role in family reunification—an important force driving new immigration. Furthermore, once immigrants settle, family ties are accentuated because immigration poses many emotional and practical challenges forcing immigrants to turn to one another for support.³⁸

Hard work and optimism about the future are likewise central to the immigrant's *raison d'être*. The immigrant's most fundamental motivation is to find a better life. Immigrants tend to view hard work as essential to this project. The fact that many immigrants will do the impossible jobs that native workers simply refuse to consider is an indication of just how hard they are willing to work. Immigrant family ties, work ethic, and optimism about the future are unique assets that should be celebrated as adding to the total cultural stock of the nation.

Immigration generates change. The immigrants themselves undergo a variety of transformations. Likewise, the immigration process inevitably changes the members of the dominant culture. In the United States today we eat, speak, and dance differently from the way we did thirty years ago, in part because of large-scale immigration. But change is never easy. The

changes brought about by the new immigration require mutual calibrations and negotiations.

Rather than advocating that immigrant children abandon all elements of their culture as they embark on their uncertain assimilation journey, a more promising path is to cultivate and nurture the emergence of new hybrid identities and bicultural competencies.⁵¹ These hybrid cultural styles creatively blend elements of the old culture with that of the new, unleashing new energies and potentials.⁵²

The skills and work habits that are required to thrive in the new century are essential elements of assimilation. Immigrant children, like all children, must develop this repertoire of instrumental skills. At the same time, maintaining a sense of belonging and social cohesion with their immigrant roots is equally important. When immigrant children lose their expressive culture, social cohesion is weakened, parental authority is undermined, and interpersonal relations suffer. The unthinking call for immigrant children to abandon their culture can only result in loss, anomie, and social disruption.

The model of unilineal assimilation—in which the bargain was straightforward: please check all your cultural baggage before you pass through the Golden Gate—emerged in another era.⁵³ The young nation, then, was eager to turn large numbers of European immigrants into loyal citizen workers and consumers. It was an era of nation-building and bounded national projects.⁵⁴

But even then, accounts of immigrants rushing in unison to trade their culture for American culture were greatly exaggerated. German Americans, Italian Americans, and Irish Americans have all left deep cultural imprints in the molding of American culture. Even among fifth-generation descendants of the previous great wave of immigration, symbolic culture and ethnicity remain an emotional gravitational field.⁵⁵

But beyond the argument that maintaining the expressive elements of culture is symbolically important and strategic from the point of view of social cohesion, there is another point worth considering. In the global era, the tenets of unilineal assimilation are no longer relevant. Today there are clear and unequivocal advantages to being able to operate in multiple

cultural codes—as anyone working in a major (and now not-so-major) corporation knows. There are social, economic, cognitive, and aesthetic advantages to being able to move across cultural spaces. Dual consciousness has its instrumental and expressive advantages. Immigrant children are in a position to maximize that unique advantage. While many view their cultural—including linguistic—skills as a threat, I see them as precious assets to be cultivated.

A renowned historian once said the history of the United States is in fundamental respects the history of immigration. Throughout history, U.S. citizens have ambivalently welcomed newcomers. The fear then, as now, focused on whether the immigrants would contribute to the American project. The gift of hindsight demonstrates just how essential immigration has proven to the making and remaking of the American fabric.

However, with diversity comes conflict and dissent. Working through frictions in the public sphere by reasoned debate and compromise is central to the idea and practice of democracy. Immigrant children are uniquely poised to play a significant role in the remaking of American democracy. In the era of multiculturalism and transnationalism, their bicultural experiences and skills prepare them well to be the cultural brokers able to find the common ground.

ENDNOTES

See, for example, *Profile of the Foreign Born Population in the United States: 1997* (Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, 1999).

See, for example, Erik Eickholm, "For China's Rural Migrants, an Education Wall," *New York Times*, 12 December 1999, A8.

See, for example, Carola Suarez-Orozco and Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco, *Children of Immigration* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006).

Theorists of immigration have argued that transnationalized labor-recruiting networks, family reunification, and changing cultural models and expectations about, for example, what is an acceptable standard of living are all potentially implicated in generating and sustaining new migratory flows. Wars nearly always generate large-scale immigration: World War II gave birth to the Mexican *bracero* program, which started the largest wave of immigration to the United States in history. Without the Cold War, there would not be today over a million Cuban Americans in the United States. The Southeast Asian

Diaspora is the product of the war in Indochina. The million or so Central Americans that now make the United States their home arrived following the intensification of the U.S.-backed counterinsurgency campaigns in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua of the 1980s.

A great deal of energy has gone into assessing the economic consequences of immigration, and the research findings are somewhat ambiguous. Indeed, they are often contradictory—some economists claim that the new immigrants are a burden to taxpayers and an overall negative influence on the U.S. economy; others suggest that they continue to be an important asset. A recent study on the economic, demographic, and fiscal effects of immigration by the National Research Council concludes: “immigration produces net economic gains for domestic residents.” National Research Council, *The New Americans: Economic, Demographic, and Fiscal Effects of Immigration* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1997), 3. For another overview of immigrants and the economy, see George Borjas, *Heaven’s Door: Immigration Policy and the American Economy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999).

National Research Council, *The New Americans*, 5.

Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, *Children of Immigration*.

⁷For a recent exquisite treatment of this narrative, see Riv-Ellen Prell, *Fighting to Become Americans: Jews, Gender, and the Anxiety of Assimilation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999). Consider also the introductory paragraph on a recent *New York Times* story on the families of vice-presidential candidate Senator Joseph Lieberman and his immigrant wife, Mrs. Hadassah Lieberman, a child of Holocaust survivors: “They came over on wobbling merchant marine ships, refugees with a few valises apiece that contained all they owned in the world. Rebuilding from scratch—they had, after all, lost their homes and most of their closest kin—they worked at low-paying jobs in dingy dress factories, luncheonettes, dry-goods stores. For many, it was too late for any grander aspirations. Their children would redeem their expectations.” Joseph Berger, “Mrs. Lieberman’s Story, and Others,” *New York Times*, 13 August 2000, A26.

Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, *Children of Immigration*.

⁸See, inter alia, Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); and Richard Alba and Victor Nee, “Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration,” *International Migration Review* 33 (1) (Winter 1997).

⁹The process of change was said to be unilinear in that all new arrivals would be expected to undergo roughly the same process of change.

¹⁰See, for example, Jose C. Moya, *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850–1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) and Michael Piore, *Birds of Passage: Migrant Labor and Industrial Societies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

- ¹³See, for example, Alejandro Portes, ed., *The New Second Generation* (New York: Russell Sage, 1996).
- ¹⁴See Peggy Levitt, "Transnationalizing Civil and Political Change: The Case of Transnational Organizational Ties between Boston and the Dominican Republic," Ph.D. dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1996; "Commentary," in Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco, ed., *Crossings: Mexican Immigration in Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Cambridge, Mass.: David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies and Harvard University Press, 1998); Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (Basel, Switzerland: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1994).
- ¹⁵Borrowing the delicious words of Luis Rafael Sánchez, many new immigrants today live neither here nor there but rather in "*la gragna aérea*"—the air bus.
- ¹⁶See Ricardo Ainslie, "Cultural Mourning, Immigration, and Engagement: Veignettes from the Mexican Experience," in Suárez-Orozco, ed., *Crossings: Mexican Immigration in Interdisciplinary Perspectives*.
- ¹⁷See David G. Gutiérrez, "Ethnic Mexicans and the Transformation of 'American' Social Space: Reflections on Recent History," in Suárez-Orozco, ed., *Crossings: Mexican Immigration in Interdisciplinary Perspectives*.
- ¹⁸Since 1990, while the Hispanic population in the United States grew by more than 30 percent, its buying power has grown by more than 65 percent, to about \$350 billion in 1997. This is changing the way business is conducted in many parts of the country.
- ¹⁹Wayne Cornelius, "The Structural Embeddedness of Demand for Mexican Immigrant Labor," in Suárez-Orozco, ed., *Crossings: Mexican Immigration in Interdisciplinary Perspectives*; and Jorge Dorand, "Migration and Integration," *ibid.*
- ²⁰See Binational Study, *Migration Between Mexico and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, 1998). Cornelius, however, argues that over time Mexican immigrants in the United States are less likely to invest in capital improvements in the communities they emigrated from. In fact, he argues that a new feature of the Mexican experience in the United States is that as Mexican immigrants become increasingly rooted in the U.S. side of "the line," they mainly go back to these communities for rest and relaxation. See Cornelius, "The Structural Embeddedness."
- ²¹Culturally, immigrants not only significantly reshape the ethos of their new communities but are also responsible for significant social transformations "back home." Peggy Levitt has argued that Dominican "social remittances" affect the values, cultural models, and social practices of those left behind. See Levitt, "Transnationalizing Civil and Political Change."
- ²²Basch, Schiller, and Blanc, *Nations Unbound*.
- ²³I concur with Alejandro Portes when he argues that we can no longer assume that new immigrants will assimilate into a coherent mainstream.

- ¹John Higham, *Send These to My Sons and Other Immigrants in Urban America* (New York: Atheneum, 1975).
- ²Portes, *The New Second Generation*.
- ³Roger Waldinger and Melih Bozorgmehr, eds., *Latin Los Angeles* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1996).
- ⁴Portes, *The New Second Generation*.
- ⁵Lawrence E. Friedman, *Identity's Architect: A Biography of Erik H. Erikson* (New York: Scribner, 1999).
- ⁶Eula Romanucci-Ross and George DeVos, *Filipino Identity: Creation, Conflict, and Accommodation*, 3rd ed. (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Alta Mira Press, 1995).
- ⁷Not do these categories address the sensibilities rooted in history and generation in the United States. A Latina can be a person who is the descendant of the original settlers in what is today New Mexico. Her ancestors spoke Spanish—well, then, English was ever heard in this comment. Her family has resided in this land before the United States appropriated the southwest territories. She is considered a Latina just as is a Mayan speaking new arrival from Guatemala who crossed the border last week. Likewise, the term Asian brings together people of highly diverse cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds. A Chinese Buddhist and a Filipino Catholic are both considered Asian American though they may have very little in common in terms of language, cultural identity, and sense of self.
- ⁸See Grace Kato and Maria Florida, "Optimism and Achievement: The Educational Performance of Immigrant Youth," *Social Science Quarterly* 76 (1) (1995): 1-19; National Research Council, *From Generation to Generation: The Health and Well-Being of Children in Immigrant Families* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1998); Ruben Rumbaut, "The New Californians: Comparative Research Findings on the Educational Progress of Immigrant Children," in Ruben Rumbaut and Wayne Cornelius, eds., *California's Immigrant Children* (San Diego, Calif.: Center for U.S. Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, 1998); Laurence Steinberg, B. Bradford Brown, and Sanford M. Dornbusch, *Beyond the Classroom: Why School Reform Has Failed — What Parents Need to Do* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996); and Carol and Marcelo Suarez-Orozco, *Transformations: Immigration, Family Life, and Achievement Motivation Among Latino Adolescents* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995).
- ⁹The data reported are largely cross-sectional panel data—some of it self-reported. Better quality longitudinal data are now needed to develop a more clear sense of the factors leading to these worrisome trends. See National Research Council, *From Generation to Generation*. Quote from *ibid.*, 159.
- ¹⁰Rumbaut, "The New Californians."
- ¹¹Quoted in Roberto Suro, *Strangers Among Us: How Latino Immigration is Transforming America* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1998), 13.
- ¹²See "Wanted: American Physicists," *New York Times*, 23 July 1999, A27. Of course, not all of these foreign-born physics graduate students are immi-

grants—some will indeed return to their countries of birth while others will surely go on to have productive scientific careers in the United States.

¹⁸See Annalée Saxenian, *Silicon Valley's New Immigrant Entrepreneurs* (San Francisco, Calif.: Public Policy Institute of California, 1999). I am thankful to Professor Michael Jones-Correa of the department of government at Harvard University for alerting me to this important new study.

¹⁹See, for example, George Borjas, "Assimilation in Cohort Quality Revisited: What Happened to Immigrant Earnings in the 1980s?" *Journal of Labor Economics* 15 (2) (1995): 211–245.

²⁰See Waldinger and Bozorgmehr, *Ethnic Los Angeles*.

²¹William Wilson, *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997).

²²Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).

²³See Dowell Myers, "Dimensions of Economic Adaptation by Mexican-Origin Men," in Suárez-Orozco, ed., *Crossings: Mexican Immigration in Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 188.

²⁴See Richard Murnane, *Teaching the New Basic Skills: Principles for Educating Children to Thrive in a Changing Economy* (New York: Martin Kessler Books, Free Press, 1996).

²⁵In one such site, one of our research assistants found that boys sneak out of school at noon to watch pornographic films at a shop across the street from the school. Many of these schools are dilapidated and unkempt. Violence is pervasive. In an elementary school, a young girl was found raped and murdered on school premises. In another, an irate parent stabbed a teacher in front of her students. In yet another school, just days after the Columbine incident, a cherry bomb was set off as one of our research assistants was conducting an interview. In many schools there is tremendous ethnic tension. In one of our sites, students regularly play a game they call "Rice and Beans" (Asian students versus Latino students) that frequently deteriorates into physical violence. In many sites immigrant students report living in constant fear; they dread lunch and class changes as the hallways are sites of confrontation and intimidation, including sexual violence.

²⁶An ethnographic study of a number of immigrant schools in Miami found that three factors were consistently present in schools with "cultures of violence." First, school officials tended to deny that the school had problems with violence or drugs. Second, many of the school staff members exhibited "non-caring" behaviors toward the students. Third, the schools took lax school-security measures. See Michael Collier, "Cultures of Violence in Miami-Dade Public Schools," working paper of the Immigration and Ethnicity Institute, Florida International University, November 1998.

²⁷These schools affect the opportunities and experiences of immigrant children in several immediate ways. They tend to have limited resources. Classrooms are typically over-crowded. Textbooks and curricula are outdated; computers are few and obsolete. Many of the teachers may not have credentials in the sub-

jects they teach. Clearly defined tracks sentence students to noncollege destinations. Lacking English skills, many immigrant students are often enrolled in the lower-performing, noncompetitive classes that eventually exclude them from courses needed for college. These schools generally offer few (if any) Advanced Placement courses that are critical for entry in many of the more competitive colleges. The guidance counselor-student ratio is impossibly high. Because the settings are so undesirable, teachers and principals routinely transfer out in search of better assignments elsewhere. As a result, in many such schools, there is little continuity or sense of community. Children and teachers are often preoccupied with their present violence and morale is often very low.

For a superb but somewhat pessimistic study of how "persistent, blatant racial discrimination" along with inferior schools in high-crime neighborhoods is responsible for the next generation of decline of West Indian immigrants in New York City, see Mary Waters, *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

Musey and Denton, *American Apartheid*.

See Carlos Suarez-Orozco, "Identities Under Siege," in Antonius Robben and Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco, eds., *Cultures Under Siege: Collective Violence in U.S. Immigrants* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

For an overview of recent research on immigration and family ties, see Ruben Rumbaut, "Ties that Bind: Immigration and Immigrant Families in the United States," in Alan Booth, Ann C. Crouter, and Nancy Landale, eds., *Immigration and the Family: Research and Policy on U.S. Immigrants* (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1996). See also Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, *Transnationality, Immigration, Family Life and Achievement Motivation Among Latino Adolescents* and Celia Falicov, *Latino Families in Therapy: A Guide to Multicultural Practice* (New York: Guilford, 1998). For an overview of immigrant optimism and achievement orientation, see Grace Kao and Mirta Lleras, "Optimism and Achievement: The Educational Performance of Immigrant Youth," *Social Science Quarterly* 96 (1995): 1-19.

See Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, *Children of Immigration*.

Concure with Teresa LaFromboise and her colleagues on the need to avoid "pragmatists" who they call the "linear model of cultural acquisition." See Teresa LaFromboise et al., "Psychological Impact of Biculturalism: Evidence from Bonaire," in Pamela Balls Organista, Kevin M. Chun, and Gerardo Marin, eds., *Readings in Ethnic Psychology* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

Margaret Gibson articulates a theoretical argument on immigrant transnationality and a calculated strategy of "accommodation without assimilation" in her study of highly successful Sikh immigrants in California. See Margaret Gibson, *Accommodation without Assimilation: Sikh Immigrants in an American High School* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988). For a theoretical statement on the psychology of ethnic identity and cultural pluralism, see Jini S. Plummer, "Ethnic Identity in Adolescents and Adults: Review of Research," in Organista, Chun, and Marin, eds., *Readings in Ethnic Psychology*.

¹By unilinear assimilation I mean the idea that various immigrant groups have followed roughly a single path of assimilation.

²Bounded national projects is a counterpoint to the idea that today transnationalism means, *inter alia*, that nations are becoming increasingly enmeshed or “unbounded,” to borrow Linda Basch’s word. Basch, Schiller, and Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States*.

³See, for example, Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1970).

⁴Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1951).

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