



Teresa, Island, 1948 (see p. 30).  
Photograph by David Seymour (courtesy Magnum Photos).

## Cultures under Siege

*Collective Violence and Trauma*

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## 7 Identities under siege: immigration stress and social mirroring among the children of immigrants

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### Introduction

Immigration is a phenomenon that involves over 130 million people worldwide. In the United States, one out of every five children is the child of an immigrant. In New York City schools today, forty-eight per cent of all students come from immigrant-headed households. This is not only an urban phenomenon – schools across the country are encountering large numbers of children from immigrant families. It is increasingly clear that the adaptations of these children will be an important factor in the remaking of the American economy and society.

For many individuals, migration results in substantial gains. Some escape political, religious, or ethnic persecution while others migrate for economic reasons. Long-separated families may be reunited. Some immigrants are motivated by the opportunity for social mobility while others migrate in the spirit of adventure. Whatever their motives, immigration is considered worthwhile for many. Still, the gains of immigration come at considerable costs which could not have been anticipated at the moment of departure. The costs and pressures of migration are in particular felt by the children of immigrants.

The pressures of migration are profoundly felt by the children of immigrants. These children experience a particular constellation of changes and experiences that are likely to have an impact upon their developing psyches. In this chapter, I examine how the stresses of immigration are complicated by both the structural barriers and the 'social mirroring' of nativist responses and racism that many immigrant children encounter. When the inherent stresses of immigration are

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compounded by patterns of structural and psychological violence, immigration becomes traumatic.

Surprisingly little research has focused on the psychological experiences of immigrant children (García-Coll and Magnuson 1998). Much of the work to date either has emphasized the adult immigrant experience or has examined the physical rather than the psychological health of these children. This chapter is a theoretical contribution to this emerging field based on analyses of the first wave of data from the Longitudinal Immigrant Student Adaptation Study (a large-scale interdisciplinary research project which I co-direct with Marcelo Suárez-Orozco). This project involves five groups of immigrant children coming to the United States from China, Central America, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Mexico. We are following 425 recently arrived immigrant children over the course of five years.<sup>1</sup> Using anthropological and psychological techniques, we are assessing the children's adaptation to the new society, with particular emphasis on the schooling context.

### Stresses of immigration

Transitions of any kind have long been regarded by social scientists and mental health professionals to be stressful (Schlossberg 1984). Events such as moves, job changes, and ruptures in relationships are known to be highly disruptive, often triggering a variety of reactions including anxiety, anger, depression, somatic complaints, and illness (Dohrenwend 1986). Stress is particularly noxious when the individual is unable to cope in his or her usual manner. The stakes are even higher when (s)he perceives that there are serious consequences to not adapting (House 1974). Both of these conditions are met in the process of immigration.

By any measure, immigration is one of the most stressful events a person can undergo. Most critically, immigration removes individuals from many of their relationships and predictable contexts – extended families and friends, community ties, jobs, living situations, customs, and (often) language. Immigrants are stripped of many of their sustaining social relationships, as well as of their roles which provide them with culturally scripted notions of how they fit into the world. Without a sense of competence, control, and belonging, they may feel marginalized. These changes are highly disorienting and nearly inevitably lead to a keen sense of loss (Ainslie 1998; Grinberg and Grinberg 1989).

<sup>1</sup> The children attend forty-two schools in eight school districts in the Boston and San Francisco area. Ethnographic observations are conducted by twenty-nine highly trained bilingual/bicultural graduate social science students.

At the most dramatic end of the stress spectrum are the stresses that result in post-traumatic symptomatology. Events such as experiencing or witnessing killing, rape, or torture often lead to transient as well as long-term symptomatology. Recent arrivals originating from the former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Indochina, Central America, and Haiti are examples of waves of immigrants who come from regions where they may well have undergone trauma (Somach 1995). Symptom clusters resulting from PTSD include recurrent traumatic memories, and a general numbing of responses, as well as a persistent sense of increased arousal leading to intense anxiety, irritability, and outbursts of anger, difficulty concentrating, and insomnia (Horowitz 1986; Smajkic and Weane 1995). Immigrants who experience trauma will often suffer recurring waves of these symptoms over a period of time; the severity of the symptoms will depend on the extent of the trauma and the psychological, social, and material resources available to the victims. These symptoms add significantly to the stresses of immigration.

Concern with violence is a recurring theme that we have found among many of our informants. An alarming number of immigrant children experience a variety of forms of stress which may lead to post-traumatic symptomatology. In addition to the violence experienced prior to migration (in the cases where families are fleeing war or civil unrest), all too many immigrant children witness a disconcertingly high level of violence in their new neighbourhood and school settings (see below). Furthermore, the actual border crossing is often a traumatic event for adults and children alike.

Scholars and human rights observers of the US-Mexican border – the most heavily trafficked in the world – have noted that undocumented border crossers are subject to a variety of dangers including exposure to environmental extremes (Eschbach *et al.* 1997) and violence at the hands of border agents, ‘coyotes’ (paid crossing guides), as well as others (Amnesty International 1998:24). According to a recent Amnesty International report ‘women are at particular risk of being physically abused, raped, robbed, or murdered on their journey’ (1998:24). The number of women who are raped sometime during their crossing journey is reported to be very high.

Our own interviews with immigrant children reveal that many of them experience the crossing of the border as highly traumatic. Some report actual events that occur to them (such as being detained, deported, humiliated, or beaten). Others report perceptions of potential danger. A nine-year-old Mexican boy with clearly evident fear in his voice told us of his crossing: ‘I had to be careful of where I put my feet. My parents

told me that the *migra* [slang term for the Immigration and Naturalization Service] had put piranhas in the river to keep us away.’<sup>2</sup>

A further form of stress specific to immigration has been termed acculturation (or acculturative) stress (Berry 1998; Flakerud and Uman 1996; Smart and Smart 1995). Acculturation refers to the process whereby individuals learn and come to terms with the new cultural ‘rules of engagement’. The individual’s place of origin provides her with familiar and predictable contexts; these predictable contexts change in dramatic ways following immigration. As Polish immigrant Eva Hoffmann says in her exquisitely written memoirs, immigration results in falling ‘out of the net of meaning into the weightlessness of chaos’ (Hoffmann 1989:151). Without a sense of competence, control, and belonging, migrants are often left with a keen sense of loss and marginality. A twenty-three-year-old Mexican informant insightfully summed up the experience: ‘I became an infant again. I had to learn all over again to eat, to speak, to dress, and what was expected of me.’

#### Responses to the stresses of immigration

While anticipating the migration and the initial period following the arrival, many immigrants experience a sense of euphoria (Sluzki, 1979). Expectations are often high as the anticipated possibilities may seem boundless. Energies are focused on attending to the immediate needs of orienting themselves in the new environment, including finding work and a place to live. As the realities of the new situation are confronted, individuals normatively begin to experience a variety of psychological problems (Ainslie 1998; Arrendondo-Dowd 1981; Grinberg and Grinberg 1989; Rumbaut 1977; Sluzki 1979; Suárez-Orozco 1998). Most frequently, the cumulative losses of loved ones and familiar contexts lead to feelings along a spectrum of sadness to depression to ‘perpetual mourning’ (Volkan 1993). The dissonances in cultural expectations and of predictable contexts lead many to experience an anxious disorientation (Grinberg and Grinberg 1989). Disappointed aspirations and dreams, when coupled with a hostile reception in the new environment, may lead to feelings of distrust, suspicion, anger, and even well-founded paranoia (Grinberg and Grinberg 1989).

The repercussions of the responses at the individual level are felt within the family. Sluzki (1979) argues that migration has destabilizing effects on the family. Indeed, migration creates particular pressures on the family system. It is not unusual for there to be an increase in conflict

<sup>2</sup> Please note that all quotations from our informants are translations from their native language.

between family members following migration (particularly if there was pre-existing marital tension). Migration often creates changes within the structure of the family: former family leaders may be 'demoted' (Shuval 1980) and the nature of the gender relationships may shift. Espin argues that 'immigrant families may become entrenched in traditional social and sex role norms as a defense against the strong pressures to acculturate' (1987:493). In other cases, as immigrant women move into the workplace, their new role as family providers may at once provide them with new-found independence and create tensions within their relationships.

Many immigrant families incorporate extended family members and are more interdependent and hierarchical than traditional Anglo-American families (Smart and Smart 1995). Some of these characteristics may be in part culturally determined but others may be secondary to migration. Extended families will often live together to share both the financial and the childcare burdens. In the absence of other social support networks, they may rely on each other considerably more than most non-immigrant families.

Immigrant parents often have to make dramatic sacrifices for what they hope will be a better future for their children. They are frequently fiercely protective of their children with deep-seated concerns about the perceived dangers of the new environment (including the potential of becoming too Americanized). Within the new context, they may set limits that are significantly more stringent than they would have had they stayed in their country of origin. At the same time, immigrant parents are often quite dependent upon their children. The children may develop language skills more quickly than their parents and consequently serve as interpreters and errand-runners for the family. Alternating between 'parentifying' the children and, at the same time, severely constricting their activities and contacts, may create significant tensions within the family.

Many immigrant parents (particularly those coming from poorer families) work in several jobs. These multiple obligations lead them to be relatively unavailable to their children. For example, because their work schedules do not permit much flexibility, immigrant parents are often unable to attend school functions: as a result, educators lament the perceived lack of interest in their children's education. It is a mistake, however, automatically to interpret this as lack of interest or concern. Immigrant parents often tell us that they feel that working hard is the best way they can help their children; yet these long work hours leave the children unattended. This physical absence compounds the psychological unavailability that often accompanies parental anxiety and

depression (Athey and Ahearn 1991). These two forms of absence all too frequently leave immigrant children to their own devices long before it is developmentally appropriate. While in some cases this leads to hyper-responsible internalized children, in other cases it leads to depressed children who are drawn to the lure of alternative family structures such as gangs (Vigil 1988).

The time frame for adaptation to the new culture is usually quite different for children than for adults. Children are quickly forced to contend with the host society more intensely than their parents. Schools represent an important first host-culture site encountered by the children. There, they meet teachers (who are usually members of the dominant culture) as well as children from both the majority and other minority backgrounds. Hence, they are forced to contend more quickly and more intensely with the new culture than do their parents who are likely to work in jobs that do not require much in the way of language skills or which may be largely populated by other members of the immigrant community (M. Suárez-Orozco 1998). The relative rapidity of the children's adaptation may create particular tensions. Parents may try to slow down the process by warning children not to act like other children in the new setting. Children may also have feelings ranging from vague to intense embarrassment in regard to aspects of their parents' 'old country' and 'old fashioned' ways.

The potential for miscommunication should not be overlooked or underestimated in immigrant families. As noted earlier, children often learn the new language more quickly than do their parents. Most children long to be like others: many will quickly show a preference for the language of the dominant culture (Portes and Hao 1998). Furthermore, even if the child continues to speak the home language, the level of fluency is likely to be influenced by the fact that after a number of years in the new culture, without a concerted effort, the vocabulary and literacy level of the language of origin usually lags far behind that of the host culture. Hence, while the child may easily communicate about basic needs in her language of origin, she is likely to have more difficulty communicating subtleties of thought and emotion in that language (Wong-Fillmore 1991). By the same token, often the opposite is true with the parents. Hence, one of the parties in the conversation is likely to be at a disadvantage in complicated communication sequences. Furthermore, in complex discussions, subtleties of meanings are likely to be missed and miscommunication may result. It is not uncommon to overhear discussions in which parents and children switch back and forth between languages and completely miss one another's intent. Children are also not above deliberately misleading their parents. A

thirteen-year-old Mexican boy admitted to us that he had told his parents that the 'F' on his report card stood for 'fabulous'!

Our new research suggests that tensions between parents and children are particularly heightened in cases where the children have been separated from their parents for long periods of time. A number of the new immigrants are following a pattern whereby one or both parents go ahead to the host country leaving the children with relatives. These separations often last for several years. During this time, the child is likely to attach him or herself to a new caretaker, who may or may not have affectionately attended to their needs. If the child succeeds in attaching to the new caretaker, the separation from this caretaker in order to be reunited with the parent can be quite painful (compounding the mourning and loss that follows the immigration). If the separation was painful and the child was neglected or abused, this too will complicate the adjustment following migration. In any case, there is likely to be some fall-out following these years of separation prior to migration (particularly within the Caribbean immigrant community as well as, increasingly, within the recent Central American community and from some areas in China).

A number of factors may significantly attenuate the severity of response to the transitions and stress of immigration (Garcia-Coll and Magnuson 1997; Laosa 1989; Rumbaut 1996). These mediating variables can roughly be broken down into two categories: sending factors and receiving factors.

### Mediating factors

#### *The sending context*

Each individual brings with him characteristics, traits, and experiences which are referred to as sending (or antecedent) factors. The circumstances surrounding the migration can play a key role. Was the individual 'pushed or pulled' out of their country of origin? If the immigrant is lured out of his homeland by the promise of opportunity and adventure, he is likely to be more positively disposed to the experience than if he is 'pushed' out by ethnic, religious, or political conflict, chronic hardship, or famine in the homeland. By the same token, at least initially, the individual initiating the migration is likely to be more enthusiastic about the experience than a reluctant spouse, elderly parent, or child (Shuval 1980). We have found that children in particular often have little understanding of the reasons behind the motivation to migrate. As a result they may not pass through a stage of looking

forward in anticipation to the migration and may experience the move as an imposition upon them from which they have little to gain.

Pre-immigration stress and trauma may be critical to the subsequent adaptation of immigrants. Did he experience trauma that was directly linked to the decision to migrate? Individuals and families who flee conflict-torn areas may have witnessed traumatic events and may have been subjected to torture and other forms of physical and psychological violence (Suárez-Orozco 1989). This is almost always true of refugees, a special kind of migrant. In addition, as noted earlier, these traumas may be compounded with further violence during the actual process of migration.

Socio-economic background has been found to be a consistent mediator of the stresses of the migration process (Flaskerud and Uman 1996). Higher levels of education as well as economic resources play a decisive role in minimizing structural impediments (C. Suárez-Orozco 1998). On the whole, upper-middle-class immigrants sustain the least loss. They may be able to retain much of their prestige and may be able to travel back and forth to maintain their social relationships. Individuals and families of middle and lower classes are less likely to have opportunities to visit and may particularly suffer from being cut off from their loved ones.

Immigrants of middle-class backgrounds often experience significant losses in prestige: they frequently find employment in positions far below their training and qualifications because of language difficulties, lack of connections, or lack of certification in certain professions. In addition middle-class immigrants may suffer for the first time the painful experience of prejudice and discrimination in the new country. The poorest immigrants, who are largely members of the lower classes in their country of origin, often suffer tremendous adversity as a result of immigration. In spite of these difficulties – which may include xenophobia, racism, and fierce competition for the least desirable jobs – they often achieve relative improvements in their economic and social circumstances. In addition, while they certainly suffer from discrimination in the new country, social disparagement may not necessarily be a new experience. As members of the lower socio-economic class, they are likely to have suffered such treatment in their country of origin.

Personality and temperamental factors are likely to play a significant role in how the individual will respond to the migration process (Garcia-Coll and Magnuson 1997; Shuval 1980). A healthy response to dramatic change requires the ability to be flexible and adaptable to new circumstances. Individuals who are particularly rigid, or who have a high need for predictability, are likely to suffer more than those who are more

comfortable with change and new circumstances (Wheaton 1983). Those who are particularly shy, proud, or sensitive to outside opinions are also at higher risk as are those who are highly suspicious of the motivations of others. An effective arsenal of coping strategies, on the other hand, is a great asset (Lazarus and Folkman 1984; Pearlin and Schooler 1978).

By the same token, psychological and physical health prior to migration will also aid or impede the ease of the response to immigration. Individuals who are suffering from post-traumatic stress (as discussed earlier) are of course highly at risk. So, too, are individuals who suffer from depressive tendencies as well as any of a number of other psychiatric disorders. Physical health may also play a role, particularly if an illness or disability interferes with either maintaining gainful employment or with general quality of life.

A variety of other sending factors can also help to mediate the migration process. Possessing the language skills of the new country, clearly, is an asset. Religiosity and connection with a church may also play a positive role. The rural-to-urban shift (a not uncommon pattern for many immigrants) on the other hand may complicate the ease of transition. Many immigrant children in our study report to us that they find it very difficult to adjust to the *encerramiento* (as many said in Spanish for being 'shut-in'). While they may have had considerable freedom to play and roam their neighbourhoods in their place of origin, they often lose such freedoms when the move to an urban environment.

#### *The receiving context*

Just as a number of factors related to the sending situation will ease or impede the adjustment to the new context, conditions in the new host milieu will also play a significant role. At the top of the list is the availability of a social support network. The relative absence of social support has been linked to the etiology of disease, mortality, slowed recovery, and mental illness. By the same token, the presence of a healthy social support network has long been regarded to be a key mediator to stress (Cobb 1988; Cohen and Syme 1985).

Interpersonal relationships provide a number of functions (Wills 1985). Instrumental social support includes the provision of tangible aid (such as running an errand or making a loan); as well as guidance and advice (including information, and job and housing leads) so much needed by disoriented newcomers. Social companionship also serves to maintain and enhance self-esteem and provides much needed acceptance and approval. A well-functioning social support network, quite

predictably, is closely linked to better adjustment to the new environment. Of course, in part, the availability of an effective social support structure will be influenced by the individuals' pre-existing social competence. Individuals with highly developed social skills are likely to be better able to establish and draw upon interpersonal relationships (Heller and Swindle 1983).

A number of other factors within the host environment play a role in the adaptation of the immigrants. Whether or not the immigrant is 'documented' or 'undocumented' will obviously impact the opportunity structure in which (s)he is able to participate (Chavez 1992; Smart and Smart 1995) as well as the general quality of life. Feeling 'hunted' by the INS is highly stressful (Padilla *et al.* 1988) and leads to anxiety and (well-founded) paranoia. For adults the availability of jobs will be key. Here, social networks will play a key role as employers often rely on migrant networks to provide them with a constant source of potential new employees (Waldinger 1997; Cornelius 1998). Ability to find work, questions of pay, seasonal availability, safety, and the unpleasantness of the job will also play a role in adjustment.

For children, the quality of their schools will play a key role in the ease of transition. Unfortunately, many immigrant children find themselves in segregated, poverty-stricken, and conflict-ridden schools (Orfield 1998). Fear of violence is a central concern in the lives of many new immigrants. In our sample of schools, a number of administrators have reported high crime rates. In one of our participating middle schools, a student was recently raped and murdered; a high school principal told us of approximately thirty murders within the last year within the immediate neighbourhood; and many other school officials and students complain of significant gang activity within the school environs. A middle school student told us that a security guard, who had supposedly been hired to protect the schools' students, was the main dealer of drugs on campus. During a focus group we conducted with Mexican immigrant students in a San Francisco Bay Area school, students revealed that only a few days earlier, an escaped prisoner had barricaded himself during school hours within the school grounds, leading to an exchange of gunshots between him and the police.

Obviously, neighbourhood safety will do much to influence the quality of life for children and adults alike. Many immigrants move to inner-city areas in search of housing they can afford. Unfortunately, 'affordable' urban housing is often located in areas which may be characterized as 'war zones'. An eleven-year-old Mexican girl told us: 'There is a lot of violence here in the United States. They kill people in the streets.' A thirteen-year-old Mexican girl said: 'There I was free.

Here there are bad people who hurt children.' A twelve-year-old Haitian girl recounted: 'I don't like the neighborhood where I live. There is a lot of crime in the neighborhood. One day, we were sleeping and the police came and opened the door. There was a man in the apartment above us who had killed his wife . . . I was scared because he could have come and killed us too.' A ten-year-old Mexican boy reported a frightening incident: 'I saw a man lying out in front of my house with blood on his legs and stomach. I think someone shot him.' Another child, a thirteen-year-old Chinese girl, told us: 'I have seen gang activities near my house . . . I am afraid to go out. I don't feel safe.'

Parents, too, fear for their children's safety. They often require them to stay within the confines of their (often cramped) living spaces, out of harm's way in the streets. Many of our informants lamented the resulting loss of freedom following immigration. A thirteen-year-old Dominican boy said: 'Back home, I had much more freedom. I didn't have to ask permission for every little thing. Here, our parents are much more protective of us. They are always after us telling us to be careful and not to come home late.' When asked about what the most difficult thing about migration was for her, one twelve-year-old Mexican girl replied: 'If you go out in the United States, you are always afraid of everything. In Mexico, you can go out with confidence.' A fourteen-year-old Salvadorean girl said: 'The most difficult thing about immigration is that I am always locked up in the house.' A twelve-year-old girl who recently immigrated from Haiti recounted: 'In Haiti I could go where I wanted. Here I cannot do that because there are bad kids.' A fourteen-year-old Dominican boy said: 'I don't like being closed in. You can't go out.' A thirteen-year-old Chinese girl summed up the feeling of many of our informants: 'It is very lonely in America having nobody to talk to and staying home all day long after school every day.'

The general social climate of reception to the new immigrants plays a critical role in their adaptation. Garcia-Coll and Magnuson (1997:119) argue that 'discrimination against immigrants today, and particularly immigrants of color, is widespread in America'. Prejudice and exclusion are established forms of social traumata. 'Prejudicial exclusion is, even if neglected, a potent psychosocial stressor impinging on the daily lives of many . . . interfering with their mental and social adaptation and adjustment' (Adams 1990:363). The exclusion can take a structural form (when individuals are excluded from the opportunity structure) as well as an attitudinal form (in the form of disparagement and public hostility).

In the following section, I illustrate some of the ways in which both

structural and social exclusion are impacting the lives of immigrant children.

### The social climate: hostility in the receiving context

#### *Structural violence and exclusion*

In recent years, there has been a growing concern about the large influx of new immigrants. A number of public opinion polls reveal negative attitudes towards immigrants. In one recent survey, over two-thirds indicated that they did not want to extend the invitation of the Statue of Liberty to new immigrants (Espenshade and Belanger 1998). In their thorough analysis of recent public opinion polls, Princeton scholars Espenshade and Belanger found that many respondents perceive that immigrants have a negative economic impact, drain the social service system, contribute to crime, and show little prospect of assimilation. These prevailing beliefs and sentiments led to several dramatic anti-immigrant initiatives (see Suárez-Orozco 1996).

California's Proposition 187 illustrates the explosive tensions generated by large-scale immigration in a state which had undergone a severe economic recession. In November 1994, California voters overwhelmingly approved this proposition, known as the 'Save our State' initiative. This initiative was designed to 'prevent illegal aliens in the United States from receiving benefits or public services in the State of California' (Proposition 187 1994:91) including emergency medical services and education for children.

This controversial initiative generated a great deal of legal action including several suits in Federal and State courts. Currently, the law is not being fully implemented. However, if it were to be, it is estimated that some 300,000 undocumented immigrant children in California would be banned from enrolling in public schools. Many observers argue that this proposition would do nothing to prevent further unauthorized immigration to the State of California, and could in the long term cost the tax payers of that state far beyond whatever short-term savings could be realized by not providing public schooling to these immigrant children (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 1995).

The draconian 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Responsibility Act is another example of structural exclusion, which some observers have argued will have a harmful effect on large sectors of society (Eschbach *et al.* 1997; Hagan 1998). In addition to a steep intensification of deportations, the internal security provision of this new Act ushered in a nationwide effort at fingerprinting, wiretapping, INS

linkages with local and state law enforcement, and other measures supposedly designed to combat links between immigration, the drug trade, and terrorism. The Act has obvious implications for the civil rights of immigrants and citizens alike – particularly those of colour (see Eschbach *et al.* 1997; M. Suárez-Orozco 1998). The new law also changes in significant ways the process by which citizens and permanent residents can bring family members to permanently reside in the United States.

In 1996 President Clinton announced 'the end of the era of big government'. Ironically, that same year, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) experienced an explosive growth. In September 1996 President Clinton signed the Illegal Immigration and Responsibility Act. The Act, *inter alia*, doubled the size of the Border Patrol over five years. Likewise, US military personnel were given a substantial role at the southern border, assisting the INS in various initiatives including surveillance and maintenance and the operation of highly sophisticated military equipment (Andreas 1998). Alarming, since the implementation of these policies, there has been a significant increase in human rights violations at the border (see Amnesty International 1998:24; American Friends Service Committee 1992) as well as deaths at the border resulting from exposure and violence as migrants make more dangerous crossings (Hagan 1998). Although the massive new law enforcement effort has made the southern border of the United States harder to cross, scholar Peter Andreas concludes that 'illegal entry is certainly more difficult and dangerous, but there is little evidence to suggest that migrants are giving up and heading home' (Andreas 1998:347).

A side effect of these policies is the increasing criminalization of the border region. Unauthorized crossings went from being mostly acts of self-smuggling to a process structured around widening circles of criminality. Undocumented immigrants must increasingly rely on the work of professional alien smugglers and document forgers – a high-profits growth industry on both sides of the border. Some scholars of immigration have noted that, while the new border control efforts make for dramatic symbolic politics, they largely fail actually to reduce illegal immigration flows through the southern sector (Andreas 1998). While in the past many undocumented migrants would shuttle back and forth across the border in steady transnational flows, increasingly, once they make the crossing into the US, many of them are unlikely to risk a return home. Hence, ironically, they are more likely to stay within the US rather than return to their point of origin. Though these initiatives generate a seductive imagery of state control reinforcing the myth that

the problem of illegal immigration is to be found on the border, the problem of unauthorized immigration clearly requires more intelligent, long-term, bi-national responses than we have seen to date (M. Suárez-Orozco 1998).

These exclusionary policies are not limited to the border. In recent years, we have witnessed a range of policies aimed at excluding immigrants (especially undocumented immigrants) from accessing a variety of publicly funded services. Immigration controls have moved slowly over the years from the border to the classroom (Proposition 187), the hospital (see Brown *et al.* 1998) and the welfare agency (see Eschbach *et al.* 1997). Noticeably missing from these initiatives is a systematic attempt to punish or police the businesses that secure significant gains through immigrant labour – whether documented or undocumented. The employer sanction laws have been anaemically enforced due to lack of resources, personnel, and political will. Businesses therefore continue to achieve great gains and risk little sanctioning for widespread use of unauthorized immigrant labor (Cornelius 1998).

These policies and practices are generating a pattern of intense exclusion and segregation between large numbers of immigrants and the larger society. This intense segregation is evident in the work force (see Waldinger 1996), schools (see Orfield 1998), and residential patterns (see M. Suárez-Orozco 1998). Increasingly large numbers of immigrants of colour are settling into highly segregated neighbourhoods where deep poverty, violence, and substandard schools are the norm. In these neighbourhoods, counter-cultural gangs are ever present and eager to recruit and 'socialize' immigrant children into alternative economies where drug-dealing and drug-taking is an important feature of the social scene (Vigil 1988).

These patterns of deep segregation are further intensified by an increasing segmentation in the US economy. While some immigrants, particularly those who are highly educated and highly skilled, are readily moving into the knowledge-intensive sectors of the economy, large numbers of low-skilled immigrants find themselves in low-skilled service sector jobs – a sector of the economy that shows no prospect for status mobility (see Portes and Zhou 1993). Among the children of immigrants, new research suggests another worrisome development. A recent study by Dowell Myers suggests that, while the children of Mexican immigrants have made important gains in terms of school attainment, those gains have not been rewarded proportionally in terms of wages in the marketplace. Particularly for the children of immigrants, there has been a disconcerting pattern of 'declining returns' to education (Myers 1998).

*Psychological violence and social exclusion*

The structural exclusion suffered by immigrants and their children is detrimental to their ability to participate in the opportunity structure. The attitudinal social exclusion also plays a toxic role. How does a child incorporate the notion that she is 'an alien', 'an illegal', unwanted and not warranting the most basic rights of education and health care? Even if they are not undocumented, the hostility prevalent in the current climate radiates to all children with accents and darker complexions.

A resident of southern California articulated the fears of many: 'You find the huge gangs of illegal aliens that line the streets, shake down our school children, spread diseases like malaria, and roam our neighborhoods looking for work or homes to rob. We are under siege' (quoted in Chavez 1992). One of the leaders in the Proposition 187 effort was propelled to 'do something' after a visit to an Orange County social service agency. She says: 'I walked into this monstrous room full of people, babies, little children all over the place and I realized no one was speaking English . . . I was overwhelmed with this feeling: Where am I? What has happened here?' (quoted in Suro 1994). In Flushing, New York, like in many other communities across the nation, there has been a dramatic increase in its immigrant population in the last ten years. For many long-time residents, the change is 'proving painful, even traumatic' (Dugger 1997). One resident commented: 'Everything is changing' while another said 'It's very discombobulating, very upsetting. We all recognize that change is necessary but it just doesn't sit well.' Though the new immigrants have brought resources to Flushing revitalizing declining neighbourhoods, a Congresswoman said of the new immigrants: '[They are] more like colonizers than immigrants. They sure as hell have lots of money and they sure as hell know how to buy property and jack up rents of retail shops and drive people out' (quoted in Dugger 1997).

Adults are not the only members of American society who share such feelings. Non-immigrant, non-minority students in public high school in northern California had these thoughts to share with educational researcher Laurie Olsen: '[Immigrants] come to take our jobs, and are willing to break their backs for shit pay, and we can't compete.' Another said: 'These Chinese kids come over here and all they do is work and work and work and work, and all you have to do is look in the AP [Advanced Placement] classes and you'll see they are filling them up. No one can compete any more.' Still another summed up a prevailing fear: 'They just want to take over' (quoted in Olsen 1998:68).

These quotes suggest several points. Most obviously, the hostility is

undisguised and unambivalent. The immigrants embody the feeling of 'uncanny' (Freud 1968) - the horror of being lost in a changing world that appears to be menacing activates such primitive defences as splitting and projection. In the anti-immigrant talk, 'aliens' appear either as parasites who are siphoning away limited resources (such as jobs and social services) or conversely as powerful and sinister aliens who control vast resources, thus eliciting envy.

Of course, anti-immigrant sentiments are nothing new. During the 1920s a frequent contributor to the *Saturday Evening Post* contrasted the 'old immigrants' (from northern Europe) with the 'new immigrants' (those from southern and eastern Europe): the former, he maintained, were able to blend into the melting pot. The latter he accused of entering the country simply to earn money with the intention of returning to their homelands. Maintaining that many were illiterate, he argued that they would be difficult to assimilate: 'If the United States is the melting pot, something is wrong with the heating system, for an inconveniently large portion of the new immigration floats around in unsightly indigestible lumps. Of recent years, the contents of the melting pot have stood badly in need of straining in order that the refuse might be removed and deposited in the customary receptacle for such things' (Simon 1985:83). Though this was written in the 1920s, the sentiment it expresses is shared by many in the 1990s. The fear (then as now) was that 'America has largely become the dumping ground for the world's human riffraff, who couldn't make a living in their own countries' (Simon 1985:83). The new immigrants of the time were viewed as intellectually inferior, lazy, crime-prone and altogether inassimilable.

Indeed a consideration of the historical record strongly suggests that there is a remarkable consistency in the responses to immigrants. Historian Rita Simon conducted an exhaustive review of media representations of immigrants in the United States over the span of a 100 years (1880 to 1980) examining fifty years of public opinion polls from their beginnings at the end of the 1930s (Simon 1985). Her findings illustrate a classic pattern of response to new arrivals - American citizens have held consistently negative attitudes towards people wishing to enter the United States; the more recent the immigrant group, the more negative the opinion. On the whole, while the people who came in earlier waves are thought to have been 'good folk', new immigrants are viewed as 'pure scum' (Simon 1985:88).

Thomas Espanshade and Maryanne Belanger (1998) of Princeton University undertook a comprehensive study of American public opinion polls on immigration. In their study of national surveys by twenty different organizations over a thirty-year period, they found that,

historically, there has been a very strong correlation between anti-immigrant sentiment and economic anxiety, particularly around unemployment rates. Put simply, when unemployment rates are high, anti-immigrant feelings are also high. Likewise, when unemployment rates drop and there is optimism about the economy, negative attitudes towards immigration have tended to level off. It is no accident then, that the high level of anti-immigration sentiment peaked during the economic slump of the late 1980s and early 1990s. In media accounts, in the latter part of the 1990s, concerns with immigration dropped off somewhat though the anti-immigration rhetoric continues to be close to the surface. In general, more educated respondents tend to be more positively disposed towards immigrants than less educated respondents (Espanshade and Belanger 1998). Perhaps, in a world of 'limited good' (Foster 1972), these respondents perceive that they have less to gain and more to lose from immigrants than do members of the more privileged classes. Therefore, although the overall economic situation improved in the latter part of the 1990s, at the lower end of the wage structure native workers already concerned with the segmented hourglass economy, continued to perceive a grave threat from the twin pressures of globalization (jobs leaving for the developing world) and immigration (migrants from the developing world competing for jobs at the bottom of the hourglass).

The fear of the cultural dilution of the country's Anglo-Saxon institutions and values is an enduring preoccupation feeding the anti-immigrant ethos (Espanshade and Belanger 1998). Citizens today feel more positive about immigrants from Europe than they do about immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean. Immigrants who do not speak English and who 'look' different from the dominant Anglo-European majority make many non-immigrants uncomfortable. The fact that 80 per cent of the 'new immigrants' (post-1965) are of colour (coming from Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean) is clearly a further complicating factor in our race-polarized society. When it comes to immigration, race and colour indeed matter. Immigration is an enduring concern that lurks just below the surface of public consciousness in the United States. Opportunistic politicians have long found immigrants to be convenient scapegoats onto which to direct righteous anger about all sorts of chagrins (Jones-Correa 1998). At best they are viewed as competitors and at worst they are seen as sinister. As a result, a range of negative attributes can be easily projected onto them.

George DeVos and Marcelo Suárez-Orozco (1990) developed an interdisciplinary, psychocultural framework to explore the experience of self in cultures where patterned inequalities shape social interaction. In

addition to the obvious structural inequalities they face, some minorities are also targeted for 'psychological disparagement'. They become the object of symbolic violence which stereotypes them as innately inferior (lazier, prone to crime, and so forth). These attributes make these disparaged minorities, in the eyes of the dominant society, less deserving of sharing in the society's dream and justifies their lot in life.

### Identity formation under siege

#### *Social mirroring*

How do these charged attitudes and rampant hostilities affect the immigrant child's sense of self? A first point to consider is whether or not children are aware of these hostilities. As part of the data collection for the Longitudinal Immigrant Student Adaptation Study, we asked immigrant children what the hardest thing about immigration was. Discrimination and racism were recurring themes discussed by many of the children. The following statements are representative of the kinds of responses we received. A thirteen-year-old Chinese girl told us: 'Americans discriminate. They treat you badly because you are Chinese or black. I hate this most.' A fourteen-year-old Mexican boy responded: 'The discrimination [is the hardest thing] . . . Here [in the US] Latinos discriminate against African-Americans, African-Americans against Latinos. You see it in the streets, and on TV and you hear it on the radio.' A twelve-year-old Central American girl said: 'One of the most difficult things about immigrating is that people make fun of me here. People from the United States think that they are superior to you.' The perceived discrimination can take a variety of forms. A fourteen-year-old Haitian girl reported: 'I do not like the discrimination. For example, when you go to a store, whites follow you to see if you are going to take something.' A twelve-year-old Haitian boy told us: 'There are many teachers that treat us [the students] well, but there are many who do not. There are teachers who even though they deny it, are racists.' An eleven-year-old Haitian girl recounted that she hated it 'when whites yell at Haitians'. A fourteen-year-old Haitian boy summed it up by saying: 'The racism is here. The Americans believe they are superior to other races.'

We asked all the immigrant children in our study to complete the sentence 'Most Americans think [people from my country] are . . .'. Strikingly, for Latino and Haitian immigrants, the most common response was: 'Most Americans think that we are bad.' Overwhelmingly, the children perceived that Americans had negative perceptions about them. Below are other responses we received:

- Most Americans don't think well of us. (fourteen-year-old Central American girl)
- Most Americans think that we are poor people. (nine-year-old Chinese girl)
- Most Americans think that we are ignorant. (fourteen-year-old Mexican old girl)
- Most Americans think that we are stupid. (ten-year-old Haitian girl)
- Most Americans think that we are very impolite. (twelve-year-old Chinese girl)
- Most Americans think that we don't know anything. (fourteen-year-old Mexican girl)
- Most Americans think that we can't do the same things as them in school or at work. (ten-year-old Mexican girl)
- Most Americans think that we are good for nothing. (fourteen-year-old Central American boy)
- Most Americans think that we are useless. (fourteen-year-old Dominican girl)
- Most Americans think that we are garbage. (fourteen-year-old Dominican boy)
- Most Americans think that we are members of gangs. (nine-year-old Central American girl)
- Most Americans think that we are thieves. (thirteen-year-old Haitian girl)
- Most Americans think that we are lazy, gangsters, drug-addicts that only come to take their jobs away. (fourteen-year-old Mexican boy)
- Most Americans think that we are bad like all Latinos. (twelve-year-old Central American boy)
- Most Americans think that we don't exist. (twelve-year-old Mexican boy)

Clearly then, immigrant children are aware of the prevailing ethos of hostility of the dominant culture. Psychologically, what do children do with this reception? Are the attitudes of the host culture internalized, denied, or resisted? Object relations theorist D. W. Winnicott can provide some insight into the processes at work. Winnicott focused much of his writing on the relationship between the mother and infant adding much to our understanding of the significance of this relationship in the formation of identity and a 'sense of self'. In articulating his concept of 'mirroring', he argued that:

the mother functions as a mirror, providing the infant with a precise reflection of his own experience and gestures, despite their fragmented and formless qualities. 'When I look I am seen, so I exist.' (Winnicott 1971:134)

Imperfections in the reflected rendition may and inhibit the child's capacity for self-experience and integration and interfere with the process of 'personalization' (Greenberg and Mitchell 1983:192-3).

The infant is highly dependent upon the reflection of the experience she receives from her mothering figure. The mother provides clues about the environment. In determining whether she need be frightened

by new stimuli, the infant will first look to her mother's expression and response. An expression of interest or calm will reassure the infant while an expression of concern will alarm her. Even more crucial is the mother's response to the infant's actions. Does the mother show delight when the infant reaches for an object or does she ignore it or show disapproval? No one response (or non-response) is likely to have much effect but the accumulation of experiences is significant in the formation of the child's identities and sense of self-worth. A child whose accomplishments are mirrored favourably is likely to feel more valuable than the child whose accomplishments are either largely ignored or, worse still, denigrated.

Although mirroring (along with a number of his other concepts) is an important contribution to our understanding of the developing child, Winnicott – like many of his psychoanalytic colleagues – overlooks the powerful forces of social systems and culture in shaping self-other relationships. Particularly as the child develops, the mirroring function is by no means the exclusive domain of maternal figures. In fact, with the exception of individuals falling on the autistic spectrum, all human beings are dependent upon the reflection of themselves mirrored back to them by others. 'Others' include non-parental relatives, adult caretakers, siblings, teachers, peers, employers, people on the street, and even the media. When the reflected opinion is generally positive, the individual (adult or child) will be able to feel that she is worthwhile and competent. When the reflection is generally negative, it is extremely difficult to maintain an unblemished sense of self-worth for very long.

These reflections can be accurate or inaccurate. In some cases, the reflection can be a positive distortion or what I call a 'false good': In such a situation the response to the individual may be out of proportion to his actual contribution or achievements. In the most benign case, positive expectations can be an asset. In the classic 'Pygmalion in the Classroom' study (Rosenthal and Jacobson 1968), when teachers believed that certain children were brighter than others (based on the experimenter randomly assigning some children that designation, unsubstantiated in fact) they treated the children more positively and assigned them higher grades. It is possible that some immigrant students, such as Asians, benefit somewhat from positive expectations of their competence as a result of being members of a 'model minority' – though no doubt at a cost (Takaki 1989). In a less benign example of 'false good' mirroring, individuals who are surrounded by those who do not inform them of negative feedback and laud even minimal accomplishments, may develop a distorted view of their own abilities and accomplishments. This would be the case with many political leaders or

movie stars as well as others with power and influence. There is also recent evidence that some children are over-praised; the resulting inflated sense of self-worth coupled with low frustration tolerance may be partially linked to violent outbursts (Seligman 1998).

I am more concerned, however, with the negative distortion or 'false bad' case. What happens to children who receive mirroring on the societal level that is predominantly negative and hostile? Such is the case with many immigrant and minority children. When the assumptions about them include expectations of sloth, irresponsibility, low intelligence, and even danger, the outcome can be toxic. When these reflections are received in a number of mirrors, including the media, the classroom, and the street, the outcome is devastating (Adams 1990).

Even when the parents provide positive mirroring, it is often insufficient to compensate for the distorted mirrors that children encounter in their daily lives. In some cases, the immigrant parent is considered out of touch with reality. Even when the parents' opinions are considered valid, they may not be enough to compensate for the intensity and frequency of the distortions of the House of Mirrors immigrant children encounter in their everyday lives. The statements made by the children in our study demonstrate that they are intensely aware of the hostile reception which they are encountering.

What can a child do with these hostilities? There are several possible responses. The most positive possible outcome is to be goaded into 'I'll show you. I'll make it in spite of what you think of me.' This response, while theoretically possible, is relatively infrequent. More likely, the child responds with self-doubt and shame, setting low aspirations in a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy: 'They are probably right. I'll never be able to do it.' Yet another potential response is one of 'You think I'm bad. Let me show you how bad I can be.'

#### *'Segmented assimilation'*

A number of theoretical constructs have been developed over the years to explore the immigration experience in American society. Historically, models developed to examine immigration were largely based on the European experience. These studies described patterns of assimilation (Gordon 1964) following various paths on what was depicted as a generally upwardly mobile journey. The argument was quite simple: the longer immigrants were in the United States the better they did in terms of schooling, health, and income.

Most recently, a number of distinguished sociologists such as Gans (1992), Portes and Zhou (1993), Rumbaut (1996), Waters (1990,

1996), and others have argued that a new 'segmentation' in American society and economy has been shaping new patterns of immigrant insertion into American culture. This research suggests what might be broadly termed a 'trimodal' pattern of adaptation. Some immigrants today are achieving extraordinary patterns of upward mobility – quickly moving into the well remunerated knowledge-intensive sectors of the economy in ways never seen before in the history of US immigration. On the opposite side of our hourglass economy, large numbers of low-skilled immigrants find themselves in increasingly segregated sectors of the economy and society – locked into low-skilled service sector jobs without much promise of status mobility (Portes and Zhou 1997).<sup>3</sup> In between these two patterns are yet other immigrant groups which seem to approximate the norms of the majority population – 'disappearing' into American institutions and culture without much notice.

This trimodal socio-economic pattern seems to be related to how the children of today's immigrants tend to do in school. In the last few years, there have been several studies on the performance of immigrant children in schools. The data suggest a complex picture. In broad strokes, we can say that the immigrant children of today also fit a trimodal pattern of school adaptation (a critical predictor of success in this society). Some immigrant children do extraordinarily well in school, surpassing native-born children in terms of a number of indicators – including grades, performance on standardized tests, and attitudes towards education (De Vos 1983; Kao and Tienda 1995). Other immigrants tend to overlap with native-born children (Rumbaut 1995; Waters 1996). Yet other immigrants tend to achieve well below their native-born peers (Kao and Tienda 1995; Rumbaut 1995; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 1995).

In addition to this pattern of variability in overall performance between groups, another disconcerting pattern has consistently emerged from the data. For many immigrant groups, length of residency in the United States is associated with declining health, school achievement, and aspirations (Kao and Tienda 1995; NRC 1998; Rumbaut 1995; Steinberg 1996; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 1995; Vernez *et al.* 1996).

A recent large-scale National Research Councils' (NRC) study considered a variety of measures of physical health and risk behaviours among children and adolescents from immigrant families – including general health, learning disabilities, obesity, emotional difficulties, and various risk-taking behaviours. The NRC researchers found that immi-

<sup>3</sup> This was substantiated by the school authorities and news reports.

grant youth were healthier than their counterparts from non-immigrant families. They researchers pointed out that these findings are 'counter-intuitive' in light of the racial or ethnic minority status, overall lower socio-economic status, and higher poverty rates that characterize many immigrant children and families that they studied. They also found that the longer youth were 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 behaviours such as substance abuse, violence, and delinquency (NRC 1998).

In the area of education, Ruben Rumbaut (1997) surveyed more than 5,000 high school students in San Diego, California and Dade County, Florida. He wrote:

an important finding supporting our earlier reported research, is the negative association of length of residence in the United States with both GPA [grade point average] 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 US and second generation status [that is, being born in the United States] are connected to declining academic achievement and aspirations, net of other factors. (Rumbaut 1997:46-8)

In a different voice, Reverend Virgil Elizondo, rector of the San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio, Texas articulates this same issue: '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' (quoted in Suro 1998:13).

#### *Negotiating identities*

At no time in the lifespan is the urge to define oneself *vis-à-vis* the society at large as great as during adolescence. According to Erickson (1964), the single greatest developmental task of adolescence is to forge a coherent sense of identity. He argued that for optimal development, there needs to be a certain amount of complementarity between the individual's sense of self and the varied social milieus he or she must transverse. This model made a great deal of analytical sense to explain the experiences of individuals living in more homogeneous worlds across their lifespan.

However, in an increasingly fractured, heterogeneous, transnational world, there is much less complementarity between social spaces. Hence, today we are less concerned with theorizing identity as a coherent, monolithic, and enduring construct than in understanding how identities are implicated in the ability to transverse increasingly discontinuous social, symbolic, and political spheres. The children of

immigrants must construct identities that will, if successful, enable them to thrive in incommensurable social settings such as home, school, the world of peers, and the world of work.

In this complex world, most children are required to move across discontinuous social spaces. For the children of immigrants, however, these discontinuities can be dramatic. Immigrant children today may have their breakfast conversation in Farsi, listen to African-American rap with their peers on the way to school, and learn in mainstream English about the New Deal from their social studies teacher. Therefore, the experience of the children of immigrants offers us a particularly powerful lens through which to view the workings of identity.

Given the multiple worlds in which immigrant children live, they face particular challenges in their identity formation (Aronowitz 1984; Grinberg and Grinberg 1989; Phinney 1998; Vigil 1988). When there is too much cultural dissonance, negative social mirroring and role confusion, and when the cultural guides are inadequate, an adolescent will find it difficult to develop a flexible and adaptive sense of self. Many are torn between the attachment to the parental culture of origin, the lure of the often more intriguing adolescent peer culture, and aspirations to join the American mainstream culture (which may or may not welcome them).

Optimistic hopes for the future are often tempered by pessimism borne of deprivation and disparagement. While immigrant and second-generation youth may believe that the 'American Dream' should be attainable with sufficient effort, the many limits of this dream become increasingly evident with experience. High school graduation no longer guarantees earnings sufficient to lead a good life, college tuition is prohibitively expensive, and networks and connections – which their parents may not have – do indeed make a difference in the opportunity structure.

To further encumber the process of identity-formation, the children of immigrants are a dissonant combination of precocious worldliness and sheltered naiveté. They are often vested with responsibilities beyond their years. They may be called upon to act as interpreters, to care for siblings, and to attend to chores at home while their parents work. They may be able to manipulate two languages and have insight into two different worlds. At the same time, particularly for girls, forays into the New World are often over-restricted by their anxious parents, which contributes to a relative naiveté. With a limited network of informed individuals to provide adequate information and advice, many immigrant children have difficulty navigating the turbulent waters of adolescence.

Given this multiplicity of factors, it is clear that immigrant adolescents

face special struggles in the formation of identity. Each individual forges an identity, finding ways to adapt to the vicissitudes of being a stranger in a new land. In 1937, Stonequist astutely described the experiences of social dislocation. He aptly described cultural transitions, which leave the migrant 'on the margin of each but a member of neither' (Stonequist 1937:4). He emphasized that the common traits of what he termed the 'marginal man' (he wrote in pre-feminist 1937 after all) evolved from the conflict of two cultures rather than from the 'specific content' (Stonequist 1937:9) of any particular culture. Stonequist contended that cultural differences create the most difficulty in circumstances where there are sharp ethnic contrasts and hostile social attitudes. His observations on the psychological costs of marginal status are as useful today as when he first wrote them.

In our work with immigrant children (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 1995) we have noted that youth attempting to transverse discontinuous cultural, political, and economic spaces tended to gravitate towards one of three dominant styles of adaptation which we have termed 'ethnic flight', 'adversarial', and 'bi-cultural'. A single child, depending upon age at migration, race, and socio-economic background, legal status, and, very importantly, the context of resettlement in the United States, may first gravitate to one style of adaptation. As she matures and develops and as her contexts change, she may develop another style of adaptation. We did not see these styles as fixed or mutually exclusive. We hypothesized that contexts, opportunities, networks, and social mirroring act as powerful gravitational fields shaping the adaptation of immigrant children.

Youths clustering around the 'ethnic flight' style often struggle to mimic the dominant group and may attempt to join them, leaving their own ethnic group behind. These are the youths who minimize or even deny the negative social mirroring they encounter. An earlier body of social science research examined the related issue of 'passing' among members of some ethnic minority groups (see Tajfel 1978 for example). This line of inquiry argued that individuals who attempted to pass had unresolved issues of what Erickson called 'shame and doubt' (1964:109–12) for which they may struggle to overcompensate. Many immigrant youth who deploy an 'ethnic flight' style may feel more comfortable networking with peers from the dominant culture. For these youths, learning standard English may serve not only instrumental purposes but also often may become an important symbolic act of identification with the dominant culture. Among these youth success in school may be seen as a route for instrumental mobility. It is also a way symbolically and psychologically to dissemble and gain distance from

the family and ethnic group. These are immigrants who travel their journey with light affective baggage. The idiom 'making it' for these youth tends to be independence and individualistic self-advancement.

Among these youth, typically the culturally constituted patterns of parental authority lose legitimacy. For these youths (as for many of their mainstream American peers) parents are 'out of it' and their ways, moral codes, values, and expectations are rejected as anachronistic. While this style of adaptation might have been consciously and unconsciously deployed by earlier waves of immigrants (especially those from Europe for whom their physical appearance allowed them the option of passing), from the vantage point of the late twentieth century, we are witnessing 'the passing of passing' (De Vos 1992). For many immigrants of colour today, this option is simply not viable.

Youth clustering around 'adversarial styles' of adaptation structure their identities around a process of rejection by the institutions of the dominant culture – including schools and the formal economy. These youths respond to negative social mirroring by developing a defensively-oppositional attitude. As Luis Rodriguez, the child of Mexican immigrants in southern California, recalled in his memoirs:

You were labeled from the start. I'd walk into the counselor's office for whatever reason and looks of disdain greeted me – one meant for a criminal, alien, to be feared. Already a thug. It was harder to defy this expectation than just accept it and fall into the trappings. It was a jacket I could try to take off, but they kept putting it back on. The first hint of trouble and preconceptions proved true. So why not be proud? Why not be an outlaw? Why not make it our own? (1993:84).

These are the children who are pushed out and drop out of school at a time when the US economy is generating virtually no meaningful jobs for those without formal schooling (Orfield 1998). Among these youth, the culturally constituted parental authority functions are typically corroded. These youth, therefore, tend to have serious difficulty with their parents and relatives (see Vigil 1988) and typically gravitate towards those sharing their predicament – their peers. In many cases, the peer group, not the elders, is in charge of the lives of these children. These youths are likely to act out behaviourally (Aronowitz 1984; Garcia-Coll and Magnuson 1997). In these situations, youth often construct spaces of competence in the underground and alternative economies. At the margins of the dominant society, these young people develop an oppositional counter-culture identity from which gangs may emerge. Anthropologist John Ogbu and his colleagues (1998) have argued that in contexts of severe inequality and ethnic antagonism, for many youths learning standard English and classroom success may elicit

severe peer group sanctioning when it is viewed as 'acting white' or being a 'coconut', an 'Oreo', or a 'banana'.

Youth clustering around the 'bi-cultural style' deploy what we have termed 'transnational strategies'. These children typically emerge as 'cultural brokers' mediating the often conflicting cultural currents of home culture and host culture. The 'work of culture' (to borrow the term of anthropologist Obeyesekere 1990) for these youths consists of crafting identities in the 'hyphen', linking aspects of the discontinuous, and at times incommensurable, cultural systems they find themselves inhabiting. Some of the youth will achieve bicultural and bilingual competencies, which become an integral part of their identity. These youth respond to negative social mirroring by identifying it, naming it, and resisting it. These are youth for which the culturally constructed social strictures and patterns of social control of immigrant parents and elders maintain a degree of legitimacy. They are able to network with equal ease among members of their own ethnic group as well as with others from different backgrounds. There is considerable evidence that those who develop bi-cultural efficacy (that is to say, social competence in both cultures) are at a significant advantage over those who are alienated with a part of their identity (La Fromboise, Coleman and Gerton 1998).

Among those bicultural youth that 'make it' in the idiom of the dominant society, issues of reparation often become important components of their life trajectories. In some such cases, when one's success appears in the context of the sacrifice of loved ones – which struggled to give them opportunities in the new land – feelings of compensatory guilt are quite common. Among many such youths, success in school will have not only the instrumental meaning (of achieving advancement, better-paying opportunities, and independence) but also the important expressive meaning of making the parental sacrifice worthwhile. To make it for these youth may involve reciprocating and giving back to parents, siblings, peers, and other members of the community (Suárez-Orozco 1989; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 1995).

The majority of immigrant children, coming from a variety of countries and social classes, arrive with extremely positive attitudes towards schooling and education. Three out of four of our 425 recent arrival informants supplied 'education' as the response to an open-ended sentence completion task: 'In life the most important thing is . . .' Yet a number of new studies have shown that the longer the children are in the new environment, the less positive they are about school and the more at risk they are to disengage from academic pursuits. Kohut (1971) theorized that loss, mourning, and the narcissistic injuries of

humiliation are linked to destructive tendencies such as aggression and violence. I would argue that the losses and mourning resulting from immigration coupled with the narcissistic injuries of the host culture's reception are a dangerous combination which may in large part account for this disconcerting pattern of decline.

Given that one in five children in the US is a child of immigrants, how these children adapt to their new country should be a crucial societal concern. The pathways they take, and the identities they form are multiply-determined. The resources, experiences, stresses, and trauma, as well as the coping strategies they bring with them play a key role. The structural environment (including neighbourhood, employment opportunities, and schools) within which they find themselves must not be overlooked. I have also argued that the social mirroring which the children encounter is critical. Immigrant children suffer a variety of forms of stress and loss which is only compounded by corrosive social disparagement. We should not underestimate the toll that these experiences and shattered dreams take upon the souls of developing children. The positive attitudes of recent immigrant children are a remarkable resource: as a society we would be best served by harnessing rather than crushing those energies.

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## 8 Modern Greek and Turkish identities and the psychodynamics of Greek–Turkish relations

*Vamik D. Volkan and Norman Itzkowitz*

This chapter examines the evolution of the modern Turkish and Greek identities and the psychological forces at work, both consciously and unconsciously, in the conflictual relationship between these two groups. The term 'identity' is relatively new in psychoanalysis. Freud did not mention it often, and, when he did, it was in a colloquial or literal sense. Erik Erikson was the key figure in bringing this concept to the attention of psychoanalysts. Referring to an individual's identity, Erikson (1956) stated that it 'connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself . . . [and] a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others' (1956:57). Revising Erikson's statement, we can say that large-group identity, i.e. Turkish or Greek identity, refers to the subjective experience of millions of people who are linked by a persistent sense of sameness while sharing some characteristics with others in foreign groups.

Peter Löewenberg (1995), a historian and psychoanalyst, notes that nations are 'born' differently. Shared realistic or fantasized perceptions of the past and the manner in which a large group's identity was established influence common attitudes and actions within a given society. When a large group interacts with other groups, particularly neighbours, it must protect its identity at all costs, especially when in crises (Volkan 1997, 1999). Historical events cannot be fully understood without an examination of the shared psychological processes which accompanied them or were initiated by them. This chapter examines history through a psychoanalytic lens. It describes how historians and psychoanalysts may collaborate in illustrating how and why identity issues of large groups emerge as a silent, but important factor in international relationships.

### Background

In 1071, at Manzigert (today known as Malazgirt), in eastern Anatolia (Asia Minor), a battle took place between Byzantine forces and the