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DIVERGENT REALITIES: THE HOME AND SCHOOL LIVES OF HAITIAN IMMIGRANT YOUTH

Fabienne Doucet*

Introduction

The phenomenon of large-scale immigration is a global event that blurs and challenges our constructions of nation, state, and identity. Estimates suggest that there are more than 130 million immigrants and refugees around the world today (M. M. Suárez-Orozco, 2001, Fall). Societies worldwide are being transformed in remarkable ways as a result of these unprecedented changes in the world population, and even the United States (U.S.), with its long-running history of immigration, is being stretched in new ways. In contrast to the first large wave of immigration (roughly between 1880 and 1930), in which 80 to 90 percent of immigrants to the U.S. were Western European, post-1965 immigration has been marked by an increase in immigration from Latin America, Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa, alongside a decrease in Western European immigration. In the middle of the 20th century less than 15 percent of our population was considered "ethnically marked minorities." Currently more than 25 percent of the population is so classified (C. Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Demographers have projected that by the middle of this century, approximately half of our population will be "minority" — a term that will obviously need rethinking.

Immigrant children are the fastest growing sector of the child population (Schmidley, 2001) and represent a vitally important subpopulation of immigrants. Today, one in five children in the U.S. is the child of immigrants, and by 2040, one in three children will fit this description (Rong & Preissle, 1998). On the basis of numbers alone, there is no doubt that the ways these children adapt to our society will profoundly impact the future of our nation.

As Christian educators and youth ministers, we have a clear biblical mandate to care for immigrant children and to learn about their unique developmental and spiritual needs. In this spirit, the purpose of this paper is to provide a broad context for understanding some of the developmental issues facing immigrant

* Fabienne Doucet, Ph.D., serves as Assistant Professor of Family Studies at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, Connecticut.

youth, as well as some of the familial processes that are activated in migration. To focus the discussion, I present an overview of the home and school experiences of one particular group of immigrant youth—Haitians. The Haitian immigrant population in the United States has been estimated at 500,000 and growing (Frère, 1999), yet there is a dearth of empirical knowledge regarding this group.

The issues discussed in this paper are based primarily upon a research study of U.S.-born and Haiti-born immigrant youth in the greater Boston area that I conducted between 2000 and 2002. The methodological details of the study are provided below, but it is important for me to note that this subject has personal significance as well. I immigrated to the U.S. from Haiti when I was ten years old. The move demanded adjustment to a new culture, and a whole new set of values and ways of doing things. These experiences form the basis for my deep interest in and commitment to the success of immigrant youth in this country, and they inform my work in important ways.

Immigration in Context

As the title of the paper implies, one premise of analysis of the life of immigrant children is they must learn to navigate successfully between two cultures—represented here by home and school—which may, at times, be diametrically opposed to one another. "Growing up in two cultures is at once a source of frustration and delight, shame and pride, guilt and satisfaction. It can be both a barrier to success and a good to accomplishment, a dislocating burden or an enriching dimension" (Toufexis, 1985, 84). Home and school are the primary sites for illuminating this navigational process because these are the two central spheres of young people's worlds. Two of the biggest concerns of parents who immigrate to the United States are that their children will lose ties to the homeland and that they will no longer embrace the values of their parents' countries of origin. The intergenerational transfer of values is thus an important task for many immigrant parents (Schönpflug & Silbereisen, 1990). Typically school is the first setting of sustained contact with a new culture for newcomer children, and parents are well aware of the pull of popular culture their children will most strongly experience at school. Furthermore, academic outcomes are a powerful barometer of current as well as future psychosocial functioning. How immigrant children fare in our schools will in many cases forecast their contributions as citizens to our society. While this has long been true, education is a particularly high stakes process in the new economy (M. M. Suárez-Orozco & Gardner, 2003). In this paper, "the home" refers not only to physical space, but is also symbolic of family members, neighborhood, and

the culture of origin. Here "school" refers to the physical setting and the adults, a part of that setting.

Brief Overview of Haitians in the U.S.

An important connection between the experiences of children and black children from immigrants from Europe in the U.S. is the issue of social class boundaries, new immigrant experiences, and prejudice due to both color and class. This is a relatively new experience for Haitian youth, primarily around class, with skin color playing a role (though arguably important) role in the social hierarchy (Zéphir, 1996). By contrast, this is a characteristic for social stratification in the Caribbean (Appiah & Gutman, 1998).

Ethnic identity is thus an important process for Haitian immigrants. A study of first generation immigrants of West Indian descent (1994) found that 42 percent of them identified themselves as Black American and 58 percent as Black and other identities (such as Jamaican or Haitian). Only 10 percent of the sample identified themselves as Black and other and believed that they were superior to other behaviors and attitudes. A final 20 percent identified themselves from Black American identity.

Other characteristics of Haitian youth include kinship networks and placing a high value on the notion of "family" both in Haiti and in the U.S. (typically extends beyond parents to include a group of kin, related both by blood and marriage; Winston, 1988). This broader sense of family is to Haitian immigrant's positive achievement: children may feel good because of the sacrifices of family members. This has been demonstrated among Central American youth (Gergen, 1988; M. M. Suárez-Orozco place a high value on community responsibilities when attempting to place children to behave whereas American youth focus on the individual child.

processes that are activated present an overview of the particular group of immigrant population in the United States (Frère, 1999), yet the data regarding this group are based primarily upon data from 1990-2002. Data are provided below, but it is clear that this has personal significance for me. I grew up in Haiti when I was ten years old, and I experienced a new culture, and a whole new set of experiences. These experiences form a strong commitment to the success of my children. They inform my work in

education. One premise of analysis is that children must learn to navigate a world presented here by home and school. Home is diametrically opposed to school. Home is at once a source of pride, guilt and satisfaction. School is a good to accomplishment, but a "distraction" (Toufexis, 1985, 1995). Sites for illuminating this are the two central spheres of concern of parents who worry that their children will lose ties to home. Home no longer embrace the values of home. The intergenerational transfer of values from many immigrant parents to their children. Usually school is the first setting for newcomer children, and the dominant popular culture their children experience. Furthermore, academic achievement is current as well as future. Immigrant children fare in our schools. Their contributions as citizens to society. Education is a particularly important issue. "Home" refers not only to physical space, but to family, neighbors, and

the culture of origin. Here "school" is conceptualized to include both a physical setting and the adults, peers, and curricula that are a vital part of that setting.

Brief Overview of Haitians in the U.S.

An important connection exists between African American children and black children from Haiti: skin color. While white immigrants from Europe in the early 1920s struggled to transcend social class boundaries, new immigrants often have to contend with prejudice due to both color and class (Rumbaut, 1994). This is a relatively new experience for Haitians, whose social structure is built primarily around class, with skin color playing only a secondary (though arguably important) role in relation to position in the social hierarchy (Zéphir, 1996). By contrast, skin color is the most powerful characteristic for social stratification and discrimination in the U.S. (Appiah & Gutman, 1998).

Ethnic identity is thus an important part of the acculturation process for Haitian immigrants. Within a sample of second-generation immigrants of West Indian and Haitian descent, Waters (1994) found that 42 percent of the 83 participants identified themselves as Black American and downplayed their ethnic identities (such as Jamaican or Haitian, for example). Thirty percent of the sample identified themselves as distinct from Black Americans and believed that they were superior to Black Americans in their behaviors and attitudes. A final 28 percent were immigrant-identified (rather than Black- or ethnic-identified). This group did not distance themselves from Black Americans, but also had a strong ethnic identity.

Other characteristics of Haitian immigrants include broad kinship networks and placing a high value on community. The notion of "family" both in Haiti and among Haitian immigrants typically extends beyond parents and siblings to include a wider group of kin, related both by blood and ancestral land ties (Gutwirth-Winston, 1988). This broader sense of family may be related to Haitian immigrant's positive attitudes concerning academic achievement: children may feel greater responsibility to be successful because of the sacrifices of family members both far and near, as has been demonstrated among Central American and Asian immigrants (Gergen, 1988; M. M. Suárez-Orozco, 1987). Haitian immigrants also place a high value on community responsibility. Ballenger (1992) found that Haitian teachers appealed to the idea of group values and responsibilities when attempting to get a class of 4-year-old Haitian children to behave whereas American teachers emphasized the individual child.

Overview of Immigrant Family Dynamics

Acculturation

One of the main developmental tasks of immigrants is acculturation, the process of learning another culture and deciding what portions of the culture of origin should be kept or relinquished (García Coll, Meyer, & Brillón, 1995). Acculturation is a dynamic process that is negotiated over time and through various circumstances. It extends to language preferences, food preferences, child-rearing behaviors and attitudes, and values and beliefs. Often, this process brings with it mixed emotions. Acculturation involves "initial joy, relief, and idealization of the new culture; disillusionment associated with adjustment; and gradual acceptance of the positive and negative aspects of the new culture" (Arrendondo-Dowd, 1981).

The process of acculturation varies as a function of age (García Coll et al., 1995). In school, children have more opportunities to be exposed to and master a new culture. This may create varying levels of acculturation within families, which could potentially lead to conflict. Portes and Rumbaut (1996) theorized a typology of generationally *dissonant* families, in which parents and children display different levels of acculturation, and generationally *consonant* families, in which parents and children display similar levels of acculturation. They further proposed that dissonance in levels of acculturation could put children at risk for negative outcomes because of the stress of trying to please their parents and adapt to the new culture. Many immigrant parents stress acculturation without assimilation. For example, Gibson's (1987) study of Punjabi immigrants in California revealed that parents cautioned their children against becoming "Americanized." This group defined "Americanized" as "forgetting one's roots and adopting the most disparaged traits of the majority group, such as young people making decisions on their own without parental counsel, leaving their families at age 18 to live independently, dating, dancing, and friendship between the sexes" (269).

Acculturation also may vary as a function of generational status in a host country (Margaret A. Gibson, 1987). That is, first-generation immigrants, who are not born in the host country, may feel more connected to their homelands while second and subsequent generations of immigrants may feel more connected to the host country. On the other hand, some first-generation immigrants have a strong desire to integrate fully and quickly into the host culture, abandoning the native culture entirely (Fitzpatrick, 1988), while some second-generation immigrants highly value being tied to the native culture (Margaret A. Gibson, 1987). In terms

of generational status, it is especially that children and adolescents also belong to the "second generation" if they were not born in the host country. The term "second generation" in the designation of generations of immigrants who migrate to a new country (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Grant, 1992). In the literature on immigration, the term "1.5 Generation" has been used by researchers to refer to the second generation (foreign-born, but U.S.-born and raised) children of immigrants (Fournon, 1990; Levitt & Waters, 2001; & Zhou, 1993), but in keeping with the literature, I consider the terms "second generation" and "U.S.-born children of foreign-born parents" (2004).

Power Shifts

In all societies, parents and children experience power shifts. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (1995) creates a situation whereby parents and children experience power shifts because they are trying themselves to the new culture. Children often are quick to learn the new country and may be responsible for all sorts of tasks, from answering the phone to filling out documents, to being present at doctor appointments. For both parents and their children, the power of the world is reversed" (Proulx, 1995). In my study, parents consistently reported a loss of power over the discipline of their children as their authority as parents was undermined in the new state ("L'état") to take children out of the country or to punish. Many told stories about parents who were perfectly reasonable and not abusive, but the parents in trouble were perfectly reasonable and not abusive. In many families, power shifts between parents and children are a common phenomenon among immigrant families during the migration process.

Whether the parents migrate to the country of origin to be taken care of (or the parent who stays behind), the first to live with relatives, reunification is a deal of stress (C. Suárez-Orozco, 1995). Separations vary in length, nature, and variables certainly play an impor

Family Dynamics

Tasks of immigrants from another culture and of origin should be kept or (Hollon, 1995). Acculturation over time and through language preferences, food and attitudes, and values with it mixed emotions. Confusion, and idealization of the new culture; and gradual aspects of the new culture"

varies as a function of age. Children have more opportunities to explore. This may create varying degrees of dissonance which could potentially (Proulx, 1996) theorized a typology of acculturation which parents and children display, and generationally *consonant* children display similar levels of dissonance in levels of risk for negative outcomes. Children must learn from their parents and adapt to the new culture. Parents stress acculturation. In Gibson's (1987) study of Punjabi immigrants, parents cautioned their children to be "independent." This group defined independence as adopting the most common practices, such as young people seeking parental counsel, leaving home independently, dating, dancing, and

as a function of generational status (Gibson, 1987). That is, first-generation immigrants born in the host country, first-generation immigrants feel more connected to the culture, while second and third-generation immigrants may feel more connected to the culture. Some first-generation immigrants migrate fully and quickly into the new culture entirely (Fitzpatrick, 1995). Immigrants highly value family (Gibson, 1987). In terms

of generational status, it is especially important to keep in mind that children and adolescents also can be members of the "first-generation" if they were not born in the United States. An important nuance in the designation of generational status is that children of immigrant parents who migrate as children are considered the 1.5-generation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Rong & Brown, 2001; Rong & Grant, 1992). In the literature on immigrant youth, the term "Second Generation" has been used by researchers to include both 1.5-generation (foreign-born, but U.S.-raised) and 2.0-generation (U.S.-born and raised) children of immigrant parents (Glick-Schiller & Fouron, 1990; Levitt & Waters, 2002; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993), but in keeping with the most recent immigration literature, I consider the terms "second generation" to refer to the U.S.-born children of foreign-born parents (Doucet, In press; Louie, 2004).

Power Shifts

In all societies, parents are guides for their children. As C. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco point out (2001), immigration creates a situation whereby parents cannot always serve as guides because they are trying themselves to learn the rules of the new culture. Children often are quicker to become cultural experts in the new country and may be responsible for helping their parents with all sorts of tasks, from answering the phone, to translating legal documents, to being present at doctor visits. This can be stressful for both parents and their children because "the natural order of the world is reversed" (Proulx, 1996). Among the participants in my study, parents consistently referred to what they perceived was a loss of power over the discipline of their children. They felt their authority as parents was undermined by the ability of the state ("L'état") to take children out of their homes for reported abuse. Many told stories about parents whose children had called 911 and gotten the parents in trouble for what these parents felt were perfectly reasonable and non-abusive instances of physical punishment. In many families, problems of power distribution between parents and children are compounded by a common phenomenon among immigrant families: separation during the migration process.

Whether the parents migrate first, leaving children behind in the country of origin to be taken care of by family members (or the parent who stays behind), or the children are sent abroad first to live with relatives, reunification often brings with it a great deal of stress (C. Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, & Louie, 2002). These separations vary in length, nature, and circumstance. All of these variables certainly play an important role in determining the impact

the separation will have on parent-child dynamics. However, even in the most ideal circumstances, reunification often brings with it great stress. Interestingly, in C. Suárez-Orozco et al.'s (2002) paper on family separations, one of the examples they provided as an illustration of separation and reunification scenarios is my real life story (used with my permission). My mother sent me to Haiti to be raised by her aunt and uncle when I was seven months old. Initially my aunt and uncle encouraged me to call them Aunt and Uncle, emphasizing that my mother and father lived in different countries, but that they loved me very much. And although I eventually started calling my aunt and uncle Mom and Dad, they continued to talk to me about my parents. My mother visited from the U.S. (or I traveled to visit her) every summer, and during the year, my "two families" constantly wrote letters and communicated via phone. These adults in my life took on what was much like a team approach in raising me, and they never competed with one another for my affection. The fact that many of my peers were also living apart from one or both of their parents served to normalize my situation, and other family members also were supportive of the arrangement. C. Suárez-Orozco et al. (2002) provide this as an example of an "ideal" situation, in contrast to some in which there is jealousy and mistrust among family members. Nonetheless, when at the age of ten I made the transition to living with my mother in the U.S., there was much we had to learn about one another. I was used to my mother as someone to enjoy for the summer, not as a disciplinarian. It was important that she establish her authority and role as my primary caretaker, and it was important that I learn the ways in which she parented differently from my "other" Mom and Dad. Such power shifts in family relationships are important to recognize, particularly as they apply to immigrant families.

Methodology of the Study

The study discussed in this paper was conducted under the umbrella of the Harvard Immigration Projects. The primary study of the projects was the Longitudinal Immigrant Student Adaptation (LISA) study, a five-year investigation of the experiences of newly arrived (1.5 generation) immigrant Central American, Chinese, Dominican, Haitian, and Mexican youth. Data were collected with a sample of approximately 400 youth in Boston and in the San Francisco Bay Area from 1997 to 2002. From 2000 to 2002, a parallel study was conducted of U.S.-born (second generation) Haitian immigrant youth, *Communicating Values across Generations of Haitian Immigrants*. Mirroring the methods of the LISA study, interview data was collected with the youth, their parents, and their teachers; participant-observation data was

conducted in several Boston municipalities. In three interviews, compared to 10 in the LISA study. Similarly, while the parents of 10 youth were interviewed twice, the parents of my participants were interviewed only once.

Participants were recruited through schools, and obtaining permission from school officials was a substantial proportion of U.S.-born students who were identified by the school as Haitian-American. From the schools, we obtained permission to participate in the study, and let participants obtain informed consent. A total of 10 youth participated in the study. I also interviewed 10 1.5 generation LISA participants. I analyzed the interview data using grounded theory techniques (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). In this paper, we will look at three emergent themes in the life of study participants, and their families.

Emergent Themes

Home Life: A Protected Space

Parental Strictness

One of the themes most common among participants was that of parental strictness. On the part of these young people, parents were permissive and permitted their children to go to the mall with friends, stay out until dark, and spend money. In contrast, Haitian parents were much more strict.

According to Tania, "Americans let their children do whatever they want. They get whatever attention to the children." Like American parents' rules echoes their peers: "Their rules are to go and do whatever they want. The Americans go and do whatever they want. They, American parents, they don't do in Haiti." Comments from Jerry, a Haiti-born student, seemed to have little control over students who seemed to us to be rebellious, drew a sharp contrast between the life of Haitian parents compared to

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conducted in several Boston middle and high schools. Due to time constraints, participants in this study of Haitian youth completed three interviews, compared to five interviews for LISA participants. Similarly, while the parents of LISA participants were interviewed twice, the parents of my participants were interviewed only once.

Participants were recruited from their schools. After obtaining permission from school officials, I visited schools with substantial proportions of U.S.-born Haitian youth and contacted students who were identified by teachers, staff, and other students, as Haitian-American. From there, students were invited to participate in the study, and letters were sent home to parents to obtain informed consent. A total of 34 second generation students participated in the study. I also analyzed data from a sample of 48 1.5 generation LISA participants for the purpose of comparison. I analyzed the interview data using classic thematic analysis techniques (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). For the purposes of the current paper, we will look at three emerging themes relating to the home life of study participants, and three themes relating to their school lives.

Emergent Themes Resulting From The Study

Home Life: A Protected Space

Parental Strictness

One of the themes most commonly expressed among participants was that of parental strictness. There was a perception on the part of these young people that American parents were quite permissive and permitted their children many freedoms, such as going to the mall with friends, visiting friends after school, playing outside until dark, and spending the night at friends' houses. By contrast, Haitian parents were perceived as restrictive and closed-minded.

According to Tania, "American [kids] come home whenever they want. They get whatever they want, and parents don't pay attention to the children." Likewise, Jerry's characterization of American parents' rules echoes Tania's, and that of many of her peers: "Their rules are to go anywhere they want, stay anywhere they want. The Americans go home any time they want;" and, "They, American parents, they let their kids stay out late which they don't do in Haiti." Comments like this were especially interesting coming from Jerry, a Haiti-born participant, whose single father seemed to have little control over him. Interestingly, most of the students who seemed to us to be quite independent, and even rebellious, drew a sharp contrast between the parenting practices of Haitian parents compared to those of American parents. While

they were obviously aware of the Haitian expectations for proper conduct, they behaved in ways that they themselves identified as more "Americanized."

Although we could argue that most adolescents in general feel they are not afforded as much freedom as their peers, Haitian parents themselves discussed their beliefs that children ought to be restricted in their freedoms. Like many other parents, Samantha's mother indicated that her children's education was her primary reason for staying in this country. Although all three of her children were born here, she does not find the U.S. to be an ideal setting for childrearing because children in this country have too much freedom: "In Haiti, you tell them something, they follow it exactly, but here they're free. In this country they [i.e., children] have too many privileges over adults;" and "When you raise a child in Haiti, you raise a child, but here they can do whatever they want." Parents also lamented the fact that, unlike in Haiti, they did not have a social network of family and friends who were prepared to help with child care responsibilities any time it was needed. Gyslaine's father joked about having to plan out his every move for the day to ensure that his daughter always had someone with her, and other parents discussed various arrangements—from putting children in after-school programs to having them spend a few hours a day at the library—for knowing where the child was at all times. Control emerged as an important issue for all parents, as all felt entitled to restrict and control their children's choices and activities. Christina's mother provides an interesting example of this phenomenon: "You should at the very least know when your child goes out and when he or she comes in. You have to know how the child dresses to go to school. You have to teach the child what clothes to wear. There are some liberties you simply cannot give the child until a certain age. You must choose for her or him...You can't tell me a child at seven- or eight-years-old already can start choosing, 'this is the style of clothes I want, these are the shoes I want, etc.' No, no, no. The child is not of the age to choose. For me, a child can choose these things starting at age 16. And even then, Mom should be involved in helping to make the choice."

Family Privacy

As demonstrated in the above examples, one of the issues for Haitian parents was the lack of trust they had in the American system, which they perceived as biased against parental authority. Again and again, parents spoke about feeling restricted to punish their children in the way they felt was most appropriate, namely spanking, for fear of being arrested or turned in to social services. Thus a second, related, theme present among the interviews was

that of family privacy. Haitian children are encouraged to keep (2001). This is in contrast to our expect some sharing of personal conversation. An interesting illustration from the interview notes taken of the LISA study:

Mother refused to complete. She agreed to complete refused. We explained that why we needed to complete the disclaimer that she had to answer questions. We agreed. Several times made reference to Immigration Naturalization Services all files. We tried to reassure. Makes me wonder if the family. She also refused questions I thought were toward the middle and cautious of how she answered even apologized and said very careful how you answer lie sometimes because of about not trusting people two very difficult children [Department of Social Services] Perhaps this has something

While the above case is of the families who participated generation project, it does raise many other families. First, researchers to be cautious about questions in States although there were interviews openly participants discussed with members working with Central families in the San Francisco Bay parents spoke openly about having Haitians and other immigrant give this information, however. Give immigration to the United States Haitian parents overwhelmingly perception that it is unacceptable.

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that of family privacy. Haitian families are very private, and thus children are encouraged to keep family information private (Zéphir, 2001). This is in contrast to our cultural mores in the U.S., where we expect some sharing of personal information as part of basic friendly conversation. An interesting illustration of this phenomenon comes from the interview notes taken by one of the research team members of the LISA study:

Mother refused to complete interview in Year 1. [In Year 5,] She agreed to complete the interview, yet upon arrival she refused. We explained the importance of the project and why we needed to complete the interview. She agreed, with the disclaimer that she could stop at any time and did not have to answer questions that made her feel uncomfortable. We agreed. Several times during the interview she made reference to Immigration [i.e., Immigration and Naturalization Services] and how they can have access to all files. We tried to reassure her that was not our agenda. Makes me wonder if there are immigration issues in the family. She also refused to answer or elaborate on many questions I thought were neutral. She became more friendly toward the middle and end of interview but remained cautious of how she answered questions. At one point, she even apologized and said in this country you have to be very careful how you answer questions—"We all have to lie sometimes because of this government." She also spoke about not trusting people and their agendas. This has had two very difficult children causing her to be involved in DSS [Department of Social Services] and other social services. Perhaps this has something to do with her attitude.

While the above case is not representative of the majority of the families who participated in the LISA study or in my second generation project, it does raise some points that are relevant to many other families. First, research team members were instructed to be cautious about questions regarding legal status in the United States although there were interesting cultural variations in how openly participants discussed documentation issues. Research team members working with Central American and Mexican immigrant families in the San Francisco Bay area, for example, noted that parents spoke openly about having or not having their papers. Haitians and other immigrant groups were never forthcoming about this information, however. Given the tenuous history of Haitian immigration to the United States, this is not surprising. Second, Haitian parents overwhelmingly expressed frustration about their perception that it is unacceptable to spank children in this country.

As mentioned above, this perceived shift in power from the hands of the parent to the hands of the child was distressing for parents. Thus maintaining silence surrounding family issues was a tactic many parents adopted in order to insulate themselves from such problems, and they strongly encouraged their children to maintain this sense of privacy as well.

The Home-School Gap

Finally, in the world of home Haitian youth must interpret for their parents the rules of engagement with the American educational system. This is not an easy task given the vast differences between the American and Haitian educational systems (Doucet, 2002). To provide the reader with a brief overview of these differences, it is helpful to note that the Haitian educational system is based on a French model. Lessons are learned through rote memorization, every student follows the same curriculum, and there is little room for expression of personal opinions or beliefs, particularly at the elementary and early secondary levels. There are 13 grades in the Haitian system, but free public education is only available up to the 6th grade level. The government's inability to provide quality public education has resulted in an inordinate proportion of schools being private. According to a report by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), 90 percent of primary schools are private—whether Catholic, Protestant, or nondenominational—and 75 percent of enrolled children are in private schools (USAID, 2002). Tuition and fees for private schools are extremely high, and often schools that are more affordable are run for profit and do not give children adequate instruction. For those fortunate enough to advance to higher levels, there are difficult National exams to pass, beginning in the 6th grade, and again in the 8th and 11th grades. Young people wishing to pursue post-secondary education, must also pass a final National exam given in the 13th year.

Although the above provides only a cursory overview of the Haitian educational system, what becomes clear rather quickly is that it is quite different from the American system. Not surprisingly, then, a third theme to emerge from the interviews was that of a home-school gap. This particular theme was expressed more strongly among the parents I interviewed, though youths certainly also recognized the gap. Zéphir (2001) discussed the challenge Haitian youth face in trying to explain to their parents why their homework assignments and projects entail such activities as sewing, building models, conducting surveys, and other activities not involving "being in the books." Parents had difficulty accepting that these activities constituted real learning, and thus were sometimes

unwilling to provide the constrains such items needed for school projects, costly for parents working multiple jobs. For Haitian parents, the purpose of school is to provide an "education." This education is not only with reading, but also with moral guidance, a sense of responsibility, and other life skills. Similarly, Reese and colleagues (2000) discuss the concept of "educación" among Haitians. Elsewhere (Doucet, 2002), I discuss the messages Haitian parents send to their schools. They report that schools should provide support for parents, and children with school work, so that Haitian students can see people who share their culture, and who can serve as examples. Parents should engage students in the classroom, share from their experiences, participate in their children's schools and/or classrooms, and treat children well and respect their individuality. Challenging homework, and the pressure to do it, is smaller. Some of these points clearly reflect conceptualizations of the purpose of schooling, while others are points of contention.

School Life: A Contested Space

The Identity Question

One of the primary tasks of a child is the development of a stable identity (Erikson, 1963). This identity is crafted under often tenuous circumstances, and is one site where all children receive messages about who they are. Hence, the respect to the experiences of Haitian youth is an identity question.

Child psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott (1951) argued that a child's sense of self is profoundly shaped by significant others. In the development of the self, all human beings are mirrored by others. The mother (which was Winnicott's primary adult caretaker), siblings, teachers, and even the media (through reflected images) are generally positive influences. A child will be able to feel that she is who she is, and her reflection is generally negative, and thus she is not who she is.

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such items needed for school projects (which also may be quite
costly for parents working multiple jobs just to feed their families).
For Haitian parents, the purpose of schooling is to instruct as well
as to provide an "education." The French word refers to providing
children not only with reading, writing, and counting abilities, but
also with moral guidance, a sense of civic duty, and interpersonal
skills. Similarly, Reese and colleagues (1991) have written about "the
concept of educación" among Latino families.

Elsewhere (Doucet, 2002), there is discussion of several
of the messages Haitian parents wished to transmit to American
schools. They report that schools need more discipline, schools
should provide support for parents who are unable to help their
children with school work, schools need more Haitian teachers so
Haitian students can see people who look like them, share their
culture, and who can serve as examples for them. Further, teachers
should engage students in the educational process by having them
share from their experiences, parents should be allowed to visit their
children's schools and/or classrooms at any time, teachers should
treat children well and respect them, children should be given more
challenging homework, and the student-teacher ratio should be
smaller. Some of these points clearly reflect the parents' different
conceptualizations of the purpose of education and the structure of
schooling, while others are points we all might agree are necessary.

School Life: A Contested Space

The Identity Question

One of the primary tasks of adolescence is the development
of a stable identity (Erikson, 1968). For Haitian youth, this identity
is crafted under often tenuous circumstances, and schools represent
one site where all children receive messages from the broader society
about who they are. Hence, the first theme to be discussed with
respect to the experiences of Haitian youth in U.S. schools is the
identity question.

Child psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott suggested that the
child's sense of self is profoundly shaped by the reflections mirrored
back to her by significant others (Winnicott, 1971). Indeed, for identity
development, all human beings are dependent upon the reflection
of themselves mirrored by others. "Others" include not just the
mother (which was Winnicott's principle concern) but also relatives,
adult caretakers, siblings, teachers, peers, employers, people on
the street, and even the media (C. Suárez-Orozco, 2000). When the
reflected image 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 a

coherent sense of self-worth.

These reflections can be accurate or inaccurate. In some cases, the reflection can be a positive distortion. 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, 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 (Rosenthal & Feldman, 1991). 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 (Lee, 1994; Louie, 2004; Takaki, 1993).

It is the negative distortions, however, that are most concerning. While all groups face structural obstacles, not all groups elicit and experience the same attitudes from a dominant culture. Some immigrant groups elicit more negative attitudes—encountering a more negative social mirror—than others do. Such is the case with many immigrant and minority children (Maira, 2004). Iraqi-American Nuar Alsaïdir, for example, shortly after September 11th, eloquently stated, "The world shouldn't be a funhouse in which we're forced to stand before the distorting mirror, begging for our lives" (Alsaïdir, 2002). The legacy of racism in the United States is such that the immigrant children most likely to encounter these vitriolic messages are black and brown children, whether from the Caribbean and Latin America, Middle Eastern, or African nations. For Haitian children, the issue of race is compounded with ethnic discrimination—Haitians are known as AIDS carriers, boat people, and the poorest people of the Western Hemisphere (Zéphir, 2001). In *Haiti's Bad Press* (1992), Robert Lawless argues that since the 18th century, the characteristics of Haitian people, culture, and religion have been painted as dangerous and frightening, creating a historical record in the public imagination of Haiti and Haitians as problematic and undesirable.

C. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) define a typology of identity styles that recognizes the incredibly fluid nature of ethnic identification among youth. Identities and styles of adaptation are powerfully linked to context and social mirroring. The identity style chosen by a young person has implications for adaptation to the new society, including schooling experiences. In some cases, the identity that is forged is highly focused upon the culture of origin with co-ethnics as the primary point of reference. In some of these cases, an identity that is adversarial to the dominant

culture may emerge. Alternately, youth may embrace total assimilation into mainstream American culture, losing their ethnic identity which incorporates their culture of origin and mainstream American culture. In the same family, each child may develop a different identity, with various siblings occupying

Co-Ethnic identities

Some immigrant youth may do so because they seek meaningful contact with others. They may be responding to an urban environment where they may have extensive contact with others who are also immigrants. Hence, they may distance themselves from African American culture to avoid disparagement (Waters, 1999). Research with second generation youth that those youth who had not retained their French accent they felt it distinguished them from their parents. To her participants who were immigrants who migrated at younger ages, they were far more critical of African American culture and efforts not to associate with

Other youth of immigrant descent are constructing identities that are rejected by—the institution of the dominant culture. Sociologist Alejandro Portes find their aspirations for work and education may join native minorities in a stance toward middle-class urban pathologies" (Portes, 1998). They themselves structurally marginalized and are more likely to respond to the dominant culture by developing an adversarial identity. Some children of immigrants are other marginalized youth in the city, poor African-American youth, and back to previous waves of immigration, including Irish-American and disenfranchised second generation African American, and Polish-American profile.

Among children of immigrants, some develop adversarial styles, embracing

culture may emerge. Alternatively, youth of immigrant origin may embrace total assimilation and complete identification with mainstream American culture. And for some other youth, a new ethnic identity which incorporates selected aspects of *both* the culture of origin and mainstream American culture is forged. Within the same family, each child may adopt his or her own way, resulting in various siblings occupying very different sectors of the spectrum.

Co-Ethnic identities

Some immigrant youth maintain a largely co-ethnic focus. Some may do so because they have limited opportunity to make meaningful contact with other groups in the host culture. Others may be responding to an understanding that a group with which they may have extensive contact are even more disparaged than they are as immigrants. Hence, Caribbean individuals may distinguish themselves from African Americans in an attempt to ward off further disparagement (Waters, 1999; Zéphir, 1996). In conducting her research with second generation Haitian youth, Zéphir (2001) found that those youth who had migrated at high school age and who thus retained their French accents bore these as a point of pride because they felt it distinguished them from African Americans. Compared to her participants who were born in the United States or who had migrated at younger ages, those who migrated as young adults were far more critical of African American culture and made conscious efforts not to associate with African Americans.

Other youth of immigrant origin may develop an adversarial stance constructing identities around rejecting—after having been rejected by—the institutions of the dominant culture. Princeton sociologist Alejandro Portes observes, "As second generation youth find their aspirations for wealth and social status blocked, they may join native minorities in the inner-city, adopting an adversarial stance toward middle-class white society, and adding to the present urban pathologies" (Portes, 1993). Immigrant children who find themselves structurally marginalized and culturally disparaged are more likely to respond to the challenges to their identities by developing an adversarial style of adaptation (Vigil, 1988). These children of immigrants are responding in similar ways to that of other marginalized youth in the United States—such as many inner-city, poor African-Americans or Puerto Ricans. Likewise, gazing back to previous waves of immigration, many of the disparaged and disenfranchised second-generation Italian-American, Irish-American, and Polish-American adolescents, demonstrated a similar profile.

Among children of immigrants who gravitate towards adversarial styles, embracing aspects of the culture of the dominant

group is equated with giving up one's own ethnic identity (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Like other disenfranchised youth, children of immigrants who develop adversarial identities tend to encounter problems in school and drop-out, and consequently face unemployment in the formal economy. Among youth engaged in adversarial styles, speaking the standard language of the host culture and doing well in school may be interpreted as a show of hauteur and as a wish to "act White" (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Navarrette recalls the taunts from his less successful peers, "They will call me 'Brain' as I walk through hallways in the junior high school...They will accuse me, by virtue of my academic success, of 'trying to be white'" (Navarrette, 1993). When adolescents acquire cultural models that doing well in school is symbolically viewed as an act of ethnic betrayal, it becomes problematic for them to develop the behavioral and attitudinal repertoire necessary to succeed in school.

One Haitian participant, Anne-Marie, articulated the difficulty of being in a college preparatory track while the majority of her Haitian friends were not. When asked if her friends helped her in school, she responded, "No. They're not doing anything I'm doing. Where I am is too different from where they are. We have different classes, different work, different interests." And though she tried both to pursue her academic interests and remain connected to her Haitian peers, there were tensions: "I sometimes feel like I have to sit with Haitians, even if I don't want to because otherwise they would talk, say that I am ignoring them."

The children of immigrants who are not able to embrace their own cultures and who have formulated their identities around rejecting aspects of the mainstream society may be drawn to gangs. For such youth, in the absence of meaningful opportunities, gang membership becomes incorporated into their sense of identity. Gangs offer their members a sense of belonging, solidarity, protection, support, discipline, and warmth. Gangs also structure the anger many feel toward the society that violently rejected their parents and themselves. Although many second-generation youth may look toward gangs for cues about dress, language, and attitude, most remain on the periphery and eventually outgrow the gang mystique after working through the identity issues of adolescence. Others drawn to the periphery—and even to the epicenter of gangs—are disproportionately represented in the penal system. The gang ethos provides a sense of identity and cohesion for marginal youth during a turbulent stage of development while facing urban poverty and limited economic opportunity; ethnic minority status and discrimination; lack of training and education; and a breakdown in the social institutions of school and family (Vigil, 1988).

While many adversarial youth behaviors within their immediate stance may lead to extreme nationalism, Kamel Daoudi was raised in France being part of an Al Qaeda plot in Paris. In an essay sent to TV 1 "...I became aware of the abom those potential 'myselfes' who subcitizens just good for paying. There are only two choices left depression, and I did for about part in the universal struggle a cynicism" (Sciolino, 2002). Clearly compromise the future opportunities already are at risk of school failure and discrimination.

Ethnic Flight

At the other end of the immigrant origin shed their cultural with the dominant mainstream ethnic flight, these youth may time with peers from the mainstream their less acculturated peers. If standard English serves not only communicating, but it also be identifying with the dominant in school may be seen both as advancement and as a way to move away from the world of

Often this identification results in weakening of the tie group. These young people a their less acculturated peers; may even feel they are some may gain entry into privileged culture, they will still have to and exclusion.

Even when they do their ethnic peers, they may any behaviors that could be not necessary for the child o to distance himself from his merely being a good student Accusations of "acting White

or an "Oreo" (brown, yellow, or black on the outside and white on the inside) are not infrequent (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).

In an earlier era of scholarship, this style of adaptation was termed "passing" (DeVos 1992). While there were gains for the children of immigrants who "disappear" into the mainstream culture, there were also hidden costs—primarily in terms of unresolved shame, doubt, and self-hatred. While "passing" may have been a common style of adaptation among those who phenotypically "looked" like the mainstream, it is not easily available to today's immigrants of color who visibly look like the "Other." Further, while ethnic flight is a form of adaptation that can be adaptive in terms of "making-it" by the mainstream society's standards, it frequently comes at a significant social and emotional cost.

Among Haitians, the term for youth who adopt this identity style is "undercover Haitians." Zéphir (2001) describes them in this way, "Undercover second-generation Haitian immigrants go to great length [sic] to conceal any trace of their Haitian identity directly associated with Haiti. They endeavor to camouflage as much evidence of their origin as they can. For them, Haiti and Haitians are symbols of shame and embarrassment and constant reminders of a difficult past that must be discarded. Undercover Haitian youth believe that there is absolutely nothing to be gained from claiming any sort of Haitianness. On the contrary, they are convinced that it is an invitation to be ridiculed, to be labeled, to be marginalized, and to be excluded altogether from meaningful participation in American life" (99). Haitian youth born in the U.S. who choose to go "undercover" often identify as African Americans, while those who migrated later in life and thus still carry an accent claim to be from Canada, France, or some other French Caribbean country. In my research, I did not have occasion to interact with young people who were in denial of being Haitian altogether, though I did have difficulty recruiting U.S.-born participants in certain schools, partly because some students chose not to identify as Haitian or Haitian-American.

Transcultural Identities

In between the co-ethnic and ethnic flight gravitational fields, we find the large majority of children of immigrants. The task of immigration for these children is crafting a transcultural identity. These youth must creatively fuse aspects of two or more cultures—the parental tradition and the new culture or cultures. In so doing, they synthesize an identity that does not require them to choose between cultures—rather they are able to develop an identity that incorporates traits of both cultures all the while fusing additive

elements (Falicov, 2002).

For those of Latino origin (2002) refers to as "living in Spanglish [as] a very universal style in one place, home, to another place in both places, yet at home in neither of belonging to at least two identities confused or hurt by it" (7-8). Such of immigrant origin—their development of new cultural formations out of their own and foreign. These children's competencies that become an integral

Among youth engaged in constructed social strictures and immigrant parents and elders model Learning standard English and other competencies that do not compromise These youth network, with similar own ethnic group as well as with colleagues, and friends of other in recent years have demonstrated identity pathways and academic (Ogbu & Herbert, 1998). These studies that those who forge transcultural academically.

Many who successfully appreciate the sacrifices loved ones to thrive in a new country. Rather themselves from parents, these as a way to "pay back" their parents they experience a form of "survival deprivation their parents and others in order to move to the new land success in school serves not only achieving self-advancement and even more importantly, the expected parental sacrifices worthwhile to "make it," for such youth, may "pay back" to parents, siblings, peers of the community.

The transcultural identity of the three styles in this era of It blends the preserving of the with the acquiring of instruments successfully in the mainstream

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For those of Latino origin, this state is what Ed Morales (2002) refers to as "living in Spanglish." He defines "the root of Spanglish [as] a very universal state of being. It is displacement from one place, home, to another place, home, in which one feels at home in both places, yet at home in neither place. . . Spanglish is the state of belonging to at least two identities at the same time, and not being confused or hurt by it" (7-8). Such is the identity challenge of youth of immigrant origin—their developmental task requires crafting new cultural formations out of two systems that are at once their own and foreign. These children achieve bicultural and bilingual competencies that become an integral part of their sense of self.

Among youth engaged in bicultural styles, the culturally constructed social strictures and patterns of social control of their immigrant parents and elders maintain a degree of legitimacy. Learning standard English and doing well in school are viewed as competencies that do not compromise their sense of who they are. These youth network, with similar ease, among members of their own ethnic group as well as with students, teachers, employers, colleagues, and friends of other backgrounds. A number of studies in recent years have demonstrated a link between racial and ethnic identity pathways and academic outcomes (Margaret A Gibson, 1988; Ogbu & Herbert, 1998). These studies suggest a pattern that implies that those who forge transcultural identities are most successful academically.

Many who successfully "make it" clearly perceive and appreciate the sacrifices loved ones have made to enable them to thrive in a new country. Rather than wishing to distance themselves from parents, these youth come to experience success as a way to "pay back" their parents for their sacrifices. At times, they experience a form of "survivor guilt" as a result of the deprivation their parents and other family members have suffered in order to move to the new land. Among many such adolescents, success in school serves not only the instrumental function of achieving self-advancement and independence, but also, perhaps even more importantly, the expressive function of making the parental sacrifices worthwhile by "becoming a somebody." To "make it," for such youth, may involve restitution by "giving back" to parents, siblings, peers, and other less fortunate members of the community.

The transcultural identity seems to be the most adaptive of the three styles in this era of globalism and multiculturalism. It blends the preserving of the affective ties of the home culture with the acquiring of instrumental competencies required to cope successfully in the mainstream culture. This identity style not only

serves the individual well, but also benefits the society at large. It is precisely such transcultural individuals who Stonequist (1937) argued would be best suited to become the "creative agents" who might "contribute to the solution of the conflict of races and cultures" (15).

By acquiring competencies that enable them to operate using more than one cultural code, immigrant youth are at an advantage. These styles of adaptation are highly context-dependent and fluid. An immigrant youth might first gravitate toward one style of adaptation. Over time, as she matures and as her context changes, she may be drawn to new attitudes and social behaviors. The unilinear assimilationist model which results in styles of adaptation we term ethnic flight is no longer feasible. Today's immigrants are not unambivalently invited to join the mainstream society. The rapid abandonment of the home culture implied in ethnic flight almost always results in the collapse of the parental voice of authority. Furthermore, lack of group connectedness results in anomie and alienation. The key to a successful adaptation involves the acquisition of competencies that are relevant to the global economy while maintaining the social networks and connectedness essential to the human condition. Those who are at ease in multiple social and cultural contexts will be most successful and will be able to achieve higher levels of maturity and happiness.

Negotiating Color and Class

The discrimination based on skin color and class status that exists among Haitians themselves is a "contest" that is interestingly played out in U.S. schools. Negotiating color and class emerged as another important theme in the schooling experiences of Haitian youth. Although I never witnessed color and/or class-based discrimination firsthand in my fieldwork, the interviews with school administrators and other staff alerted me to an issue of serious concern in Haitian bilingual classrooms. Independent of one another, several school personnel, from guidance counselors to bilingual program directors to a school psychologist, shared with me that they were concerned that teachers were verbally abusing Haitian children in the Boston and Cambridge public schools. I was informed that teachers insulted their students with epithets berating their social status (e.g., *abitan, sòt, gwo soulye, moun mòn, restavèk*) suggesting that they did not belong in the U.S., or that being in the U.S. still should not be taken as an indication that they had transcended their origins. By invoking status distinctions that hold meaning in the Haitian context, these teachers actively engaged in redrawing

**peasant, uneducated, unrefined, hillbilly, servant.*

the boundaries around social practices can be understood as they would not become overly (Buchanan, 1983).

In addition to these youth also developed a sense of class hierarchies. The majority and in my study of the second working poor class, or what DuBois called the "privileged poor" because of their close relative living in the U.S., to import U.S. money and ideas to school [in Haiti] and socialize. Furthermore, they have experienced life in their home country and are familiar with the "privileged poor" status in Haiti. Once in the U.S., come into contact with their home country, their status is "black and poor." One who participated in our research living in this country by the time they came to American material goods with the illusion of not being as poor as they are in this country, they live in subsistence and perform menial labor compared to those who are among the poor. This change in helping us to understand how they make sense of and negotiate their new country of residence is an oxymoron that is this country is "available" to everyone, but it plays powerful roles in shaping

In this country many people triumph over adversity, of people who hold on to the myth of meritocracy. One honoree was a Cuban boy, Miguel, who came to the U.S. with his penniless father and relentlessly to achieve his dream. Miguel's story was told on the radio with the quoted saying, "I am someone of your own destiny. You can control your own destiny. ... I have become a role model of how I struggled."

While Miguel's efforts to succeed in the U.S. it is important that we understand the circumstances of his story and

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the boundaries around social class and status. The meaning of such
practices can be understood as "putting people in their place" so that
they would not become overly confident or overstep their bounds
(Buchanan, 1983).

In addition to these within-group dynamics, Haitian
youth also developed a sense of their "place" in the U.S. race and
class hierarchies. The majority of participants in the LISA study
and in my study of the second generation were children of Haiti's
working poor class, or what Desir (Doucet & Desir, 2003) termed
the "privileged poor" because "many of them have a parent or
close relative living in the U.S., which means having the ability
to import U.S. money and ideals. These students are able to go to
school [in Haiti] and socialize with individuals from various classes.
Furthermore, they have experienced internal migration within the
country and are familiar with adaptation issues" (p. 4). Unlike their
"privileged poor" status in Haiti, children of the working poor,
once in the U.S., come into contact with the harsh reality that in this
country, their status is "black and poor." Because all of the children
who participated in our research project had at least one parent
living in this country by the time they migrated, they'd had access
to American material goods while in Haiti, and this gave them the
illusion of not being as poor as those around them. However, once
in this country, they live in subsidized housing and their parents
perform menial labor compared to those around them. Here they
are among the poor. This change in status provides the first clue
in helping us to understand how Haitian immigrant youth come
to make sense of and negotiate their educational experiences in
their new country of residence. Youth come face to face with the
oxymoron that is this country—a nation where education is "free"
and "available" to everyone, but where race, class, and gender still
play powerful roles in shaping educational experiences.

In this country many are always looking for stories of
triumph over adversity, of people who beat the odds. We desperately
hold on to the myth of meritocracy. One of President Bush's past
honorees was a Cuban boy, Miguel Arguelles, who had come to
the U.S. with his penniless family at the age of ten and had toiled
relentlessly to achieve his dream of attending Harvard University.
Miguel's story was told on the Oprah Winfrey show, where he was
quoted saying, "I am someone who believes that you are the maker
of your own destiny. You can dictate whether you want to succeed or
not. ... I have become a role model for thousands of immigrants who
struggled how I struggled."

While Miguel's efforts should by no means be minimized,
it is important that we understand the contextual and historical
circumstances of his story and those of others like him. We would

be remiss to ignore that had Miguel been born Michel, a Haitian refugee who came on a boat to Miami's shores, he may not have even been able to remain in the U.S., and if so, he would not have had the benefits of a wealthy, politically empowered ethnic enclave where his efforts would have met up with the resources to support them. These structural factors comprise what Portes and Rumbaut (1996) termed the "context of reception," including government policies, labor market conditions, and community relationships surrounding particular immigrant groups. C. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) have argued that an important component of this context of reception is the negative social mirroring that immigrant children often encounter. That is, the symbolic messages from society that their race, ethnicity, or nationality is somehow inferior, undesirable, and problematic.

While Haitian youth may be aware of the negative lenses through which Haitians are viewed in other countries (because of AIDS, political problems, etc.), what they often do not fully understand is the extent to which race (and by this I mean skin color), is the single most determining factor with regard to discrimination and unequal treatment in the U.S. Learning the meaning and operation of race in this country is thus one of the most important developmental tasks for Haitian immigrant youth. There is no curriculum for this learning—these youth must glean their information from interactions with members of the majority group, from the ways in which their status as "bilingual" students is framed, and from their peers. At one of the LISA project school sites, Haitian immigrant children had their own bilingual program. While in some ways this allowed the children to get the support they needed, it was also a way to keep the children marginalized and separated within the school, particularly because their language, Kreyol, is not recognized as a "real" language.

School reform measures also often create a hostile environment for immigrant children. In Massachusetts, two policies implemented over the course of this research project had direct impact on Haitian immigrant youth. The first policy was establishing statewide achievement test that high school seniors must pass in order to graduate. Although intended to build in some accountability in teaching practice, the test has in reality served as a gatekeeper for immigrant youth with dreams of pursuing a college education. The second policy, and perhaps the more serious one, was a bill known as the Unz initiative to completely do away with bilingual education programs. The bill was passed in state elections and has engendered chaos in the schools—bilingual teachers fear for their jobs, children in the bilingual programs are thrown into mainstream courses without proper assessments of their abilities,

limitations, and needs, and many devices as they try to maintain actual bilingual programs were implement alternative ways of curriculum, but the choices made in the curriculum are telling of them. For example, at the aforementioned Haitian bilingual program, Kreyol is the curriculum while Korean, Spanish, and French are not. These acts of symbolic violence experienced by immigrant children are their traumatic experiences within a country where they are mostly

Yet the majority of youth are fortunate to be here, and many find success through education. Suárez-Orozco's (2001) model of social mirroring, hope is the extent to which children to overcome affronts to their identity. This sense of hope is constructed through consciousness about education specifically for the Haitian children in the United States as the vehicle for success. We heard from our interviewees that "life is school." One of our students said, "I go to school and get good grades, you go to school and get a good job." Parents also see the primary role of education in building a successful life in this country. Education was understood in terms of what youth would face because of their race. A parent, Johnny, told us, "they (African Americans) especially if you are black. I did not get too much." Nonetheless, this is not true for all Haitians and Haitians have the same chance to succeed. They have to work very hard." His statement is of the negative light in which children are viewed. Stating, "discrimination exists," she further noted that "as black people, I do not respect my children and am not giving them the understanding of the obstacles they face. A motivating factor for some, fear of failure and/or helplessness. Joseph, a parent, said about the importance of school that "if you give me advice he would give to a child who wants to be successful, he answered

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limitations, and needs, and mainstream teachers are left to their own devices as they try to maintain the curriculum. Interestingly, while actual bilingual programs were eradicated, schools did manage to implement alternative ways of introducing other languages into the curriculum, but the choices made about which languages to keep in the curriculum are telling of the hegemonic values attached to them. For example, at the aforementioned school where there was a Haitian bilingual program, Kreyol has essentially disappeared from the curriculum while Korean, Spanish, and French remain. These acts of symbolic violence experienced by Haitian youth compound their traumatic experiences while in Haiti and as newcomers to a country where they are mostly unwelcome.

Yet the majority of youth who are here consider themselves fortunate to be here, and many manage to hold on to their dreams of success through education. According to Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco's (2001) model of possible reactions to negative social mirroring, hope is the essential characteristic that enables children to overcome affronts on their sense of self. I propose that this sense of hope is constructed from the development of a critical consciousness about education as the vehicle for success, or more specifically for the Haitian children from our research, education in the United States as the vehicle for success. Over and over again we heard from our interviewees that “the most important thing in life is school.” One of our students, Rodney stated, “If you stay in school and get good grades, you’ll go to college and you’ll be able to get a good job.” Parents also strongly pushed this belief regarding the primary role of education as the key to helping their children build a successful life in this country. In some families, the push for education was understood in the context of the adversities children would face because of their race or ethnicity. As another young man, Johnny, told us, “they (Americans) don’t really respect people especially if you are black. I don’t think the white people like blacks too much.” Nonetheless, this same young man believes Americans and Haitians have the same chance of getting ahead, “but Haitians have to work very hard.” His mother also displayed an awareness of the negative light in which blacks and Haitians are viewed, stating, “discrimination exists in school. White kids have priority,” she further noted that “as blacks, we work hard, so I trust and respect my children and am their friend.” While this kind of lucid understanding of the obstacles racism presents to education was a motivating factor for some, for others it brought on feelings of anger and/or helplessness. Joseph, another of our participants, was sure about the importance of school to one’s future. When asked what advice he would give to a cousin who just arrived to the U.S. on how to be successful, he answered, “Go to school and learn.” But he also

felt the brunt of discrimination at school: "Most of the time when black students go to the office for issues with white students, the black students are always at fault." In Joseph's case, however, there was not as strong a sense that his family was fully aware of the issues he was dealing with in school, and so they were not able to provide the same kind of support that Johnny's family did. As the eighth child in a family of nine, Joseph faced a particular set of challenges due to his parents' age and failing health and the seeming absence of support from his older sisters. Yet, these two cases do illustrate an important discovery in our exploration of the issues surrounding the hopes and dreams of Haitian immigrant youth. Children who seem most able to hang on to the hope that an American education will be their ticket to success have an important combination of awareness of the racism and discrimination they will face, learned both in the social curriculum of the "peer classroom" and sometimes in the home, and adequate support mechanisms whether in the home or from outside sources, such as mentors or strong after-school programs.

Double Lives

Schools as spaces where identities were forged, and as sites for negotiating the self also emerged as spaces where Haitian youth "put on" identities and selves that were often different from those they displayed at home. Thus the final theme is an exploration of the double lives of participants. There is nothing new about the suggestion that adolescents are often living lives that are invisible and unknown to their parents (Larson & Richards, 1994). The graphic 2003 film *Thirteen*, written by an adolescent young woman about her incredibly dangerous experiences with alcohol and drugs, sex, and self-mutilation, sent shockwaves among parents of teenage girls who had no idea of the kinds of pressures facing their children in school. Even in less extreme situations, parents often can feel as though their children become strangers once they enter adolescence. For the immigrant parent, however, this feeling is aggravated by the lack of understanding of and comfort with the host culture, and for the child of immigrant parents, the need to conceal aspects of their lives outside the home can seem especially critical, again due to parents' lack of understanding of and comfort with the host culture. Many students reported feeling misunderstood by their parents and family members. For example, when asked what had gotten worse in her family's life since coming to the U.S., Celamaine noted, "[my family] They think I act different—like I chill with my friends too much. They think since I've been here, I can do everything I want." We also asked students how they felt their parents would react if they knew about their activities, and they offered responses such as

these:

Stephan—To be honest, they w

Mireille—She would probably said that if we ever got pregnar us out.

Jesula—Sometimes it's hard for because she doesn't know Engl understand things here but I tr

Marlene—They would go craz thing if it's just to have fun...[a to do this first. You have to go want to go to college they wou "what are you going to do?" So So I just keep it to myself. Tell do tell my dad to see what the

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Discussion: Impli

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these:

Stephan—To be honest, they will probably spank me or yell at me.

Mireille—She would probably kick me out of the house. Because she said that if we ever got pregnant involved with a boy, she would kick us out.

Jesula—Sometimes it's hard for her (my mother) to understand because she doesn't know English very well and she doesn't understand things here but I try to explain it to her.

Marlene—They would go crazy and flip out. They'd see it as a bad thing if it's just to have fun...[and later]...They'd say, "no, you have to do this first. You have to go to school." If I told them I didn't want to go to college they would be coming up with some stuff like, "what are you going to do?" Some rude stuff. They would flip out. So I just keep it to myself. Tell it someone I trust, a friend. I tried to do tell my dad to see what the reaction was and he lost it.

Mona—My father talks too rough. You can't tell him anything... [later]...He's different. He's a guy and he does not see where I'm coming from. My mother is more Americanized than my father.

For their part, parents talked about the importance of being a friend to one's child as a way to stay involved in their lives. Parents mistrusted greatly their children's peers and strongly discouraged their children from having friends outside the family. I interpreted this as another attempt to have control over their children's lives—if parents themselves, along with other family members—were their children's friends, there would be no need for outside friendships with the potential to introduce attitudes, ideas, and customs with which parents did not feel comfortable.

Discussion: Implications for Youth Ministers

Many issues have been raised in the current manuscript that merit papers all to themselves, and given the nature of the research reported in the current article, there are many facets of the lives of Haitian immigrant youth and their families that were not addressed. Although throughout the paper I have referred to "immigrant youth" and "Haitian youth" with a broad brushstroke, it is important to recognize that there are important variations within these groups, and that although some generalizations are helpful and appropriate, they should serve only as an introduction to these issues.

My objective for this manuscript was to provide youth ministers and Christian educators with some background and overview of the experiences of immigrant youth in general, and Haitian youth in particular. I argued that the home lives and school lives of Haitian immigrant youth often represent "divergent realities," in that their experiences in one setting often are incongruent with their experiences in the other. Youth ministers and Christian educators are uniquely poised to help young people bridge these settings because they occupy another space altogether, namely the church, which can be a space for learning to successfully negotiate the differences between home and school. Christian workers should also recognize the potential they have to bridge generational gaps between children and parents, a role which may be particularly important, and appreciated in immigrant families dealing with varying levels of acculturation, separations, reunifications, and shifts in family power dynamics brought about by migration. In engaging immigrant families in these important processes, it is vital that ministers have an understanding of the unique cultural characteristics of the communities they serve.

However, Christian workers must also be aware of the challenges they may face when working with immigrant groups, one of the most difficult of which may be the seeming mistrust immigrants have of American culture. I would offer a word of encouragement to those who embark on the journey to minister to immigrant families: do not be put off by criticisms of American culture on the part of those you serve, and guard your hearts from defensiveness. When people hear about immigrant groups disapproving of this country's system, one easy response is, "well then, go back to your own country if things are so terrible here!" I propose that instead of focusing on the criticism, listen for the bigger message—these parents, like all parents, want to fiercely protect their children from any and all things that they feel threaten what they believe to be best, and like all parents, they are opinionated about what they think is best. We will never be able to work with immigrant families effectively if we only want to hear about the positive aspects of this culture. Indeed, we have much to learn from the wisdom of parents from around the world.

In serving Haitian families in particular, ministers should recognize the perception Haitian parents have of themselves as family gatekeepers. Thus relationships with Haitian youth should be crafted with sensitivity, first building trust with parents and other adults in the family. As described above, one of the most salient features of Haitian family life is the idea of privacy. In light of this knowledge, ministers should be prepared for the youth whom they serve to be restrained in how much they are willing to share about

family life, even if the family at concerns, immigration issues, a relationships may be especially to share prayer requests in group private, for fear of violating pri

Another area in which Christian educators can be especially helpful to immigrant youth is in terms of the negative social mirror is the power of the positive social to children that they are the we loving God who wants nothing with them. Youth ministers can help other immigrant youth and can help to self-discovery. Of course because of aspects of various communities that workers also reflect accurately about their national, ethnic, and these youth to fit a given mold

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Another area in which the role of youth ministers and Christian educators can be especially powerful in the lives of immigrant youth is in terms of identity development. The power of the negative social mirror is undeniable, but more significant is the power of the positive social mirror—the reflection sent back to children that they are the wonderful, miraculous creations of a loving God who wants nothing more than to have a relationship with them. Youth ministers can bring this message to Haitian and other immigrant youth and can partner with them on the journey to self-discovery. Of course becoming educated about the unique aspects of various communities is an integral part of this process, so that workers also reflect accurate positive images to young people about their national, ethnic, and racial groups rather than encourage these youth to fit a given mold.

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Haitian immigrants in New York City*. Westport, CT: Bergin &
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Author's Notes

The title for this paper is borrowed from the book "Divergent
realities: The emotional lives of mothers, fathers, and
adolescents," by Reed Larson and Maryse Richards (1994).
A groundbreaking investigation, the study reported in the
book demonstrated that family members operate in separate
spheres, and that this can explain miscommunications
among family members. I borrowed the title because it so
aptly describes the experiences of Haitian immigrant youth
when their home and school lives are examined side-by-side.
Portions of this manuscript appear in a forthcoming chapter: Doucet,
F., & Suárez-Orozco, C., (2005). Ethnic identity development
within school contexts. In L. Romanucci-Ross, & G. DeVos
(Eds.) *Ethnic identity: Creation, conflict, and accommodation, 4th
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