

The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants

By ALEJANDRO PORTES and MIN ZHOU

ABSTRACT: Post-1965 immigration to the United States has given rise to a vigorous literature focused on adult newcomers. There is, however, a growing new second generation whose prospects of adaptation cannot be gleaned from the experience of their parents or from that of children of European immigrants arriving at the turn of the century. We present data on the contemporary second generation and review the challenges that it confronts in seeking adaptation to American society. The concept of segmented assimilation is introduced to describe the diverse possible outcomes of this process of adaptation. The concept of modes of incorporation is used for developing a typology of vulnerability and resources affecting such outcomes. Empirical case studies illustrate the theory and highlight consequences of the different contextual situations facing today's second generation.

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NOTE: The data on which this article is partially based were collected by the project Children of Immigrants: The Adaptation Process of the Second Generation, supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the National Science Foundation (grant no. SES-9022555), and the Spencer Foundation. The article was written while the senior author was in residence at the Russell Sage Foundation, whose support is also gratefully acknowledged. The authors are exclusively responsible for the contents of this article.

My name is Herb
and I'm not poor;
I'm the Herbie that you're looking for,
like Pepsi,
a new generation
of Haitian determination—
I'm the Herbie that you're looking for.

A beat tapped with bare hands, a few dance steps, and the Haitian kid was rapping. His song, titled "Straight Out of Haiti," was being performed at Edison High, a school that sits astride Little Haiti and Liberty City, the largest black area of Miami. The lyrics captured well the distinct outlook of his immigrant community. The panorama of Little Haiti contrasts sharply with the bleak inner city. In Miami's Little Haiti, the storefronts leap out at the passersby. Bright blues, reds, and oranges vibrate to Haitian merengue blaring from sidewalk speakers.¹ Yet, behind the gay Caribbean exteriors, a struggle goes on that will define the future of this community. As we will see later on, it involves the second generation—children like Herbie—subject to conflicting pressure from parents and peers and to pervasive outside discrimination.

Growing up in an immigrant family has always been difficult, as individuals are torn by conflicting social and cultural demands while they face the challenge of entry into an unfamiliar and frequently hostile world. And yet the difficulties are not always the same. The process of growing up American oscillates between smooth acceptance and traumatic

confrontation depending on the characteristics that immigrants and their children bring along and the social context that receives them. In this article, we explore some of these factors and their bearing on the process of social adaptation of the immigrant second generation. We propose a conceptual framework for understanding this process and illustrate it with selected ethnographic material and survey data from a recent survey of children of immigrants.

Research on the new immigration—that which arose after the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act—has been focused almost exclusively on the first generation, that is, on adult men and women coming to the United States in search of work or to escape political persecution. Little noticed until recently is the fact that the foreign-born inflow has been rapidly evolving from single adult individuals to entire family groups, including infant children and those born to immigrants in the United States. By 1980, 10 percent of dependent children in households counted by the census were second-generation immigrants.² In the late 1980s, another study put the number of students in kindergarten through twelfth grade in American schools who spoke a lan-

2. Defined as native-born children with at least one foreign-born parent or children born abroad who came to the United States before age 12. See Leif Jensen, *Children of the New Immigration: A Comparative Analysis of Today's Second Generation*, paper commissioned by the Children of Immigrants Research Project, Department of Sociology, Johns Hopkins University, reprinted as Institute for Policy Research and Evaluation Working Paper no. 1990-32 (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, Aug. 1990).

1. Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick, *City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), chap. 8.

guage other than English at home at 3 to 5 million.³

The great deal of research and theorizing on post-1965 immigration offers only tentative guidance on the prospects and paths of adaptation of the second generation because the outlook of this group can be very different from that of their immigrant parents. For example, it is generally accepted among immigration theorists that entry-level menial jobs are performed without hesitation by newly arrived immigrants but are commonly shunned by their U.S.-reared offspring. This disjuncture gives rise to a race between the social and economic progress of first-generation immigrants and the material conditions and career prospects that their American children grow to expect.⁴

Nor does the existing literature on second-generation adaptation, based as it is on the experience of descendants of pre-World War I immigrants, offer much guidance for the understanding of contemporary events. The last sociological study of children of immigrants was Irving Child's *Italian or American? The Second Generation in Conflict*, published fifty years ago.⁵ Conditions at the time were quite different from those confronting settled immigrant groups today.

3. Joan N. First and John W. Carrera, *New Voices: Immigrant Students in U.S. Public Schools* (Boston: National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1988).

4. Michael Piore, *Birds of Passage* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Herbert Gans, "Second-Generation Decline: Scenarios for the Economic and Ethnic Futures of the Post-1965 American Immigrants," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 15:173-92 (Apr. 1992).

5. Irving L. Child, *Italian or American? The Second Generation in Conflict* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1943).

Two such differences deserve special mention. First, descendants of European immigrants who confronted the dilemmas of conflicting cultures were uniformly white. Even if of a somewhat darker hue than the natives, their skin color reduced a major barrier to entry into the American mainstream. For this reason, the process of assimilation depended largely on individual decisions to leave the immigrant culture behind and embrace American ways. Such an advantage obviously does not exist for the black, Asian, and mestizo children of today's immigrants.

Second, the structure of economic opportunities has also changed. Fifty years ago, the United States was the premier industrial power in the world, and its diversified industrial labor requirements offered to the second generation the opportunity to move up gradually through better-paid occupations while remaining part of the working class. Such opportunities have increasingly disappeared in recent years following a rapid process of national deindustrialization and global industrial restructuring. This process has left entrants to the American labor force confronting a widening gap between the minimally paid menial jobs that immigrants commonly accept and the high-tech and professional occupations requiring college degrees that native elites occupy.⁶ The gradual disappearance of intermediate

6. See, for example, Saskia Sassen, "Changing Composition and Labor Market Location of Hispanic Immigrants in New York City, 1960-1980," in *Hispanics in the U.S. Economy*, ed. George J. Borjas and Marta Tienda (New York: Academic Press, 1985), pp. 299-322.

opportunities also bears directly on the race between first-generation economic progress and second-generation expectations, noted previously.

THE NEW AMERICANS AT A GLANCE

Before examining this process in detail, it is important to learn a little more about today's second generation. In 1990, the foreign-born population of the United States reached an estimated 21.2 million. In absolute terms, this is the highest number in the history of the nation, although relative to the native-born population, the figure is lower than that at the turn of the century. A century ago, in 1890, immigrants represented 14.8 percent of the total population, almost double today's figure of 8.6 percent. The foreign-stock population, composed of immigrants and their descendants, is, however, much higher. In 1990, roughly 46 million, or 18.5 percent of the total U.S. population, were estimated to be of foreign stock. This yields a net second-generation total of 24.8 million, or 10.9 percent of the American population.⁷

As an estimate of the new second generation, this figure is inflated by the presence of offspring of older immigrants. A team of demographers at the Urban Institute have estimated the contribution of post-1960 immigration, including immigrants and their children, to the total 1990 U.S. population. According to their esti-

mate, if immigration had been cut off in 1960, the total population in 1990 would have been 223.4 million and not the 248.7 actually counted. Hence post-1960 immigration contributed approximately 25.3 million. Subtracting estimates of net immigration for 1960-90 provided by the same researchers, the new second generation, formed by children of post-1960 immigrants, represents 7.7 million, or 3.4 percent of the native-born population. This is a lower-bound estimate based on a demographic model and not on an actual count. It excludes children born to mixed foreign-native couples who are also normally counted as part of the second generation.⁸

More important, however, is the prospect for growth in future years. Given the record increase of immigration since 1960, the second generation as a whole is expected to grow rapidly, surpassing its former peak of roughly 28 million in 1940 sometime during this decade. As noted previously, however, the racial and ethnic composition of the component of the second generation attributable to post-1960 immigration is quite different from that which peaked just before World War II. Over 85 percent of children of immigrants in 1940 were born to Europeans, or, in current terminology, non-Hispanic whites. By contrast, approximately 77 percent of post-1960 immigrants are non-Europeans. Of the post-1960 immigrants, 22.4 percent are classi-

7. Jeffrey S. Passel and Barry Edmonston, "Immigration and Race: Recent Trends in Immigration to the United States" (Paper no. PRIP-UI-22, Urban Institute, May 1992), tab. 2.

8. The new immigration is defined as that which started after the 1965 Immigration Act. Inclusion of 1960-65 immigrants in the totals just mentioned leads to only a slight overcount due to the relatively low numbers arriving before passage of the act. See *ibid.*, tab. 9.

fied as Asians, 7.6 as blacks, and 47 percent as Hispanics. The latter group, which originates in Mexico and other Latin American countries, poses a problem in terms of phenotypical classification since Hispanics can be of any race.⁹

According to the 1990 census, 51.7 percent of the 22.3 million Hispanics counted were white, 3.4 percent black, and 42.7 percent of another race. The latter figure, possibly corresponding to the category of mixed race, or mestizos, was slightly larger among Mexicans, who constitute 60.4 percent of the total Hispanic population. Applying these figures with some adjustments to the post-1960 immigrant flow, it is reasonable to assume that approximately half of Hispanic immigrants would be classified as nonwhite. This phenotypical category would hence comprise a majority, roughly 54 percent, of the total inflow.¹⁰

Individual data from the 1990 census have not been released as of this writing. In an effort to learn more about the new second generation, Leif Jensen conducted an analysis of the one-in-a-thousand version of the Public Use Microdata Sample A (PUMS) from the 1980 census. He identified 3425 children living in households with at least one foreign-born parent and who themselves were either native-born or had immigrated to the United States at a

young age.¹¹ The number represented 5.1 percent of native-born native-parentage children identified in the sample, a figure that is close to the estimated contribution of post-1960 immigration to the 1980 U.S. population, 5.8 percent.

The ethnic classification of Jensen's sample of new second-generation children in 1980 also corresponds closely with that of post-1965 immigrants reported previously. In Jensen's sample, 17.9 percent were classified as Asians, 6.8 percent as blacks, and 45.5 percent as Hispanics. The data do not provide a racial breakdown of Hispanics, but they do contain information on their national origin. Sixty-five percent of the 1564 post-1965 Hispanic children were of Mexican origin; 7.5 percent of Cuban origin; and the remaining 27.5 percent were from all other Latin American nationalities. Table 1 presents selected sociodemographic characteristics of this sample and compares them with those of native-born children of native parentage.

Not surprisingly, second-generation youths are far more likely to be bilingual than their native-parentage counterparts. Less than half of the children of immigrants speak English only, and two-thirds speak a language other than English at home in contrast with the overwhelming English exclusivity among native-parentage youth. However, linguistic assimilation is evident in the fact that only 12 percent of the second generation reports speaking English poorly. Households with immigrant parents are far more likely to be

9. Ibid.

10. U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Race by Hispanic Origin, 1990 Census of Population and Housing*, special tabulation prepared by the Ethnic and Hispanic Branch (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1992).

11. In most cases, before age 12. See Jensen, *Children of the New Immigration*.

TABLE 1
**SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF POST-1965
 SECOND-GENERATION YOUTHS AND NATIVE YOUTHS
 OF NATIVE PARENTAGE, 1980 (Percentage unless noted)**

Children's Characteristics	Post-1965 Immigrant Parent (N = 3,425)	Native-born Parents (N = 67,193)
Female	46.8	47.4
Mean age	7.5 years	11.9 years
Race or ethnicity		
White	27.4	78.9
Black	6.8	14.4
Hispanic	45.7	5.4
Mexican	29.7	3.3
Cuban	3.5	0.0
Other	12.5	2.1
Asian	19.5	0.5
Chinese	4.3	0.1
Filipino	5.1	0.1
Korean	2.6	0.0
Vietnamese	1.4	0.0
Other	6.1	0.3
English ability		
Speaks English only	47.7	95.5
Very well	26.5	2.7
Well	13.8	1.3
Not well or not at all	12.0	0.5
Language spoken at home		
English	33.6	94.9
Other	66.4	5.1
Household type		
Couple	89.7	79.0
Single male head	1.5	2.7
Single female head	8.8	18.3
Area of residence		
Central city	39.6	17.4
Non-central-city metropolitan area	48.4	49.8
Mixed	6.5	11.7
Nonmetropolitan	5.5	21.1
State of residence*		
California	32.4	8.1
New York	12.8	7.2
Texas	9.9	6.1
Illinois	5.7	5.2
Florida	5.0	3.5
New Jersey	4.9	3.1

(continued)

TABLE 1 Continued

Children's Characteristics	Post-1965 Immigrant Parent (N = 3,425)	Native-born Parents (N = 67,193)
Mean family income	\$19,502	\$23,414
Poverty rate	20.8	13.8
Mean education of family head	10.9 years	12.2 years
Mean education, self [†]	11.5 years	12.0 years
High school dropout [†]	22.8	22.9
School type		
Public	83.4	86.6
Private	16.6	13.4

NOTE: The youths in this sample reside in households with at least one parent present. This table is based on U.S. Census Public Use Microdata Sample A as reported in Leif Jensen, *Children of the New Immigration: A Comparative Analysis of Today's Second Generation*, paper commissioned by the Children of Immigrants Research Project, Department of Sociology, Johns Hopkins University, reprinted as Institute for Policy Research and Evaluation Working Paper no. 1990-32 (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, Aug. 1990), tabs. 1-8.

*The six states with the largest concentrations of post-1965 immigrant parents.

[†]Restricted to those aged 20 or more and not enrolled in school.

urban and to be found in central cities. Their geographic distribution by state also differs significantly from native-headed households. Just six states account for 71 percent of immigrant households while the same states contain only 33 percent of the natives. Not surprisingly, immigrant parents tend to have more modest socioeconomic characteristics, as indicated by their lower family income, higher poverty rates, and lower education of the family head. However, they are about twice less likely to head single-parent households than are natives. Greater family cohesiveness may have something to do with second-generation educational outcomes. Figures in Table 1 indicate that children of immigrants are as likely to attend private schools, as unlikely to be dropouts, and as likely

to graduate from high school as native-parentage youth.¹²

These comparisons are, of course, based on averages that conceal great diversity within each universe. Among second-generation youths in particular, preliminary field research indicates wide differences in educational, linguistic, and social psychological outcomes. None is more important than the forms that an inexorable process of cultural assimilation takes among different immigrant nationalities and its effects on their youths. We explore these differences and pro-

12. Because of data limitations, comparisons of years of education completed and high school dropouts are limited to persons aged 20 or older still living with their parents. These results may not be representative of the respective universes of adult individuals. See *ibid.*

vide a theoretical explanation of their causes in the next sections.

ASSIMILATION AS A PROBLEM

The Haitian immigrant community of Miami is composed of some 75,000 legal and clandestine immigrants, many of whom sold everything they owned in order to buy passage to America. First-generation Haitians are strongly oriented toward preserving a strong national identity, which they associate both with community solidarity and with social networks promoting individual success.¹³ In trying to instill national pride and an achievement orientation in their children, they clash, however, with the youngsters' everyday experiences in school. Little Haiti is adjacent to Liberty City, the main black inner-city area of Miami, and Haitian adolescents attend predominantly inner-city schools. Native-born youths stereotype Haitians as too docile and too subservient to whites and they make fun of French and Creole and of the Haitians' accent. As a result, second-generation Haitian children find themselves torn between conflicting ideas and values: to remain Haitian they would have to face social ostracism and continuing attacks in school; to become American—black American in this case—they would have to forgo their parents' dreams of making it in

America on the basis of ethnic solidarity and preservation of traditional values.¹⁴

An adversarial stance toward the white mainstream is common among inner-city minority youths who, while attacking the newcomers' ways, instill in them a consciousness of American-style discrimination. A common message is the devaluation of education as a vehicle for advancement of all black youths, a message that directly contradicts the immigrant parents' expectations. Academically outstanding Haitian American students, "Herbie" among them, have consciously attempted to retain their ethnic identity by cloaking it in black American cultural forms, such as rap music. Many others, however, have followed the path of least effort and become thoroughly assimilated. Assimilation in this instance is not into mainstream culture but into the values and norms of the inner city. In the process, the resources of solidarity and mutual support within the immigrant community are dissipated.

An emerging paradox in the study of today's second generation is the peculiar forms that assimilation has adopted for its members. As the Haitian example illustrates, adopting the outlooks and cultural ways of the native-born does not represent, as in the past, the first step toward social and economic mobility but may lead to the exact opposite. At the other end, immigrant youths who remain firmly ensconced in their respective

13. See Alex Stepick, "Haitian Refugees in the U.S." (Report no. 52, Minority Rights Group, London, 1982); Alex Stepick and Alejandro Portes, "Flight into Despair: A Profile of Recent Haitian Refugees in South Florida," *International Migration Review*, 20:329-50 (Summer 1986).

14. This account is based on fieldwork in Miami conducted in preparation for a survey of immigrant youths in public schools. The survey and preliminary results are described in the final section of this article.

ethnic communities may, by virtue of this fact, have a better chance for educational and economic mobility through use of the material and social capital that their communities make available.¹⁵

This situation stands the cultural blueprint for advancement of immigrant groups in American society on its head. As presented in innumerable academic and journalistic writings, the expectation is that the foreign-born and their offspring will first acculturate and then seek entry and acceptance among the native-born as a prerequisite for their social and economic advancement. Otherwise, they remain confined to the ranks of the ethnic lower and lower-middle classes.¹⁶ This portrayal of the requirements for mobility, so deeply embedded in the national consciousness, stands contradicted today by a growing number of empirical experiences.

A closer look at these experiences indicates, however, that the expected consequences of assimilation have

not entirely reversed signs, but that the process has become segmented. In other words, the question is into what sector of American society a particular immigrant group assimilates. Instead of a relatively uniform mainstream whose mores and prejudices dictate a common path of integration, we observe today several distinct forms of adaptation. One of them replicates the time-honored portrayal of growing acculturation and parallel integration into the white middle-class; a second leads straight in the opposite direction to permanent poverty and assimilation into the underclass; still a third associates rapid economic advancement with deliberate preservation of the immigrant community's values and tight solidarity. This pattern of segmented assimilation immediately raises the question of what makes some immigrant groups become susceptible to the downward route and what resources allow others to avoid this course. In the ultimate analysis, the same general process helps explain both outcomes. We advance next our hypotheses as to how this process takes place and how the contrasting outcomes of assimilation can be explained. This explanation is then illustrated with recent empirical material in the final section.

VULNERABILITY AND RESOURCES

Along with individual and family variables, the context that immigrants find upon arrival in their new country plays a decisive role in the course that their offspring's lives will follow. This context includes such broad variables as political relations

15. On the issue of social capital, see James S. Coleman, "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital," *American Journal of Sociology*, supplement, 94:S95-121 (1988); Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou, "Gaining the Upper Hand: Economic Mobility among Immigrant and Domestic Minorities," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 15:491-522 (Oct. 1992). On ethnic entrepreneurship, see Ivan H. Light, *Ethnic Enterprise in America: Business and Welfare among Chinese, Japanese, and Blacks* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); Kenneth Wilson and W. Allen Martin, "Ethnic Enclaves: A Comparison of the Cuban and Black Economies in Miami," *American Journal of Sociology*, 88:135-60 (1982).

16. See W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole, *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1945); Thomas Sowell, *Ethnic America: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 1981).

between sending and receiving countries and the state of the economy in the latter and such specific ones as the **size and structure of preexisting coethnic communities**. The concept of modes of incorporation provides a useful theoretical tool to understand this diversity. As developed in prior publications, modes of incorporation consist of the complex formed by the policies of the host government; the values and prejudices of the receiving society; and the characteristics of the coethnic community. These factors can be arranged in a tree of contextual situations, illustrated by Figure 1. This figure provides a first approximation to our problem.¹⁷

To explain second-generation outcomes and their segmented character, however, we need to go into greater detail into the meaning of these various modes of incorporation from the standpoint of immigrant youths. There are three features of the social contexts encountered by today's newcomers that create vulnerability to downward assimilation. The first is **color**, the second is **location**, and the third is the **absence of mobility ladders**. As noted previously, the majority of contemporary immigrants are nonwhite. Although this feature may appear at first glance as an individual characteristic, in reality it is a trait belonging to the host society. Prejudice is not intrinsic to a particular skin color or racial type, and, indeed, many immigrants never experienced it in their native lands. It is by virtue of moving into a new

social environment, marked by different values and prejudices, that physical features become redefined as a handicap.

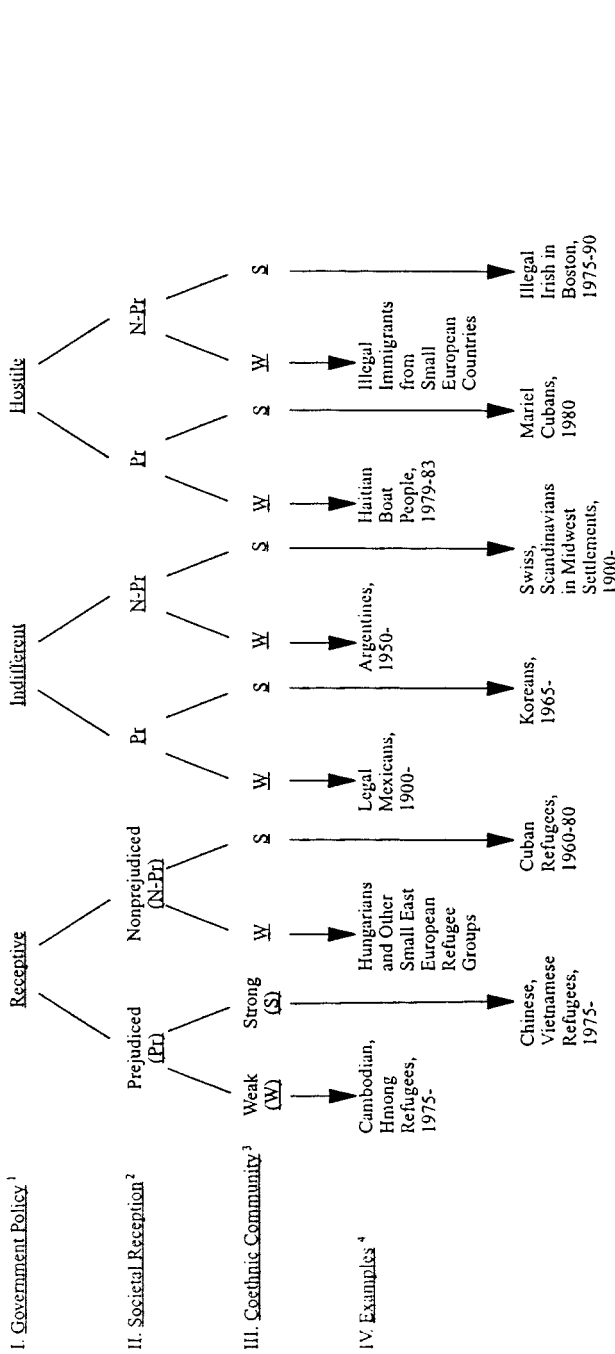
The concentration of immigrant households in cities and particularly in central cities, as documented previously, gives rise to a second source of vulnerability because it puts new arrivals in close contact with concentrations of native-born minorities. This leads to the identification of the condition of both groups—immigrants and the native poor—as the same in the eyes of the majority. More important, **it exposes second-generation children to the adversarial subculture developed by marginalized native youths to cope with their own difficult situation**.¹⁸ This process of socialization may take place even when first-generation parents are moving ahead economically and, hence, their children have no objective reasons for embracing a counter-cultural message. If successful, the process can effectively block parental plans for intergenerational mobility.

The third contextual source of vulnerability has to do with changes in the host economy that have led to the evaporation of occupational ladders for intergenerational mobility. As noted previously, **new immigrants may form the backbone of what remains of labor-intensive manufacturing in the cities as well as in their growing personal services sector, but these are niches that seldom offer channels for upward mobility**. The new hourglass economy, created by

17. See Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, *Immigrant America: A Portrait* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), chap. 3.

18. See Mercer L. Sullivan, *"Getting Paid": Youth, Crime, and Work in the Inner City* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), chaps. 1, 5.

FIGURE 1
MODES OF INCORPORATION: A TYPOLOGY



SOURCE: Adapted from Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, *Immigrant America: A Portrait* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 91. Copyright © 1990 by The Regents of the University of California.

1. Receptive policy is defined as legal entry with resettlement assistance, indifferent as legal entry without resettlement assistance, hostile as active opposition to a group's entry or permanence in the country.
2. Prejudiced reception is defined as that accorded to nonphenotypically white groups; nonprejudiced is that accorded to European and European-origin whites.
3. Weak coethnic communities are either small in numbers or composed primarily of manual workers; strong communities feature sizable numerical concentrations and a diversified occupational structure including entrepreneurs and professionals.
4. Examples include immigrant groups arriving from the start of the century to the present. Dates of migration are approximate. Groups reflect broadly but not perfectly the characteristics of each ideal type.

economic restructuring, means that children of immigrants must cross a narrow bottleneck to occupations requiring advanced training if their careers are to keep pace with their U.S.-acquired aspirations. This race against a narrowing middle demands that immigrant parents accumulate sufficient resources to allow their children to effect the passage and to simultaneously prove to them the viability of aspirations for upward mobility. Otherwise, assimilation may not be into mainstream values and expectations but into the adversarial stance of impoverished groups confined to the bottom of the new economic hourglass.

The picture is painted in such stark terms here for the sake of clarity, although in reality things have not yet become so polarized. Middle-level occupations requiring relatively modest educational achievements have not completely vanished. By 1980, skilled blue-collar jobs—classified by the U.S. census as “precision production, craft, and repair occupations”—had declined by 1.1 percent relative to a decade earlier but still represented 13 percent of the experienced civilian labor force, or 13.6 million workers. Mostly clerical administrative support occupations added another 16.9 percent, or 17.5 million jobs. In 1980, occupations requiring a college degree had increased by 6 percent in comparison with 1970, but they still employed less than a fifth—18.2 percent—of the American labor force.¹⁹ Even in the largest cities, oc-

cupations requiring only a high school diploma were common by the late 1980s. In New York City, for example, persons with 12 years or less of schooling held just over one half of the jobs in 1987. Clerical, service, and skilled blue-collar jobs not requiring a college degree represented 46 percent.²⁰ Despite these figures, there is little doubt that the trend toward occupational segmentation has increasingly reduced opportunities for incremental upward mobility through well-paid blue-collar positions. The trend forces immigrants today to bridge in only one generation the gap between entry-level jobs and professional positions that earlier groups took two or three generations to travel.

Different modes of incorporation also make available, however, three types of resources to confront the challenges of contemporary assimilation. First, certain groups, notably political refugees, are eligible for a variety of government programs including educational loans for their children. The Cuban Loan Program, implemented by the Kennedy administration in connection with its plan to resettle Cuban refugees away from South Florida, gave many impoverished first- and second-generation Cuban youths a chance to attend college. The high proportion of professionals and executives among Cuban American workers today, a figure on a par with that for native white work-

A (MRDF) (Washington, DC: Department of Commerce, 1983).

20. Thomas Bailey and Roger Waldinger, “Primary, Secondary, and Enclave Labor Markets: A Training System Approach,” *American Sociological Review*, 56:432-45 (1991).

19. U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population and Housing, 1980: Public Use Microdata Samples*

ers, can be traced, at least in part, to the success of that program.²¹ Passage of the 1980 Refugee Act gave to subsequent groups of refugees, in particular Southeast Asians and Eastern Europeans, access to a similarly generous benefits package.²²

Second, certain foreign groups have been exempted from the traditional prejudice endured by most immigrants, thereby facilitating a smoother process of adaptation. Some political refugees, such as the early waves of exiles from Castro's Cuba, Hungarians and Czechs escaping the invasions of their respective countries, and Soviet Jews escaping religious persecution, provide examples. In other cases, it is the cultural and phenotypical affinity of newcomers to ample segments of the host population that ensures a welcome reception. The Irish coming to Boston during the 1980s are a case in point. Although many were illegal aliens, they came into an environment where generations of Irish Americans had established a secure foothold. Public sympathy effectively neutralized governmental hostility in this case, culminating in a change of the immi-

gration law directly benefiting the newcomers.²³

Third, and most important, are the resources made available through networks in the coethnic community.

Immigrants who join well-established and diversified ethnic groups have access from the start to a range of moral and material resources well beyond those available through official assistance programs. Educational help for second-generation youths may include not only access to college grants and loans but also the existence of a private school system geared to the immigrant community's values. Attendance at these private ethnic schools insulates children from contact with native minority youths, while reinforcing the authority of parental views and plans.

In addition, the economic diversification of several immigrant communities creates niches of opportunity that members of the second generation can occupy, often without a need for an advanced education. Small-business apprenticeships, access to skilled building trades, and well-paid jobs in local government bureaucracies are some of the ethnic niches documented in the recent lit-

21. Professionals and executives represented 25.9 percent of Cuban-origin males aged 16 years and over in 1989; the figure for the total adult male population was 26 percent. See Jesus M. García and Patricia A. Montgomery, *The Hispanic Population of the United States: March 1990*, Current Population Reports, ser. P-20, no. 449 (Washington, DC: Department of Commerce, 1991).

22. Portes and Rumbaut, *Immigrant America*, pp. 23-25; Robert L. Bach et al., "The Economic Adjustment of Southeast Asian Refugees in the United States," in *World Refugee Survey, 1983* (Geneva: United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 1984), pp. 51-55.

23. The 1990 Immigration Act contains tailor-made provisions to facilitate the legalization of Irish immigrants. Those taking advantage of the provisions are popularly dubbed "Kennedy Irish" in honor of the Massachusetts Senator who coauthored the act. On the 1990 act, see Michael Fix and Jeffrey S. Passel, "The Door Remains Open: Recent Immigration to the United States and a Preliminary Analysis of the Immigration Act of 1990" (Working paper, Urban Institute and RAND Corporation, 1991). On the Irish in Boston, see Karen Tumulty, "When Irish Eyes Are Hiding . . .," *Los Angeles Times*, 29 Jan. 1989.

erature.²⁴ In 1987, average sales per firm of the smaller Chinese, East Indian, Korean, and Cuban enterprises exceeded \$100,000 per year and they jointly employed over 200,000 workers. These figures omit medium-sized and large ethnic firms, whose sales and work forces are much larger.²⁵ Fieldwork in these communities indicates that up to half of recently arrived immigrants are employed by coethnic firms and that self-employment offers a prime avenue for mobility to second-generation youths.²⁶ Such community-mediated opportunities provide a solution to the race between material resources and second-generation aspirations not available through competition in the open labor market. Through creation of a capitalism of their own, some immigrant groups have thus been able to circumvent outside discrimination and the threat of vanishing mobility ladders.

24. Bailey and Waldinger, "Primary, Secondary, and Enclave Labor Markets"; Min Zhou, *New York's Chinatown: The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992); Wilson and Martin, "Ethnic Enclaves"; Suzanne Model, "The Ethnic Economy: Cubans and Chinese Reconsidered" (Manuscript, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, 1990).

25. U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Survey of Minority-Owned Business Enterprises, 1987*, MB-2 and MB-3 (Washington, DC: Department of Commerce, 1991).

26. Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick, "Unwelcome Immigrants: The Labor Market Experiences of 1980 (Mariel) Cuban and Haitian Refugees in South Florida," *American Sociological Review*, 50:493-514 (Aug. 1985); Zhou, *New York's Chinatown*; Luis E. Guarnizo, "One Country in Two: Dominican-Owned Firms in New York and the Dominican Republic" (Ph.D. diss. Johns Hopkins University, 1992); Bailey and Waldinger, "Primary, Secondary, and Enclave Labor Markets."

In contrast to these favorable conditions are those foreign minorities who either lack a community already in place or whose coethnics are too poor to render assistance. The condition of Haitians in South Florida, cited earlier, provides an illustration of one of the most handicapped modes of incorporation encountered by contemporary immigrants, combining official hostility and widespread social prejudice with the absence of a strong receiving community.²⁷ From the standpoint of second-generation outcomes, the existence of a large but downtrodden coethnic community may be even less desirable than no community at all. This is because newly arrived youths enter into ready contact with the reactive subculture developed by earlier generations. Its influence is all the more powerful because it comes from individuals of the same national origin, "people like us" who can more effectively define the proper stance and attitudes of the newcomers. To the extent that they do so, the first-generation model of upward mobility through school achievement and attainment of professional occupations will be blocked.

THREE EXAMPLES

Mexicans and Mexican Americans

Field High School (the name is fictitious) is located in a small coastal community of central California whose economy has long been tied to

27. Stepick, "Haitian Refugees in the U.S."; Jake C. Miller, *The Plight of Haitian Refugees* (New York: Praeger, 1984).

agricultural production and immigrant farm labor. About 57 percent of the student population is of Mexican descent. An intensive ethnographic study of the class of 1985 at Field High began with school records that showed that the majority of U.S.-born Spanish-surname students who had entered the school in 1981 had dropped out by their senior year. However, only 35 percent of the Spanish-surname students who had been originally classified by the school as limited English proficient (LEP) had dropped out. The figure was even lower than the corresponding one for native white students, 40 percent. LEP status is commonly assigned to recently arrived Mexican immigrants.²⁸

Intensive ethnographic fieldwork at the school identified several distinct categories in which the Mexican-origin population could be classified. Recent Mexican immigrants were at one extreme. They dressed differently and unstylishly. They claimed an identity as Mexican and considered Mexico their permanent home. The most academically successful of this group were those most proficient in Spanish, reflecting their prior levels of education in Mexico. Almost all were described by teach-

ers and staff as courteous, serious about their schoolwork, respectful, and eager to please as well as naive and unsophisticated. They were commonly classified as LEP.

The next category comprised Mexican-oriented students. They spoke Spanish at home and were generally classified as fluent English proficient (FEP). They had strong bicultural ties with both Mexico and the United States, reflecting the fact that most were born in Mexico but had lived in the United States for more than five years. They were proud of their Mexican heritage but saw themselves as different from the first group, the *recién llegados* (recently arrived), as well as from the native-born Chicanos and Cholos, who were derided as people who had lost their Mexican roots. Students from this group were active in soccer and the Sociedad Bilingue and in celebrations of May 5th, the anniversary of the Mexican defeat of French occupying forces. Virtually all of the Mexican-descent students who graduated in the top 10 percent of their class in 1981 were identified as members of this group.

Chicanos were by far the largest Mexican-descent group at Field High. They were mostly U.S.-born second- and third-generation students whose primary loyalty was to their in-group, seen as locked in conflict with white society. Chicanos referred derisively to successful Mexican students as "schoolboys" and "schoolgirls" or as "wannabes." According to M. G. Matute-Bianchi,

To be a Chicano meant in practice to hang out by the science wing . . . *not* eating lunch in the quad where all the "gringos" and "schoolboys" hang out . . . cutting classes

28. M. G. Matute-Bianchi, "Ethnic Identities and Patterns of School Success and Failure among Mexican-Descent and Japanese-American Students in a California High School," *American Journal of Education*, 95:233-55 (Nov. 1986). This study is summarized in Rubén G. Rumbaut, "Immigrant Students in California Public Schools: A Summary of Current Knowledge" (Report no. 11, Center for Research on Effective Schooling for Disadvantaged Children, Johns Hopkins University, Aug. 1990).

by faking a call slip so you can be with your friends at the 7-11 . . . sitting in the back of classes and not participating . . . *not* carrying your books to class . . . *not* taking the difficult classes . . . doing the minimum to get by.²⁹

Chicanos merge imperceptibly into the last category, the Cholos, who were commonly seen as “low riders” and gang members. They were also native-born Mexican Americans, easily identifiable by their deliberate manner of dress, walk, speech, and other cultural symbols. Chicanos and Cholos were generally regarded by teachers as “irresponsible,” “disrespectful,” “mistrusting,” “sullen,” “apathetic,” and “less motivated,” and their poor school performance was attributed to these traits.³⁰ According to Matute-Bianchi, Chicanos and Cholos were faced with what they saw as a forced-choice dilemma between doing well in school or being a Chicano. To act white was regarded as disloyalty to one’s group.

The situation of these last two groups exemplifies losing the race between first-generation achievements and later generations’ expectations. Seeing their parents and grandparents confined to humble menial jobs and increasingly aware of discrimination against them by the white mainstream, U.S.-born children of earlier Mexican immigrants readily join a reactive subculture as a means of protecting their sense of self-worth. Participation in this subculture then leads to serious barriers to their chances of upward mobility because school achievement is defined

as antithetical to ethnic solidarity. Like Haitian students at Edison High, newly arrived Mexican students are at risk of being socialized into the same reactive stance, with the aggravating factor that it is other Mexicans, not native-born strangers, who convey the message. The principal protection of *mexicanos* against this type of assimilation lies in their strong identification with home-country language and values, which brings them closer to their parents’ cultural stance.

Punjabi Sikhs in California

Valleyside (a fictitious name) is a northern California community where the primary economic activity is orchard farming. Farm laborers in this area come often from India; they are mainly rural Sikhs from the Punjab. By the early 1980s, second-generation Punjabi students already accounted for 11 percent of the student body at Valleyside High. Their parents were no longer only farm laborers, since about a third had become orchard owners themselves and another third worked in factories in the nearby San Francisco area. An ethnographic study of Valleyside High School in 1980-82 revealed a very difficult process of assimilation for Punjabi Sikh students. According to its author, M. A. Gibson, Valleyside is “redneck country,” and white residents are extremely hostile to immigrants who look different and speak a different language: “Punjabi teenagers are told they stink . . . told to go back to India . . . physically abused by majority students who spit at them, refuse to sit by them in class

29. Matute-Bianchi, “Ethnic Identities and Patterns,” p. 253.

30. Rumbaut, “Immigrant Students,” p. 25.

or in buses, throw food at them or worse."³¹

Despite these attacks and some evidence of discrimination by school staff, Punjabi students performed better academically than majority Anglo students. About 90 percent of the immigrant youths completed high school, compared to 70-75 percent of native whites. Punjabi boys surpassed the average grade point average, were more likely to take advanced science and math classes, and expressed aspirations for careers in science and engineering. Girls, on the other hand, tended to enroll in business classes, but they paid less attention to immediate career plans, reflecting parental wishes that they should marry first. This gender difference is indicative of the continuing strong influence exercised by the immigrant community over its second generation. According to Gibson, Punjabi parents pressured their children against too much contact with white peers who may "dishonor" the immigrants' families, and defined "becoming Americanized" as forgetting one's roots and adopting the most disparaged traits of the majority, such as leaving home at age 18, making decisions without parental consent, dating, and dancing. At the same time, parents urged children to abide by school rules, ignore racist remarks and avoid fights, and learn useful skills, including full proficiency in English.³²

31. M. A. Gibson, *Accommodation without Assimilation: Sikh Immigrants in an American High School* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 268.

32. Gibson, *Accommodation without Assimilation*. The study is summarized in Rumbaut, "Immigrant Students," pp. 22-23.

The overall success of this strategy of selective assimilation to American society is remarkable because Punjabi immigrants were generally poor on their arrival in the United States and confronted widespread discrimination from whites without the benefit of either governmental assistance or a well-established coethnic community. In terms of our typology of vulnerability and resources, the Punjabi Sikh second generation was very much at risk except for two crucial factors. First, immigrant parents did not settle in the inner city or in close proximity to any native-born minority whose offspring could provide an alternative model of adaptation to white-majority discrimination. In particular, the absence of a downtrodden Indian American community composed of children of previous immigrants allowed first-generation parents to influence decisively the outlook of their offspring, including their ways of fighting white prejudice. There was no equivalent of a Cholo-like reactive subculture to offer an alternative blueprint of the stance that "people like us" should take.

Second, Punjabi immigrants managed to make considerable economic progress, as attested by the number who had become farm owners, while maintaining a tightly knit ethnic community. The material and social capital created by this first-generation community compensated for the absence of an older coethnic group and had decisive effects on second-generation outlooks. Punjabi teenagers were shown that their parents' ways paid off economically, and this fact, plus their community's cohe-

siveness, endowed them with a source of pride to counteract outside discrimination. Through this strategy of selective assimilation, Punjabi Sikhs appeared to be winning the race against the inevitable acculturation of their children to American-style aspirations.

*Caribbean youths
in South Florida*

Miami is arguably the American city that has been most thoroughly transformed by post-1960 immigration. The Cuban Revolution had much to do with this transformation, as it sent the entire Cuban upper class out of the country, followed by thousands of refugees of more modest backgrounds. Over time, Cubans created a highly diversified and prosperous ethnic community that provided resources for the adaptation process of its second generation. Reflecting this situation are average Cuban family incomes that, by 1989, approximated those of the native-born population; the existence in 1987 of more than 30,000 Cuban-owned small businesses that formed the core of the Miami ethnic enclave; and the parallel rise of a private school system oriented toward the values and political outlook of this community.³³ In terms of the typology of vulnerability and resources, well-sheltered Cuban American teenagers lack any extensive exposure to outside discrimination, they have little contact with youths from disadvantaged minorities, and the development of an en-

33. García and Montgomery, *Hispanic Population*; U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Survey of Minority-Owned Business Enterprises*, MB-2.

clave creates economic opportunities beyond the narrowing industrial and tourist sectors on which most other immigrant groups in the area depend. Across town, Haitian American teenagers face exactly the opposite set of conditions, as has been shown.

Among the other immigrant groups that form Miami's ethnic mosaic, two deserve mention because they represent intermediate situations between those of the Cubans and Haitians. One comprises Nicaraguans escaping the Sandinista regime during the 1980s. They were not as welcomed in the United States as were the Cuban exiles, nor were they able to develop a large and diversified community. Yet they shared with Cubans their language and culture, as well as a militant anti-Communist discourse. This common political outlook led the Cuban American community to extend its resources in support of their Nicaraguan brethren, smoothing their process of adaptation.³⁴ For second-generation Nicaraguans, this means that the preexisting ethnic community that provides a model for their own assimilation is not a downtrodden group but rather one that has managed to establish a firm and positive presence in the city's economy and politics.

The second group comprises West Indians coming from Jamaica, Trinidad, and other English-speaking Caribbean republics. They generally arrive in Miami as legal immigrants, and many bring along professional and business credentials as well as the advantage of fluency in English. These individual advantages are dis-

34. Portes and Stepick, *City on the Edge*, chap. 7.

counted, however, by a context of reception in which these mostly black immigrants are put in the same category as native-born blacks and discriminated against accordingly. The recency of West Indian migration and its small size have prevented the development of a diversified ethnic community in South Florida. Hence new arrivals experience the full force of white discrimination without the protection of a large coethnic group and with constant exposure to the situation and attitudes of the inner-city population. Despite considerable individual resources, these disadvantages put the West Indian second generation at risk of bypassing white or even native black middle-class models to assimilate into the culture of the underclass.

A recently completed survey of eighth- and ninth-graders in the Dade County (Miami) and Broward County (Ft. Lauderdale) schools includes sizable samples of Cuban, Haitian, Nicaraguan, and West Indian second-generation children. The study defined "second generation" as youths born in the United States who have at least one foreign-born parent or those born abroad who have lived in the United States for at least five years. All eligible students in the selected schools were included. The survey included both inner-city and suburban public schools, as well as private schools and those where particular foreign-origin groups were known to concentrate. The sample was evenly divided between boys and girls, and the students ranged in age between 12 and 17.³⁵

35. Alejandro Portes and Lisandro Perez, *Children of Immigrants: The Adaptation Pro-*

Table 2 presents the responses of second-generation students from these nationalities to a battery of attitudinal and self-identification questions. The large Cuban-origin sample is divided between those attending public and private school. Large socioeconomic differences between the four groups are highlighted in the first panel of Table 2. Cuban children in private schools have the best-educated parents and those with the highest-status occupations. Haitians in public schools have parents who rank lowest on both dimensions. Nicaraguans and West Indians occupy intermediate positions, with parents whose average education is often higher than that of the parents of public school Cubans but whose occupational levels are roughly the same. Reflecting these differences, over half of private school Cuban respondents define their families as upper middle class or higher, while only a third of Haitians and Nicaraguans do so.³⁶

The next panel of the table presents differences in ethnic self-identification. Less than one-fifth of these second-generation students identify themselves as nonhyphenated Americans. The proportion is highest among higher-status Cubans, but

cess of the Second Generation (Project conducted at the Department of Sociology, Johns Hopkins University, in progress).

36. Because of the large sample size, .001 is used as the criterion of statistical significance in these tabulations. Cramér's V^2 is used as the principal measure of strength of association. In comparison with other coefficients, it has the advantage of a constant range between 0 and 1. Higher values indicate stronger association. Eta is similarly defined but is used only for the continuous parental occupational status variables.

TABLE 2
SECOND-GENERATION EIGHTH- AND NINTH-GRADE STUDENTS
BY NATIONAL ORIGIN, SOUTH FLORIDA SCHOOLS, 1992 (Percentage unless noted)

	Cubans in Private School (N = 172)	Cubans in Public School (N = 968)	Haitians (N = 136)	Nicaraguans (N = 319)	West Indians (N = 191)	Total (N = 1,786)	p <	V ² or Eta
Socioeconomic characteristics								
Father college graduate	50.0	21.4	11.0	38.6	18.8	26.1	.001	.27
Mother college graduate	39.0	17.5	11.0	28.2	26.2	21.9	.001	.15
Father occupation, mean prestige scores*	52.6	44.2	37.6	43.7	43.6	44.5	.001	.22
Mother occupation, mean prestige scores*	51.1	45.1	39.7	40.1	44.8	44.3	.001	.23
Family wealthy or upper-middle class†	57.0	42.7	37.5	35.4	49.2	43.1	.001	.10
Self-identification								
American	33.1	19.9	16.2	10.0	16.2	18.8	.001	.64
Black American	—	—	12.5	—	9.9	2.2	.001	.64
Hispanic American	3.5	7.6	1.5	39.5	0.5	11.7	.001	.64
Cuban†	61.6	67.5	—	0.3	—	42.6	.001	.64
Haitian†	—	—	53.7	—	3.1	4.4	.001	.64
Nicaraguan†	—	0.6	—	44.8	—	8.3	.001	.64
Other nationality§	1.8	4.4	16.2	5.3	70.2	12.2	.001	.64
Aspirations								
College education or higher	97.1	82.6	86.7	79.0	84.8	83.9	.001	.11
Professional or business occupation	72.1	70.0	75.0	69.9	71.2	70.6	n.s.	.06

(continued)

TABLE 2 Continued

	Cubans in Private School (N = 172)	Cubans in Public School (N = 968)	Haitians (N = 136)	Nicaraguans (N = 319)	West Indians (N = 191)	Total (N = 1,786)	p <	V ² or Eta
Perceptions of discrimination								
Has ever been discriminated against	29.1	38.2	67.6	50.8	64.4	44.6	.001	.23
Discriminated against by teachers	5.2	12.5	16.2	13.5	23.6	13.4	.001	.13
Attitudes toward U.S. society								
There is racial discrimination in economic opportunities	91.3	79.2	84.6	81.5	89.5	82.3	.001	.11
Nonwhites have equal opportunities	30.8	53.6	44.9	52.4	41.9	49.3	.001	.14
The United States is the best country in the world	79.7	68.9	36.0	49.8	35.1	60.4	.001	.30
Friends								
Many or most friends have foreign-born parents	93.6	73.1	46.3	75.2	43.5	70.2	.001	.22
Friends' parents are								
Cuban	89.5	58.7	2.9	11.3	4.2	43.1	.001	.44
Haitian	—	1.2	30.1	1.3	12.6	4.5	.001	.44
Nicaraguan	7.6	24.8	2.9	69.0	2.1	26.9	.001	.44
West Indian	—	6.2	46.3	7.2	62.8	14.9	.001	.44
Other	2.9	9.1	17.7	11.2	18.3	10.6	.001	.44

SOURCE: Alejandro Portes and Lisandro Perez, Children of Immigrants: The Adaptation Process of the Second Generation (Project conducted at the Department of Sociology, Johns Hopkins University, in progress).

*Employed parents only; Treiman international prestige scale scores.

[†]Respondent's class self-classification.

[‡]Includes hyphenated self-identifications of the same nationality, for example, Nicaraguan American.

[§]West Indian self-identifications not classified individually by country.

^{||} Respondents' statements of the level of education that they realistically expect to attain.

even among this group almost two-thirds see themselves as Cuban or Cuban American, a proportion close to their peers in public schools. Very few Cubans opt for the self-designation "Hispanic." Nicaraguan students, on the other hand, use this label almost as commonly as that of "Nicaraguan" itself. None of the Latin groups identify themselves as "black." Among Haitians and West Indians, however, roughly one-tenth already assume an identity as black American. Haitian self-identifications are similar to Nicaraguan in being less attached to the country of origin and in using pan-national labels more often than either Cubans or West Indians do. In total, about half of the Haitian children identified themselves as something other than "Haitian."³⁷

Aspirations are very high in the entire sample, as indicated in the next panel of Table 2. Although significant differences in expectations of completing college do exist, at least four-fifths of every group expects to achieve this level of education. Similarly, roughly 70 percent of students from every nationality aspire to professional or business careers. These consistently high aspirations contrast with the reported wide differences in parental socioeconomic backgrounds and the differential effects of discrimination. The next panel of the table addresses the latter point, documenting the awareness that these teenagers have about the realities of American society. The two mostly black groups report discrimination against themselves twice to

three times more frequently than do Cubans. Majorities of both Haitian and West Indian youths reported having been discriminated against, and about 20 percent said that discrimination was by their teachers. In contrast, only 5 percent of Cubans in private school report such incidents. Nicaraguans occupy an intermediate position, with half reporting discrimination against themselves and 13 percent pointing to their teachers as the source.

Congruent with these personal experiences, Haitian and West Indian teenagers are more likely to agree that there is racial discrimination in economic opportunities in the United States and to disagree that non-whites have equal opportunities. Interestingly, they are joined in these negative evaluations by private school Cubans. This result may reflect the greater information and class awareness of the latter group relative to their less privileged Latin counterparts. However, all Cuban students part company with the rest of the sample in their positive evaluation of the United States. Roughly three-fourths of second-generation Cubans endorse the view that "the United States is the best country in the world"; only half of Nicaraguans do so and the two mostly black groups take a distinctly less enthusiastic stance. These significant differences illustrate the contrasting levels of identification with their country and their local community by children of nationalities affected more or less by outside discrimination.

Introducing controls for native versus foreign birth of respondents attenuates these differences some-

37. West Indian self-identification was not coded separately and hence is classified under "Other nationality" in Table 2.

what, but the overall pattern remains. Results of this survey illustrate the race between generalized career aspirations and the widely different vulnerabilities and resources created by first-generation modes of incorporation. Aspirations are very high for all groups, regardless of origin; however, parental socioeconomic backgrounds, resources of the coethnic community—as exemplified by the existence of a private school system—and experiences of discrimination are very different. They influence decisively the outlook of second-generation youths, even at a young age, and are likely to have strong effects on the course of their future assimilation. Illustrating these differences is the enthusiasm with which children of advantaged immigrants embrace their parents' adopted country and the much less sanguine views of those whose situation is more difficult.

CONCLUSION

The last panel of Table 2 highlights another intriguing fact about today's second generation. **The best-positioned group—private-school Cubans—is the one least likely to step out of the ethnic circle in their interpersonal relationships, while the group in the most disadvantaged position—Haitians—is most likely to do so.** Overall, the three Latin groups overwhelmingly select friends who are also children of immigrants, mostly from the same nationality. Less than half of the Haitians and West Indians do so, indicating much

greater contact with native-parent-age youths. Other Haitian American teenagers are not even the majority of foreign-parentage friends among our Haitian respondents.

Fifty years ago, the dilemma of Italian American youngsters studied by Irving Child consisted of assimilating into the American mainstream, sacrificing in the process their parents' cultural heritage in contrast to taking refuge in the ethnic community from the challenges of the outside world. In the contemporary context of segmented assimilation, the options have become less clear. Children of nonwhite immigrants may not even have the opportunity of gaining access to middle-class white society, no matter how acculturated they become. Joining those native circles to which they do have access may prove a ticket to permanent subordination and disadvantage. Remaining securely ensconced in their coethnic community, under these circumstances, may be not a symptom of escapism but the best strategy for capitalizing on otherwise unavailable material and moral resources. As the experiences of Punjabi Sikh and Cuban American students suggest, a strategy of paced, selective assimilation may prove the best course for immigrant minorities. But the extent to which this strategy is possible also depends on the history of each group and its specific profile of vulnerabilities and resources. The present analysis represents a preliminary step toward understanding these realities.