CHAPTER ONE

A Comparison of Contemporary Immigration and the New Immigration of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

Introduction

The first selection, appropriately, is an essay that lays out a comparison between turn-of-the-century European immigrants and contemporary immigrants. Pyong Gap Min, a sociologist, outlines a very comprehensive argument for the contention that today's immigrants will follow a different trajectory in making lives for themselves within American society than did European immigrants a century ago. Min's argument is based on a number of economic, cultural, political, and social factors that are said to separate the experience of the two groups. The familiar arguments, based on segmented assimilation theory and transnationalization, are complemented here by discussions of both governmental policies and the internal social characteristics and settlement patterns of the contemporary immigration that serve to reinforce the view that the assimilation model is not a useful way to understand immigration today. Thus, past experience, which helped to create the theory that analysts took to understanding European immigration, is presumed not to be an adequate guide to present immigration experience.

As Min notes, however, we must keep in mind that the European immigrants of the turn of the century were also deemed unlikely to assimilate into American society, which, in fact, was one of the most important reasons that the nativist movement to restrict their numbers grew and was ultimately successful in gaining federal legislation to impose strict quotas on all immigrants from outside northern and western Europe. The quota system

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did provide a context for the more rapid integration of European newcomers, because it cut off the immigration of people from their homelands who continuously revitalized homeland languages, cultures, identities, and ethnic groups in the United States. While some nativists did indeed favor just such efforts to speed the process of Americanization, many others were concerned simply with protecting American society against foreigners who seemed to threaten American democracy and social order, and who seemed inherently to be poor material for American citizenship. In retrospect, these fears of peoples like Italians, Eastern European Jews, Poles, Greeks, and others, who over the course of several generations found their way into the American mainstream and are now firmly lodged there, seem irrational, exaggerated, and deeply bigoted.

One question that is immediately called to mind in light of the pessimism and the hostility that turn-of-the-century European immigration inspired at the time is whether the pessimism about, and in some quarters, too, the hostility directed at contemporary immigrants is similarly exaggerated. Just as it was difficult amidst the confusing welter of daily events to project a more positive outcome for the European immigrants and for American society a century ago, so, too, might it be the case today that pessimism seems more realistic than putting one's hopes on the formidable absorptive powers of American society. Nonetheless, American society has proven itself able to integrate large numbers of immigrants, both by changing the immigrants and by changing such institutions as schools and political parties to accommodate their presence. Moreover, as some selections in this book will demonstrate, the lives and the aspirations of contemporary immigrants often do not really seem much different from the European immigrants of the past. Ask yourself, then, whether there are alternative futures to the one projected in the essay you are about to read.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Alejandro Portes and Robert Bach, *Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigration in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

Nancy Foner, *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration* (New Haven and New York: Yale University Press and the Russell Sage Foundation, 2000).

Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People* (Boston: Little Brown, 1951).

Rudolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos* (New York: Pearson, Longman, 1988, third edition).

Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (Boston: Gale Group, 1991).

Thomas Archdeacon, *Becoming American: An Ethnic History* (New York: Free Press, 1983).

Pyong Gap Min, "A Comparison of Post–1965 and Turn-of-the-Century Immigrants in Intergenerational Mobility and Cultural Transmission"

BETWEEN 1880 AND 1930, approximately 28 million people immigrated to the United States. About half of the immigrants during this mass migration period originated from southern and eastern European countries. While the vast majority of the earlier northwestern European immigrant groups were Protestant, these later immigrants were mostly Catholic or Jewish. Initially, these *non*-Protestant, "new immigrant" groups were considered different races and encountered prejudice, discrimination, and racial violence by native-born Americans of northwestern ancestry. However, as classical assimilation theory predicted, these non-Protestant, white ethnic groups quickly acculturated to the American mainstream and achieved gradual social assimilation and socioeconomic mobility over generations. Although their ancestors were labelled as "inassimilable races," they have been incorporated into the white American mainstream culturally and structurally.

National origin discriminatory immigration laws in the early 1920s, the Great Depression, and World War II caused the immigration flow to drop to its nadir in the next four decades beginning in 1930. Yet, the liberalization of immigration laws, the United States government's political and military involvement in many Third World countries, and other factors have accelerated the flow of immigration since 1965, ushering in the second mass migration period in American history. While the majority of immigrants during the first mass migration period were whites who originated in European countries, the vast majority of post–1965 immigrants were drawn from non-European, Third World countries.

An important issue regarding the adaptation of the descendants of these new immigrant groups is whether they will follow the descendants of the earlier white immigrant groups at the turn of the twentieth century. To put the question differently, what will the major differences be between the descendants of earlier white ethnic groups and those of contemporary immigrant groups in patterns of adaptation?

This article intends to compare the descendants of contemporary, Third World immigrants and those of the turn-of-the-century white immigrants in their adaptation patterns. To compare the adaptation patterns systematically, we need to examine the differences in (1) patterns of ethnicity and acculturation and (2) patterns of social mobility separately.

"Inassimilable Races" Have Become White Americans

Table 1.1 provides an overview of historical trends between 1841 and 1996 in immigration size and regions of immigrants' origin, with a focus on the

Table 1.1 Immigration to the U.S. by decade, region, and race, 1841–1996

		Region (%)						U.S. totals		
Decade	Total N (in 1000s)	N.&W. Europe	S.&E. Europe[2]	Canada & N.F.[3]	Total White	L.A.[1] &C.I.[4]	Asia & M.E.[5]	Year	% of Foreign Born	% of White
1841–50	1,713	93.0	0.3	2.4	95.7	1.2	0.0	1850	9.7	84.3
1851–60	2,598	93.6	0.8	2.3	96.7	0.6	1.6	1860	13.1	85.6
1861–70	2,315	87.8	1.5	6.7	96.0	0.6	2.8	1870	14.0	87.1
1871–80	2,812	73.6	7.7	13.6	94.9	0.7	4.4	1880	13.3	86.5
1881–90	5,247	72.0	18.2	7.5	97.7	0.7	1.3	1890	14.7	87.5
1891–1900	3,688	44.6	51.9	0.1	96.6	1.0	2.0	1900	13.6	87.9
1901–10	8,795	21.7	69.9	2.0	93.6	2.1	3.7	1910	14.6	88.9
1911–20	5,763	25.3	50.0	12.9	88.2	6.0	4.3	1920	13.1	89.7
1921–30	4,107	32.5	27.5	22.2	82.2	14.4	2.7	1930	11.5	89.8
1931–40	528	38.7	27.2	20.5	86.4	9.7	3.0	1940	8.6	89.8
1941–50	1,035	49.9	10.1	16.6	76.6	17.7	3.1	1950	6.9	89.3
1951–60	2,516	38.2	14.5	15.0	67.7	24.6	6.1	1960	5.4	88.6
1961–70	3,322	18.3	15.5	12.4	46.2	39.3	12.9	1970	4.7	87.6
1971–80	4,493	11.6	10.0	23.8	45.4	40.3	35.3	1980	6.2	79.6
1981–90	7,338	4.6	5.2	1.8	11.6	46.8	38.0	1990	8.0	75.6
1991–96	6,146	3.3	10.2	1.5	15.0	48.7	31.6	1997	9.7	72.0

Notes

1. Latin America.
2. Up to 1910, data for Austria and Hungary were tabulated together by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. In this table, the data for these two countries up to 1910 were included in the category of southeastern Europe, although only Hungary actually belongs to southeastern Europe.
3. Newfoundland.
4. Caribbean Islands.
5. Middle East.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957*, Series A 9–22, A 34–50, C 23–38 & C 228–295 (Washington, D.C., 1960); U.S. Bureau Of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*, Series A 9–22, A 44–50, C 23–28 & C 228–295 (Washington, D.C., 1975); U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1980 Census of Population*, *PC-80-1-B1*, *U.S. Summary*, Table 39 and PC-80-D I-A, *United States Summary*, Table 253 (Washington, D.C., 1983); U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1990 Census of Population*, *Social and Economic Characteristics*, *United States*, Table 24 (Washington, D.C., 1993); U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1997 Demographic File, March Current Population Survey; Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Statistical Yearbook*, *1985*, Tables 1.1, 1.2 & 1.3 and 1996, Table 3 (Washington, D.C., 1986 and 1997).

two mass migration periods. The period of 1881–1930, the first mass migration period, differs from the previous migration period both in the size of annual immigration and in the region of origin of immigrants. While an overwhelming majority of immigrants admitted before 1881 were drawn from northwestern European, Protestant countries—the United Kingdom, Germany, and Ireland in particular—the proportion of southeastern, non-Protestant immigrants began to increase in the 1880s, reaching the majority of immigrants in the next three decades. The phenomenal increase in the number of immigrants from these less-developed European countries contributed to the sharp rise in the overall immigration scale during the period. In the peak decade of the 1900s, Italy, Russia, Hungary, and Poland were among the top source countries of immigrants, with the first two replacing the United Kingdom and Germany as the top two source countries.

The immigrants from these economically less-developed European countries were mostly Catholic, Jewish, or Eastern Orthodox Christian. Their language, religious, "racial," and other differences, along with nativism, led native-born Protestants to consider their mass migration as a threat to the very foundation of American cultural and political systems. The negative attitudes toward Italians resulted in racial violence against and killings of Italian immigrants in the early twentieth century. Jews, who left Russia and other Eastern European countries to escape pogroms, encountered new forms of anti-Semitic prejudice and discrimination. The nativist reactions to the "new immigrants" developed into scientific racism in the 1910s, according to which "scientific evidence" was alleged to support the biological superiority of the "old stock," or the "Teutonic race," to southern and eastern Europeans.

Immigrants' class background is one of the key variables that determine their and their children's socioeconomic adjustments. A large proportion of the southern and eastern European immigrants of the first mass migration period were farmers and unskilled workers who were illiterate, although there were significant national origin differences in the immigrants' class background. Among the European immigrants of 1889–1910 who reported their occupations, 94 percent of Rumanians, 83 percent of Russians, 78 percent of southern Italians, and 76 percent of Poles were unskilled workers or farmers, compared to only 12 percent of Scotch and 14 percent of Jews and English. The illiteracy rates of major southern and eastern European immigrant groups admitted in 1920 were 60 percent for the Portuguese, 47 percent for Italians, 32 percent for Poles, and 23 percent for Jews. As a result, most of the Southern and Eastern European immigrants, with the exception of Jews who had largely urban and higher educational backgrounds, occupied the bottom of the occupational hierarchy in American society. In 1910, only 6 percent of foreign-born white workers engaged in professional and other white-collar occupations (public service and clerical) in comparison to 17 percent of native white workers with native parentage, while they were overrepresented in manufacturing with the ratio of 43 percent to 26 percent. Partly because of their class disadvantages and partly because of the industrial structure of the time, even many of their second-generation descendants remained in blue-collar occupations.

Earlier southern and eastern European immigrants of a heavy rural background kept their "old world traits" in urban America. Many working-class immigrants who settled in ethnic enclaves were able to transmit their ethnic language and customs to their children. However, these "inassimilable" white ethnic groups also experienced an inexorable march toward acculturation. Beyond the second generation, they lost their ethnic language and much of their ethnic customs. Already in the 1970s, their third and fourth generations achieved cultural and social assimilation to the extent that they maintained their ethnicity loosely, using only ethnic symbols such as ethnic food and ethnic festivals. In the 1950s and 1960s, descendants of southern and eastern European immigrants were slightly behind those of Protestant ethnic groups in their socioeconomic statistics. However, by the 1970s most of the non-Protestant ethnic groups caught up with or outperformed Protestant ethnic groups socioeconomically. In the process of racial formation in the United States, these "inassimilable races" have become white Americans.

Contemporary Immigrants' Contribution to Racial and Ethnic Diversity and Disadvantages for Intergenerational Mobility

The contemporary migration period is similar to the first mass migration period in that an exceptionally large number of immigrants were admitted annually to the United States. Yet the differences in the region of origin and physical characteristics of immigrants sharply separate the two waves. While nearly 90 percent of immigrants admitted between 1881 and 1930 were drawn from Europe and Canada, only about 15 percent of post–1965 immigrants have originated from these regions. Mexico, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Cuba, the Philippines, Vietnam, China, and South Korea are among the major sending countries of contemporary immigration to the United States, with Jews from the former Soviet Union and the Middle East being the only major contemporary white immigrant group.

Contribution to Racial and Ethnic Diversity

As shown in table 1.1, the mass migration of immigrants beginning in 1880 did not change the racial composition of American society at all. Until the 1960s the white population had maintained its numerical supremacy with almost 90 percent. The only significant racial minority group before the 1960s was African American; thus race relations in the United States was synonymous with black–white relations. However, the influx of immigrants from Latin American, Asian, and Caribbean countries since the late 1960s has led to a phenomenal increase in Latino and Asian populations, while it has gradually reduced the proportion of the non-Hispanic white population.

In 1997, the non-Hispanic white population dropped to 72 percent, while the Latino and Asian/Pacific Islander populations rose to 11 and 4 percent, respectively. In the population estimate made in March 1997, there was no statistically significant differential between non-Hispanic black (12.6 percent) and Latino (11.1 percent) populations. Considering that the majority of the approximately four million illegals are Latinos, Latinos may have already outnumbered non-Hispanic blacks in 1997.

The liberalization of immigration law in 1965 is partly responsible for the mass migration of immigrants from Third World countries in the post–1965 era. But the United States government's military and political linkages with many Latin American, Asian, and Caribbean countries, along with other structural factors, are mainly responsible for the current flow of migration. There is little chance that the immigration laws will be drastically revised in the foreseeable future to substantially reduce the current level of immigration. Further, many researchers have warned that the government cannot stem the tide of the current immigration flow through its policies. If that is the case, Latino and Asian populations will continue to increase, with a concomitant decline in the proportion of the white population. According to population projections, the non-Hispanic white population will be reduced to 53 percent in 2050 while the Latino, black, and Asian American populations will grow to 25 percent, 14 percent, and 8 percent, respectively.

As will be shown in the next section, the contemporary Third World immigrants are concentrated in several states and metropolitan areas, and much more highly concentrated than turn-of-the-century white immigrants. As a result, non-Hispanic whites have already become a numerical minority in several metropolitan cities, including New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Miami. American cities have grown far more multiracial and multiethnic than they were thirty years ago; they will grow racially and ethnically more diverse in the future. Thus the influx of immigrants in the post–1965 era has made American racial and ethnic relations far more complex than before. Many scholars have pointed out that racial and ethnic theories based on the black–white dichotomy cannot explain complex racial and ethnic relations in contemporary America.

Disadvantages for Intergenerational Mobility

Although the contemporary mass migration of Third World people has made American society far more diverse than before, it has not changed the racial stratification system in which white Americans dominate other racial minorities. While descendants of the earlier European immigrants have melted into white society structurally as well as culturally, African Americans and some Latino groups (like Puerto Ricans and Mexicans) have not been incorporated into American society structurally. Civil rights laws enacted in the 1960s have eliminated legal barriers encountered by minority groups; affirmative action programs have given minority members and women some advantages for finding jobs and gaining admission to colleges

and universities. However, blacks and other racial minorities are still subject to prejudice and subtle forms of discrimination. A gradual increase in minority populations and a concomitant decline in the white population in the future may further moderate racial prejudice and discrimination. Yet white racism and racial inequality are unlikely to disappear in the foreseeable future.

Thus, the descendants of post–1965 immigrants, with the exception of the descendants of white immigrants, will encounter barriers to social mobility and structural assimilation that the descendants of turn-of-the-century white immigrants did not experience. The children of black immigrants from the Caribbean Basin, and those of lower-class black immigrants in particular, are more likely to assimilate to black Americans than to white Americans, although, as will be discussed below, the social class variable will have effects on the children's socioeconomic adjustments in interaction with race. Overall, the descendants of contemporary Latino immigrants will be better accepted than those of black immigrants. But the children of darker-skinned Latino immigrants, like Dominicans, are likely to encounter more social barriers than light-skinned Latinos and Asian Americans. The 1990 census shows that United States-born Dominican households have a higher poverty rate than their foreign-born counterparts.

As far as socioeconomic adjustments are concerned, Asian Americans seem to do very well. The 1990 census reveals that for all Asian groups, with the exception of Filipinos, the native-born populations fare better than both the foreign-born and white Americans in their socioeconomic status in general and in educational level in particular. However, even second-generation Asian Americans, regardless of their socioeconomic status, are subjected to a moderate level of prejudice by white Americans because of their color. Personal interviews with 1.5[1]—and second-generation Asian American adults and their narratives reveal that even native-born Asian American children suffer from prejudice and harassment by white children because of their physical differences. The later-generation descendants of the earlier white immigrants are now accepted as one-hundred-percent Americans. Thus for them ethnic identity is a matter of a personal choice mainly to meet their psychological need to belong to a community. However, even later-generation Asian Americans cannot but accept their ethnic identity because they are not accepted by "real Americans."

The class background of immigrants, along with their race, is an important determinant of their own and their descendants' socioeconomic adjustment. While immigrants' skin color is likely to have long-term effects on the socioeconomic adjustment of not only the second but also later generations, their class background will have positive effects particularly on their children's socioeconomic adaptations. As noted above, the 1884–1930 white immigrants, with the exception of Jews, had heavily rural and lower class backgrounds, lower than the native population in the United States, which partly contributed to their initial adjustment difficulties and their slower intergenerational mobility. By contrast, the vast majority of contemporary immigrants originated from urban areas, with a significant proportion

having professional and middle-class backgrounds. Asian immigrants, with the exception of Indochinese refugees and Chinese immigrants from mainland China, were predominantly from metropolitan cities and were drawn heavily from professional and middle-class segments of the populations. The 1990 census shows that 36 percent of Asian immigrants had completed at least four years of college, compared to only 22 percent of the white population. Latino and Caribbean immigrants on average represent a lower premigrant class background than both Asian immigrants and white Americans. In the 1990 census, only 9 percent of Latino and Caribbean immigrants reported that they completed a four-year college. Yet, Latino and Caribbean migrants in the United States, even illegals, lived in cities prior to migration and they represent a higher class background than the general populations in their home countries.

Segmented assimilation theory proposes that immigrants' race and social class have combined effects on their locale of residence, which, in turn, determine their children's acculturation patterns. New Asian immigrants and many oldtimers with lower-class backgrounds tend to reside in immigrant enclaves, while professional and middle-class Asian immigrants generally live in white middle-class neighborhoods either through the initial settlement upon immigration or through re-migration from immigrant enclaves. Asian American and other children who live in immigrant enclaves can maintain their language and ethnic culture successfully, although they may not be fluent in English. These children will find an opportunity for socioeconomic mobility in an ethnic community. The children who grow up in white middle-class neighborhoods are likely to acculturate to the white middle class. Proponents of segmented assimilation assume that the acculturation to the white middle class has positive effects on children's school performance. Thus, the children of Asian and other immigrants settled in white middle-class neighborhoods have a greater chance to achieve high social mobility in the mainstream economy through a high level of education. This mode of adaptation that requires acculturation and education as prerequisites for social mobility is a replication of a path suggested by classical assimilationist theorists.

Lower-class immigrants in general and poor Latino and Caribbean immigrants in particular often settle in inner-city, low-income minority neighborhoods. [Sociologist Alejandro] Portes and his associates argue that their settlement in low-income, minority neighborhoods is likely to lead their children to have contact with native-born minority children and thereby to assimilate to the "adversarial subculture developed by marginalized native youth." The idea that native-born minority youth create their own subculture "adversarial" to academic performance was originally developed in the late 1980s to explain the poor academic performance of blacks. Drawing from these anthropological studies, proponents of segmented assimilation theory propose that the acculturation of the children of immigrants to the minority youth culture will block their academic achievements and thereby their social mobility. However, not all immigrant groups settled in low-income, minority neighborhoods are vulnerable to

their children's acculturation to the adversarial subculture. Vietnamese refugees settled in a black neighborhood in New Orleans were able to teach their children immigrant values through strong family and community ties and thereby helped them to resist the adversarial minority youth culture.

Because of the differences in the structure of economic opportunities, education is far more important for social mobility for the children of contemporary immigrants than for those of turn-of-the-century white immigrants. At the beginning of the twentieth century, when the United States economy was in its industrial stage, a large number of well-paying blue-collar jobs were available to the children of immigrants. Thus many second-generation white ethnics were able to achieve intergenerational mobility without getting a higher education. However, the deindustrialization process during recent decades has drastically reduced the proportion of manufacturing and particularly unskilled jobs, while creating a large number of high-paying high-tech and professional occupations. Moreover, the earnings gap between the high earners and the low earners has significantly increased recently. This means that the highly educated children of contemporary immigrants can achieve a high level of intergenerational mobility within one generation—probably from their parents' small business to a computer programmer or a medical doctor—while those with no high school degree do not have an opportunity to find stable jobs.

Social scientists consider a combination of the residents' low education and the disappearance and exodus of low-level blue-collar jobs as major factors for an exceptionally high unemployment rate and poverty in inner-city, low-income black neighborhoods. As noted above, as a result of their acculturation to a local youth culture, the children of Caribbean and Latino immigrants who live in inner-city, minority neighborhoods may not have the motivation to excel in school. These children, like the children of native-born minority members, are likely to be trapped in permanent poverty. Many of their immigrant parents can escape from poverty because they are ready to undertake low-level blue-collar and service-related jobs and work long hours. The second-generation children who do not hold their immigrant parents' values of work and mobility will not accept these unattractive jobs that demand long hours of work. This is why some sociologists predict that a large segment of the new second generation will experience downward mobility.

The New Second Generation's Advantages for Retaining their Ethnic Culture and Remaining Bicultural

Almost all contemporary immigrant parents would want their children to achieve high social mobility while maintaining their ethnic cultural traditions. The above observations indicate that the descendants of post–1965 immigrants are disadvantaged for social assimilation (being accepted as full American citizens) and social mobility compared to those of the earlier white immigrants because of their skin color and a changed economic

structure. While the new second generation have disadvantages for their social assimilation and social mobility, they have advantages for retaining their ethnic language and culture. This does not mean that the descendants of contemporary immigrants will be slower in adopting American culture than those of turn-of-the-century white immigrants. There are also strong forces that push the children of contemporary immigrants toward acculturation. As a result of their retention of ethnic culture and a high level of acculturation, a large proportion of the second- and even third-generation descendants of post–1965 immigrants are likely to remain bicultural.

Contemporary Immigrants' Higher Level of Concentration

There are four major reasons that contemporary immigrants have advantages for transmitting their cultural traditions to their descendants over the 1880–1930 waves of immigrants. First, contemporary immigrants have a higher level of population concentration. Table 1.2 shows the differences in settlement patterns between the earlier and contemporary immigrants based on 1910 and 1990 census reports. While New York State and the New York metropolitan area were the premier immigrant state and city in the 1880–1930 era, California and Los Angeles have replaced New York as the major immigrant state and city in the post–1965 era. This is not surprising, considering the fact that Los Angeles and other California cities are major destinations of many Latino and Asian immigrants. In 1990, 34 percent of Latinos were concentrated in California and 21 percent in the Los Angeles

Table 1.2 Major foreign-born states and metropolitan cities in 1910 and 1990

Year	*Major States*	*Number (in 1,000s)*	*% of Total Foreign Born*	*Major Cities*	*Number (in 1,000s)*	*% of Total Foreign Born*
1910	New York	2,748	20.3	New York	1,944	14.4
	Pennsylvania	1,442	10.7	Chicago	783	5.8
	Illinois	1,205	8.9	Philadelphia	385	2.8
	Massachusetts	1,059	7.8	Boston	243	1.8
	Ohio	598	4.4	Cleveland	196	1.5
	Michigan	597	4.4	San Francisco	142	1.1
	Total	7,649	56.6	Total	3,693	27.4
	U.S. Total	13,516	100.0	U.S. Total	13,516	100.0
1990	California	6,459	32.7	Los Angeles	3,945	19.9
	New York	2,852	14.4	New York	3,554	18.0
	Florida	1,663	8.4	San Francisco	1,251	6.3
	Texas	1,523	7.7	Miami	1,073	5.4
	New Jersey	967	4.9	Chicago	910	4.6
	Illinois	952	4.8	Washington	484	2.4
	Total	14,416	72.9	Total	11,217	56.7
	U.S. Total	19,767	100.0	U.S. Total	19,767	100.0

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910, Abstracts of the Census*, Tables 14 and 210 (Washington, D.C., 1913); U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1990 Census of Population, Social and EconomicCharacteristics, United States*, Table 32 & *Metropolitan Areas*, Table 32 (Washington, D.C., 1993).

metropolitan era, while 39 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans resided in the state and 18 percent in the city. The concentration of the majority of Cuban immigrants in the Miami area and many other Latino and Caribbean immigrant populations in the area have established Florida as the third largest immigrant state. It is quite natural that a significant proportion of Mexican immigrants have chosen cities in Texas as their destinations.

A more important piece of information from Table 1.2 for the purpose of this article is not the difference in the major destination states and cities between the two waves of immigrants, but the differential levels of concentration of immigrants in particular states and cities. In 1910, approximately 57 percent of the immigrant population resided in six major immigrant states and 27 percent, in six major immigrant cities. By contrast, in 1990 nearly three-fourths of the immigrant population was concentrated in the six major immigrant states and the majority of immigrants lived in six major immigrant cities. Whereas in 1990 four cities had 5 percent or more of the immigrant population, in 1910 only New York and Chicago had such a large proportion of immigrants.

Contemporary immigrants' higher level of residential concentration generally suggests that they have advantages over the earlier immigrant groups for maintaining their language and culture. Yet we need to compare two immigration periods in residential concentration by the country of origin because members of each country of origin group usually share the same language and culture. When examining settlement patterns by the country of origin, we find the differential levels of residential concentration between the two waves of immigrants to be even greater.

Contemporary Latino and Caribbean immigrant groups show extremely high levels of concentration in one or a few cities. For example, 70 percent of Guyanese, over 60 percent of Dominicans, 50 percent of Ecuadorians, and 45 percent of Jamaicans who immigrated to the United States between 1982 and 1989 chose New York City as their destination. The 1990 census shows that each of the three largest Latino groups is highly concentrated in a metropolitan area: 56 percent of Cubans in the Miami-Fort Lauderdale area, 47 percent of Puerto Ricans in the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut area, and 28 percent of Mexicans in the Los Angeles-Anaheim-Riverside area. However, with the exception of Jews in New York, the major immigrant groups at the turn of the century did not have levels of residential concentration in one or a few areas comparable to those of contemporary immigrant groups. Russian, Italian, Irish, and Hungarian immigrants composed major non-Protestant immigrant groups at the turn of the century, and all had the largest population concentration in New York City. But their New York City concentration rates in 1910 respectively were 30 percent for Russians (mostly Jews), 26 percent for Italians, 19 percent for Irish, and 16 percent for Hungarians.

Latino immigrants, who compose the largest panethnic[2] group in many cities, share a common language. Consequently, they have an advantage over both the earlier white immigrant groups and other contemporary immigrant groups for transmitting their language to their children. Already in

1990, Latinos comprised 24 percent of the population in New York City and 40 percent of the population in Los Angeles, the two largest cities in the United States, while they composed the majority of the population in three other cities, E1 Paso (69 percent), Miami (63 percent), and San Antonio (56 percent). They comprise a significant proportion of the population in many other major cities, including Houston, Dallas, San Diego, and Chicago. Latinos in these cities have access to several Spanish-language TV and radio channels. In these and other smaller cities with a large Latino population, Spanish is often used as a language for business transactions. By virtue of a large Latino population, Spanish has been adopted as the most important foreign language in American public schools for several decades. Thus, descendants of Latino immigrants can learn the Spanish language more easily than other immigrant groups.

Contemporary Immigrants' Greater Proximity to Their Home Countries

Latino and Caribbean immigrant groups have an additional advantage over the earlier white immigrant groups in transmitting their language and culture to their children partly because of their settlement in the cities much closer to their home countries. The earlier European immigrants usually chose New York and other East Coast cities—the gateways from Europe to the United States—as their destinations. Even these "Atlantic bridges" were physically so far away from Europe that the immigrants had little immediate linkage to their home countries. By contrast, the post-1965 Latino and Caribbean immigrants are generally settled in the destinations physically close to their home countries. Mexican immigrants, who compose approximately one-fourth of the total post-1965 immigrants, are heavily concentrated in the border states, such as California, Texas, and Arizona. The Mexicans settled in the former Mexican territory can visit their home cities within a matter of one or a few hours. Most Cuban immigrants settled in Miami, which is only 90 miles from Havana. For political reasons, Cubans in Miami currently do not maintain strong sociocultural ties with their home country. Yet the situation will change drastically when United States-Cuban political relations improve in the future. Other Latino and Caribbean immigrants maintain stronger ties with their home countries than both the earlier white immigrant groups and even contemporary Asian immigrant groups because of the geographical closeness between Latin America and the Caribbean Islands and such American cities as New York, Miami, and Los Angeles.

Contemporary Immigrants' Stronger Transnational Ties

As noted above, contemporary Latino and Caribbean immigrants maintain stronger sociocultural ties with their home countries partly because of their greater physical proximity. However, the major factor that contributes to contemporary immigrants' multiple linkages to their homelands is not

their geographical closeness but their transnational ties, made possible by technological advances in communication, transportation, and the mass media. The turn-of-the-century white immigrants also maintained transnational ties with their home countries. They usually sent letters to their relatives and friends in their homelands. Many immigrants at that time were male sojourners who left their spouses and children at home. They sent remittances to their family members regularly. Some of the immigrants even visited their home countries to see their relatives and friends, buy land, and/or bring back their spouses.

However, by virtue of advanced technologies, contemporary immigrants maintain high levels of transnational ties with their home countries unimaginable to earlier immigrants. The only means of communication between immigrants and their relatives in the home country in Europe at the turn of the century was sending letters, which took several weeks for delivery. By contrast, contemporary immigrants can communicate with their relatives and friends in the home country almost every day, using long-distance telephone calls, fax messages, and electronic mail. The affordability of long-distance calls, in particular, has had revolutionary effects on contemporary immigrants' communication patterns with their relatives left behind in their homeland. A 1996 survey in New York revealed that about one-third of Korean immigrants talked to their relatives in Korea at least once a week while half communicated by phone once or twice a month.

The entry of steamships into the immigrant trade in the mid-nineteenth century led to a drastic reduction in the length of passage from Europe to America. Yet the trans-Atlantic voyage at the turn of the century still took approximately two weeks. Because of great expense, time, and the threat of accidents and epidemics involved in the voyage, only a relatively small minority of immigrants visited their home countries to take care of important matters. By contrast, the international air travel connecting contemporary immigrants' American destinations to their home cities in the Third World is far less expensive, far more convenient, and much faster than turn-of-the-century trans-Atlantic voyages. Most Latino and Caribbean immigrants in New York can fly to their home cities within four to six hours, while Asian immigrants in Los Angeles need to spend only seven to nine hours to visit their home cities in Asia. As a result, contemporary immigrants exchange visits with their relatives and friends at home regularly—to celebrate a parent's birthday, participate in a brother's wedding, or enjoy a vacation. In fact, some immigrants move back and forth between American destinations and Third World cities while others maintain commuter marriages, with wives and children remaining in American cities and husbands working in Third World cities.

Finally, great improvements in media technologies during the last two decades have given contemporary immigrants access to active ethnic media—ethnic dailies and weeklies and ethnic radio and TV stations. The earlier immigrants did establish a number of ethnic newspapers. Yet, as they did not have communication channels with their home countries on a daily basis, the ethnic media could not provide the earlier immigrants with day-to-day news from their homelands. By contrast, the ethnic media today

tie immigrants to their homelands by supplying them with daily news from their homelands. Ethnic TV programs also offer contemporary immigrants ethnic movies and TV programs on videotape. For example, the Korean community in New York has four Korean-language dailies, all of which, as branches of major dailies in Korea, republish articles published in their headquarters in Seoul. There are also two Korean TV stations and two Korean radio stations in the Korean community in New York, which air Korean-language programs 24 hours a day. Korean immigrants in New York as well as in other major Korean communities depend mainly on the Korean-language ethnic media for news, information, and leisure activities. Their heavy dependence on the ethnic media, in turn, has strengthened their ties to the ethnic community and the home country. By virtue of contemporary technological advances, other immigrant groups have developed similarly active ethnic media, which, in turn, tie immigrants to the homeland and the origin community at multiple levels.

To sum up the preceding discussions, technological improvements in international travel, telecommunications, and the media help contemporary immigrants to maintain active and continuous contacts with the homeland and community of origin, overcoming any barriers deriving from the physical boundary. Because of the active and sustained involvement of immigrants in the home country, several source countries of United States immigrants have taken measures in recent years to strengthen their overseas residents' cultural, social, and political ties to the home country. Recently, several major source countries, including Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and Columbia, have passed laws that recognize their American residents' dual citizenship.

Strong transnational ties between host and home countries, and between destination and origin communities, help not only contemporary immigrants but also their children to maintain their ethnic subculture and identity. Second-generation children can learn their ethnic language formally through the language instruction provided by ethnic TV stations, as most ethnic TV stations offer such instruction. Moreover, as international air travel is popularized, immigrant parents send their children to their home countries during summer vacation to help them learn the language and culture. A 1989 survey showed that 80 percent of American-born Korean high school students in New York had visited Korea at least once and that 20 percent had visited Korea twice or more. Because of physical proximity, Caribbean and Latino second-generation children seem to visit their parental home countries more frequently than their Korean and Asian American counterparts. In addition, popularization of video and music tapes helps second-generation children watch ethnic-language movies and learn ethnic pop songs, even if they may not be fluent in their mother tongues.

Multicultural Policy since the Early 1970s

Multicultural policy is another factor that gives contemporary immigrant groups advantages over earlier white immigrants in transmitting their

language and culture to their children. The dominant social policy in the United States up to the 1960s had been Anglo conformity, according to which immigrants and members of minority groups should replace their language with English and their cultural patterns with those of British origin. The Anglo conformity policy or ideology was most influentially expressed in the Americanization movement that tried to force immigrants and their children to get rid of their cultural traditions and to accept American culture as soon as possible. The Americanization movement reached its peak during World War I after a large number of immigrants from Eastern and Southern European countries had arrived. Squads of women were sent out "on home visits to immigrants, telling them to create a more 'American' household by preparing 'non-ethnic' foods, modifying their grooming and personal hygiene habits, and advocating the use of English in the home." The English language was associated with being "American" and "patriotic," and bilingualism was interpreted as a sign of disloyalty to the United States. In this context, one major function of public schools was to Americanize immigrant children and children of immigrants by teaching them English and inculcating American values.

However, since the early 1970s all levels of government—the federal government in particular—and local school districts have changed their policies toward minority members and immigrants from "Anglo conformity" to cultural pluralism. The policy changes were partly in response to various minority movements—the civil rights movement, the black cultural nationalist movement, the Chicano movement, and the Third World students' movement—and the women's movement, and partly in response to the influx of new immigrants from Third World countries. Probably the most noteworthy event in the United States government's multicultural policy in the early 1970s was the *Lau v. Nichols* Supreme Court decision. In 1974, the Supreme Court declared that students with limited English proficiency were to be given special remedial aid to facilitate their learning of English. Armed with the landmark Supreme Court decision, the Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare established a series of guidelines to require all school districts to provide bilingual education programs for "language minority children." In addition to bilingual programs, public schools have changed their curriculum by including more courses related to minority groups' language, history, and culture. They have also tried to promote cultural diversity through such extracurricular activities as ethnic festivals and symposiums on minority groups to foster ethnic pride.

Colleges and universities, too, have done a great deal to increase ethnic diversity in curricular and extracurricular activities. As a result of the influx of nonwhite immigrants and minority groups' improvement in education, colleges and universities have become racially and ethnically far more diverse than before. Employment through affirmative action programs and establishment of ethnic, area, and women's studies programs have also increased the number and proportion of minority and women faculty members. Under pressure from minority and women students and faculty

members, many colleges and universities have revised the white-male-oriented curriculum by including contributions made by people of color and women in traditional liberal arts courses and adding numerous courses pertaining to the experiences of minority groups and women. Establishment of ethnic and women's studies programs on many campuses in particular has resulted in a significant revision of the traditional curriculum.

There have been some conservative reactions to multiculturalism. In response to the rapid increase in the non-English speaking immigrant population, more than a dozen states, including California and Florida, have passed laws that recognize English as the standard language. In 1998, California passed a referendum to abolish bilingual education. Conservative intellectuals have attacked multicultural education in higher educational institutions. Despite these reactionary movements and measures, both governments and schools are currently strongly committed to the multicultural policy. For example, in New York City, local officials, social workers, and teachers try actively to promote festivals and events to foster ethnic pride and glorify the city's multiethnic character. Both governments and schools are likely to strengthen rather than moderate the multicultural policy in the future, particularly because of the continuous increase in the non-white population. The children of contemporary immigrants have distinct advantages for retaining their ethnic culture over those of the earlier immigrants at the turn of the century because of the multicultural policy.

Bilingual and Bicultural Orientations

New immigrants replenish the ethnic community with the culture of the homeland and thus the continuity of immigration is essential to maintaining ethnic cultural traditions. One of the major reasons why turn-of-the-century immigrant groups have almost completely lost their ethnic cultural traditions is that their immigration almost came to an end around the early 1930s and did not revive for a long period of time. As previously noted, the current immigration flow is not likely to come to an end or even decline sharply in the foreseeable future. This is another reason why the descendants of post–1965 immigrants will be more successful than those of the earlier white immigrant groups in retaining their cultural traditions.

I have thus far examined several factors that give the children of contemporary immigrants advantages for preserving their cultural traditions over those of the earlier immigrants. However, I do not intend to suggest that the children of contemporary immigrants have disadvantages for acculturation. In fact, these children are under greater pressure to assimilate to American culture than the children of turn-of-the-century immigrants, for two major reasons. First, the media, American peers, and schools currently have a stronger effect on the behavior and attitude of children than at the turn of the century, while immigrant parents have less control over their children than before. Contemporary immigrant parents may be less effective in preventing their children from being culturally Americanized than the immigrant parents one hundred years ago, particularly because, a much

larger proportion of contemporary immigrant mothers work full-time outside the home. Second, the children of today's immigrants have a greater pressure to assimilate to American culture than their counterparts a century ago partly because of the global influence of American popular culture today. Due to the presence of American servicemen, multinational corporations, and/or media in their home countries, most contemporary immigrants from Third World countries, including immigrant children, became familiar with American mass culture prior to migration.

My argument that the children of contemporary immigrants have advantages over those of the earlier immigrants for both retaining their ethnic culture and acculturating to American society may sound contradictory to many readers. But it is not contradictory because retention of ethnic culture and acculturation are not always mutually exclusive. Classical assimilationists proposed a zero sum model of acculturation, according to which immigrants' acculturation involves a gradual replacement of their ethnic culture with American culture. As indicated elsewhere, although the zero sum model may be useful as a description of the Anglo conformist policy or ideology up to the 1960s, it is not helpful in understanding the experiences of contemporary immigrants and their children. Contemporary immigrants can achieve a high level of acculturation while maintaining their ethnic culture almost perfectly, whereas their Americanized children can achieve a high level of ethnic attachment. A large proportion of the descendants of post–1965 immigrants—much larger than those of the turn-of-the century-immigrants—are likely to remain fluently bilingual and strongly bicultural because of the factors described above: their high ethnic and panethnic concentration in a particular city, their proximity to and transnational ties to their parents' home countries, and multicultural policy.

A more systematic survey study of ethnic attachment among the descendants of post–1965 immigrants is needed to test the validity of the above bilingual, bicultural hypothesis. However, both quantitative and qualitative data available at present seem to support the hypothesis. David Lopez analyzed the Public Use Sample of the 1989 Current Population Survey to examine intergenerational language maintenance and shift among Latino and Asian populations in Los Angeles. According to his analysis, 53 percent of second-generation Hispanics 25–44 years old spoke English "very well" but used their ethnic language at home, in comparison to 19 percent of their Asian American counterparts. It also showed that 47 percent of third- and later-generation Latino adults (natives of natives) and 11 percent of their Asian American counterparts were fluent in English but used their ethnic language at home.

The Latino and Asian American adults who can speak English very well but use their ethnic language at home are bilinguals. As expected, Latinos show a much higher rate of intergenerational transmission of their ethnic language than Asian Americans. But even third-generation Asian Americans include a higher proportion of bilinguals (11 percent) than expected from studies of the descendants of the 1880–1930 wave of immigrants, according to which "by the third generation, knowledge of an ethnic language beyond

a few words and phrases is often lost." The earlier Japanese immigration occurred between 1885 and 1924, roughly during the European mass migration period. A major survey study of Japanese Americans conducted in the early 1960s reveals that only 2 percent of the third-generation respondents reported that they spoke Japanese fluently. The Latino and Asian American respondents (25–44 years old) included in the 1989 Current Population Survey were born and grew up before the mass influx of post-1965 Latino and Asian immigrants. Thus, they did not benefit fully from the structural factors facilitating the retention of their ethnic language discussed in this article. Accordingly, the descendants of post-1965 Latino and Asian immigrants are likely to retain their ethnic language more successfully than the sample of the 1989 Current Population Survey, the descendants of the pre-1965 Latino and Asian immigrant cohorts.

Research on the descendants of the earlier white immigrant groups and a commonsense assumption support a view that bilingualism is associated with lower-class family background and residence in an immigrant enclave. However, recent studies of the children of post–1965 immigrants suggest that fluent bilingualism is highly correlated with a professional family background. The children who have grown up in an immigrant enclave may be fluent in their ethnic language but may not be fluent in English. Yet professional families in a suburban white middle-class neighborhood have resources to make their children fluent bilinguals. Many Korean professional and high-income business families in a white, middle-class neighborhood in New York enroll their children in Saturday ethnic language schools and send them to Korea for a Korean cultural program regularly during the summer vacation. Some of them send their college-graduated children to college in Korea for a long-term ethnic education. Personal narratives by 1.5- and second-generation young Asian American professionals reveal that many, including those married to white partners, have strong bicultural and binational orientations, although all grew up in predominantly white, middle- and upper-middle-class neighborhoods and graduated from prestigious universities.

Notes

1. Born outside the United States and immigrated as children.
2. People of many different national origins who share a common trait—in this example, the Spanish language—that serves potentially to unite them; a group composed of many different ethnic groups.

Chapter 4

"Being Practical" or "Doing What I Want": The Role of Parents in the Academic Choices of Chinese Americans*

Vivian Louie

My mom and dad kind of want me and my brother to become doctors to carry on the family business. My brother and I would say that the only professions in my mother's eyes that were worthy were either a doctor or a lawyer.
—Victoria, eighteen-year-old Ivy League student and daughter of a doctor

Growing up, parents keep on saying, "What are you going to do? Doctor, lawyer?" And when I was in high school, it was pharmacy school in particular. Everybody was going to pharmacy school—my cousins, it was pharmacy school. Parents push for something more practical, or applicable. And you can't get anything more practical than pharmacy and medical school or law school.
—Robert, twenty-one-year-old student at a public commuter university and son of a retired chef and nurse's aide supervisor

Despite coming from nearly opposite socioeconomic ends of Chinese migration flows to New York, Victoria and Robert relayed a common experience of confronting parental pressure to follow a "practical" professional path. In this chapter, I explore how second-generation Chinese American college students understood the expectations of their Chinese immigrant parents as they were choosing what to study and pursue as a career. Across

*All names of individuals reported throughout the chapter are pseudonyms.

class and gender, my respondents heard the same message from parents: not only is education important—with the bachelor's degree seen as the minimum level of attainment (Louie 2001)—but the end goal of education is a stable, high-paying job, and the key to this is studying "practical" and "safe" fields.

Media and research accounts have depicted Asian Americans as overachievers in technical fields, and my respondents too understood this to be an ethnic phenomenon. As I show in this chapter, however, class matters in several key dimensions: in how students respond to their parents' views on the most appropriate fields of study for them to pursue; in how they make their decisions in very different institutions of higher learning; and, along with gender, in how parental pressures are often transmitted and experienced differently.

The very different life histories of Victoria and Robert reflect the great variety of socioeconomic trajectories among the 361,000 Chinese who make their home in New York City (according to the census of 2000), particularly those who arrived after 1965. Victoria's family, headed as it was by two highly educated and professionalized parents who made their home in the suburbs, belonged to what social scientists have called the "uptown Chinese." Victoria's father had left Taiwan in 1979 after graduating from the prestigious National Taiwan University to train as a doctor in the United States; her mother came to earn a master's degree in international relations. Instead of returning to Taiwan, the couple settled in a wealthy Long Island suburb and enrolled their children in its highly ranked public school system. Victoria in particular excelled academically. It came as no surprise to Victoria's parents, then, that she was admitted to an Ivy League school, Columbia College.

Robert's parents were part of a working-class immigrant stream of manual laborers who typically worked in restaurants and garment factories in an ethnic economic enclave described as the "downtown Chinese." Robert's parents left southern China in the 1960s and discovered that their limited education (his father had some high school, and his mother finished grade school) gave them few options in the United States aside from the ethnic economy. Robert's father waited on tables and cooked in Chinese-owned restaurants while his mother, a nurse's aide supervisor, worked mainly with Chinese clients. Eventually the couple moved to Bensonhurst, Brooklyn. In high school Robert could be found cutting classes and hanging out with friends more often than studying. After some run-ins with his parents, he straightened out, graduated from high school, and, much to his parents' relief, entered Hunter College, a public university.

Because of all these differences, it was unlikely that Victoria and Robert would come across one another, even though their families lived only twenty miles apart and they went to colleges in the same city. Nor were they likely to

meet in an ethnic church. As Karen Chai Kim documents in this volume, ethnic churches increasingly draw second-generation Chinese Americans in New York City from diverse social class backgrounds, offering them a place to develop a frame of commonality that can sometimes bridge class differences. Victoria, however, participated in a campus Christian fellowship group that drew mainly Columbia students and was not ethnic-specific. And Robert had a much more ambivalent relationship to his parents' religious faiths: his mother was a devout Jehovah's Witness, and his father followed "superstitious Chinese" practices. Robert declined to adopt either faith, opting instead for a self-fashioned Buddhism acquired through martial arts training in Chinatown and reading on his own.

Even if their paths did cross by some chance, Victoria and Robert would have found that they had little in common, with one notable exception: their parents' aspirations for their schooling and careers. I met both Victoria and Robert during my year of fieldwork at Hunter and Columbia. My goal was to explore how the very different socioeconomic backgrounds of Chinese immigrant families had shaped the educational paths and aspirations of their young adult children (Louie 2004). Although the "model minority" stereotype portrays Asian Americans as high academic achievers, educational outcomes actually differ a good deal between and within groups.[1] The Immigrant Second Generation in Metropolitan New York Study found, for example, that first- and second-generation Chinese Americans both had diverse educational outcomes. As table 4.1 indicates, 11.7 percent of all second-generation respondents had only a high school diploma or GED, were still enrolled in high school, or had dropped out. Another 7.6 percent were enrolled in or had graduated from a two-year college, and 7.2 percent had some college but no degree.

Overall, however, a majority of Chinese survey respondents were going on to a four-year college. More than three out of five (61.4 percent), for example, were enrolled in or had graduated from a four-year college. But even so, they attended many different kinds of schools. Table 4.2 shows that 12.8 percent attended a two-year CUNY college and 32.1 percent attended a four-year CUNY school. At the other end of the spectrum, 36.2 percent attended a private college. Thus, while second-generation Chinese Americans were faring better than other groups in the Second Generation Study, sometimes even going to better schools than whites, their profile was certainly not homogeneous.

This chapter focuses on 1.5- and second-generation Chinese Americans attending Columbia, a national tier I private university, and Hunter College, a regional tier II campus of the public City University of New York (CUNY). I ask whether children's educational experiences vary with the class background of their immigrant families and what role gender plays in that rela-

TABLE 4.1 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF CHINESE SECOND GENERATION

General Recoded Educational Status (Valid)	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
High school dropout	3	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Still in high school	7	5.0	5.0	7.0
High school graduate or GED	6	4.6	4.6	11.7
Enrolled in two-year college	9	6.6	6.6	18.3
Some college, no degree	9	7.2	7.2	25.5
Graduated from two-year college	1	1.0	1.0	26.4
Enrolled in four-year college	47	36.6	36.6	63.1
Graduated from four-year-college	32	24.8	24.8	87.9
Enrolled in graduate or professional school	7	5.2	5.2	93.1
Some graduate school, no degree	1	.9	.9	94.0
Postgraduate or professional degree	4	3.3	3.3	97.3
Other	4	2.7	2.7	100.0
Total	129	100.0	100.0	

Source: Data from the Immigrant Second Generation in Metropolitan New York Survey sample.

TABLE 4.2 TYPE OF UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOL ATTENDED BY SECOND-GENERATION CHINESE

Type of School (Valid)	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
CUNY two-year	14	10.5%	12.8%	12.8%
CUNY four-year	34	26.5	32.1	44.9
SUNY	13	10.1	12.3	57.2
Private NYC	27	20.7	25.2	82.4
Private non-NYC	12	9.1	11.0	93.4
Public non-NYC	7	5.2	6.3	99.7
Public NYC (non-CUNY)	0	.3	.3	100.0
Total	107	82.4	100.0	
Missing system	23	17.6		
Total	129	100.0		

Source: Data from the Immigrant Second Generation in Metropolitan New York Survey sample.

tionship. Specifically, I explore how Chinese immigrant parents develop and communicate aspirations for their children's academic choices and occupational paths and whether the children agree or disagree with those goals. Academic researchers and the media have said a lot about high achievement levels among Chinese Americans, their strong presence in technical fields, and the ways in which their families encourage these outcomes. My research suggests that we need to look through the lenses of immigration, class, community, and perceptions of the American racial structure when we examine how Chinese immigrant families affect their children's educational outcomes.

THE STUDY

From April 1998 to May 1999, I participated in classroom and informal settings at Columbia and Hunter three to five times a week and interviewed sixty-eight Chinese American students from both schools, seven of their immigrant parents, and two adult siblings. Much of the argument in this chapter is based on the student interviews, which explored the respondents' experiences from elementary school through college, career aspirations, views on racial and ethnic stratification, and perceptions of family attitudes toward education. Given the small number of family interviews, I rely on them more to give depth to the themes raised by the students themselves. The family interviews probed sibling experiences with education, discussed parents' attitudes toward their children's schooling and toward their own experiences with schooling, migration, and work, and traced their views on racial and ethnic stratification in the United States.

The two schools had varying entrance requirements for students and varying tuitions. About four thousand undergraduates enrolled at Columbia College during my year of fieldwork. As befits an Ivy League school, Columbia College[2] was highly selective: it accepted only 17 percent of more than eleven thousand applicants in 1997, and entering students had median SAT scores of 1346 out of a possible 1600. Columbia also resembles its Ivy League counterparts in its annual tuition and fees of about $30,000. A commuter school with fourteen thousand undergraduates, Hunter was founded to provide affordable higher education to the economically disadvantaged. Tuition and fees for a full-time resident of the city totaled $1,600 per semester, or $135 per credit for part-time students, in 1997. Academically speaking, Hunter was open in the late 1990s to high school graduates who had at least an 80 percent average, were in the top third of their class, or scored at least 1020 out of a possible 1600 on the SAT. According to its catalogs, applicants who had a GED score of at least three hundred were also eligible for admission.

I decided to conduct the study at these two sites to bring into view an un-

derstudied group, namely, Asian American students attending less selective universities and community and city colleges. In 1997, 41 percent of Asian Americans enrolled in college attended a public four-year institution, and 39 percent were at a public two-year institution (*Chronicle of Higher Education* 2000). Yet we know little about the experiences of Asian Americans in these institutions, particularly at community and city colleges, and how they complicate the model minority stereotype of Asian Americans.[3]

Another motivation for having a dual-site study was to tap into the dimension of social class background, which is often correlated with the type of postsecondary institution attended (Kwong 1987; Weinberg 1997). Thus, I expected that the Hunter students would tend to be downtown Chinese, and the Columbia respondents uptown Chinese. As table 4.3 shows, this was largely the case, although the class dimension turned out to be more complex.

More than half of the Hunter respondents grew up in or near Chinatown in Manhattan, Flushing in Queens, or Sunset Park in Brooklyn. Two-thirds of their parents were involved with the Chinese ethnic economy, mainly in the restaurant business (as cooks and waiters) or the garment industry (as seamstresses and pressers); a few were entrepreneurs who owned restaurants and other businesses and had middle-class status in the ethnic economy.[4] The remainder worked outside the ethnic economy as engineers, health care aides, and teachers but retained strong kinship and social ties to an ethnic enclave.

While a few Hunter students had started off at elite, private colleges (such as Cornell or Smith), their parents were not members of the uptown Chinese.

TABLE 4.3 HUNTER AND COLUMBIA CHINESE AMERICAN STUDENT CHARACTERISTCS

Student Characteristics	Hunter	Columbia
Percentage of Respondents	49	51
Grew up in intact family	73	77
Grew up in or adjacent to one of New York City's three Chinatowns[a]	52	14
Has at least one parent working in the ethnic economy	67	20
Parents own their home[b]	52	91

Source: Author's compilation.
Notes: N = 68 (74 percent female, 26 percent male). Sixty percent of the respondents were second-generation immigrants, and 40 percent were 1.5-generation. Sixty-nine percent had grown up in the New York City metropolitan area (the five boroughs, Westchester County, and Long Island).
[a] Manhattan's Chinatown, Sunset Park in Brooklyn, and Flushing, Queens.
[b] House, condominium, or coop.

Rather, their parents lived or worked in the ethnic economy, within which they had middle-class status and generally did not work in manual jobs.

Most of my Columbia respondents grew up in suburban, largely white neighborhoods with parents in professional occupations such as engineering, law, and medicine. As table 4.4 shows, more than half of the fathers had an advanced degree, and 45 percent of the mothers had a bachelor's degree, in contrast to the Hunter parents, most of whom had a high school education or less.

A minority of the Columbia parents, however, experienced downward mobility with migration—they had held positions of higher prestige and income in their home country and had fewer resources in the United States than their educational credentials might have suggested.[5] Some worked in the Chinese ethnic economy in New York City or elsewhere. But unlike most of the Hunter parents, these parents had obtained some college education either abroad or in the United States or owned property and operated their own businesses. Thus, they held a middle-class status in the ethnic economy.

TABLE 4.4 PARENTAL EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Parents' Education	Hunter	Columbia
Fathers		
Grade school	7	1
Junior high school	2	1
High school	17	3
Some college	3	3
Bachelor's degree	1	7
Advanced degree	1	19
Student does not know	2	1
Mothers		
Grade school	4	0
Junior high school	4	2
High school	17	4
Some college	5	6
Bachelor's degree	1	16
Advanced degree	0	7
Student does not know	2	0

Source: Author's compilation.
Notes: N = 33 (Hunter) and 35 (Columbia).

METHODS

Because of constraints of access, I could not draw a random and representative sample. However, I used a number of strategies to try to ensure that my respondents proved typical in their outlooks and experiences. Students were recruited through administrative, faculty, and student contacts and were briefly introduced to the project either by me personally or through e-mail at non-ethnic and ethnic organizations and in classes in various disciplines.[6] I emphasized my status as a second-generation Chinese American asking other second-generation Americans and 1.5ers to participate in a study about themselves. All but one of the interviews were conducted face to face, and all were tape-recorded. They lasted between ninety minutes and two hours. To gain perspective on the respondents' views of their parents and other family members, I interviewed seven parents and two adult siblings. The majority of these interviews took place in the family home, were also tape-recorded, and lasted between thirty and ninety minutes.[7]

Despite my attempts to have gender parity in the sample, women consistently volunteered to participate in greater numbers: nearly three-fourths of the respondents were women. To offset the gender imbalance, I probed more deeply into issues related to gender in the interview, asking about respondents' siblings and, more generally, about issues related to gender socialization, as they pertained to both men and women.

One theme expressed by both women and men of varying class backgrounds centered on the "Asian" fields of study, which they understood in the context of immigrant parents' expectations, and that is what I examine next.

THE "ASIAN" FIELDS OF STUDY

One day, in the second-floor sky café at Hunter, I was asking Jeff whether he thought Chinese Americans tended to major in some fields and not in others. He responded by volunteering to take me to Hunter's "Asian" wing. This area was home to the departments of physics, chemistry, and biology; here we would find, in Jeff's words, "research assistants and researchers and students, 70 to 80 percent of them Asian." Jeff was not alone in voicing this view. In the course of my interviews, it became clear that my respondents had varying takes on what it meant to be Asian American—who was included in the term and what it signified.[8] Yet they easily agreed that the technical fields were "Asian" fields and Chinese Americans were well represented in them.

Although this claim made by my respondents was mainly based on anecdotal evidence, there is much empirical data to support the idea that Asian Americans can be found in particular fields of study and occupations. In

1990, for example, Asian Americans represented 3 percent of the total U.S. population, but nearly 7 percent of the bachelor's degrees awarded in science in 1991, 7 percent of the nation's scientists and engineering workforce, and 9 percent of medical school faculty (Tang and Smith 1996; Elliot et al. 1996; Espiritu 1997). Several years later the trend continued as Asian Americans received 18.4 percent of all engineering doctorates awarded in 1998, 13.3 percent of the life sciences doctorates, and 12.9 percent of doctorates in the physical sciences. By contrast, only 3.2 percent received doctorates in education (*Chronicle of Higher Education* 2000).

These trends can be attributed, at least in part, to the brain drain that has drawn highly trained immigrants, particularly in the technical fields, to the United States. But these trends also seem salient among 1.5- and second-generation Asian Americans. Morrison Wong (1995a, 1995b) finds that Chinese Americans, particularly the foreign-born, overconcentrate in the sciences and math to maintain high grade point averages at the secondary and collegiate levels. Other studies suggest that Chinese parents perceive structural constraints to their children's future mobility and thus favor "safe" careers that rely less on face-to-face contact, subjective judgments, and language skills and more on objective data and licensing, such as law, engineering, math, medicine, and the physical and biological sciences (Lyman 1974; Kwong 1987). But as Dae Young Kim (this volume) demonstrates in his work with Koreans, and researchers studying other Asian ethnic groups have shown as well, this phenomenon is by no means limited to Chinese immigrant parents.

Although neither Hunter nor Columbia recorded the fields of study chosen by Chinese Americans as compared to other ethnic and racial groups, some data were available for Asian Americans. At Hunter, Asian and Pacific Islanders were underrepresented in the humanities and overrepresented in technical fields like the sciences and mathematics, trends similar to those found in national studies of Asian American educational performance (Jacobs 1996). At Columbia data were scarcer, but the university's 1999 statistical abstract on student enrollment readily revealed that Asian Americans made up 41 percent of the student body at the engineering school.

Typical Advice from Asian Parents: "Choose Something Practical"

In trying to explain why these fields had such a pronounced Asian presence, my respondents invariably brought up the role of parental pressure. In the words of one woman, "Asian families want their sons and daughters to be doctors and lawyers." In the view of my respondents, across class and gender, parents expressed this preference because they wanted their children to pur-

sue occupations that held high promise for financial security and thus were "practical" and "safe." This was in keeping with the parents' generally utilitarian view of education. For instance, Deborah, the daughter of a waiter and garment worker, described her parents' cues about school: "The objective is to have a job at the end of the academic experience. It's just to strive for [academic] success to get a good job." Grace is another example. As a teenager, Grace, whose parents also worked in the ethnic economy, had an interest in fashion and thought about applying to the city's fashion high school, only to have her mother discourage her because "there's no money involved." Instead, she steered Grace toward Brooklyn Technical High School, and later she would come to have equally firm ideas about what her daughter should be studying in college. Grace observed:

> My mother will ask me which classes I'm taking each semester, and I will tell her. She's like, "What does that do?" She's like, "Why are you taking that?" Like once, I was taking an elective in film, and she was like, "What are you going to do with that?" I am like, I am just taking a class. I'll just take it for fun.

Most middle-class children were also socialized by their parents to have a utilitarian view of education. In the words of a young woman whose father was a lawyer and whose mother was a certified public accountant: "They're thinking of education as my way to a job, as opposed to education for education's sake."

The reasons for this orientation varied. Many students talked about their parents' traumatic experiences of everything from poverty to racial riots and precarious political and economic arrangements in their homelands. Some parents were born into economically disadvantaged families; others came from more privileged backgrounds only to undergo a precipitous decline in social status. Such dislocations were occasioned by the tumultuous events that befell East Asia from the late nineteenth century onward, in brief: civil war (1927 to 1937, 1946 to 1949) engulfed China, was interrupted by war with Japan, and finally culminated in the Communist Party's assumption of power; Japan colonized Taiwan (1895 to 1945), which was then taken over by Nationalist forces; and in nations like Vietnam, Malaysia, and Philippines, the costs of ethnic marginalization that came with being a Chinese minority often worsened the experience of political and social unrest within those countries.

The United States, while offering a refuge from such turmoil, presented its own share of challenges. According to my student respondents, the immigrant adjustment often proved to be difficult as their parents tried to recalibrate

their sensibilities to a new language and culture. Some of the students also remembered their parents pointing to the racialized social structure as another challenge. For many parents, potential discrimination by whites in fields with a marginal Asian presence—or as one student respondent put it, the potential pitfalls of trying to make it in a "white man's world"—gave them further incentive to stress with their children a utilitarian view of education overall, and technical fields in particular.

Regardless of the provenance of these aspirations, the parents transmitted them to their children in very similar ways, as can be seen from the following accounts of five students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Joan and Grace both grew up in Chinatown, though Joan's family had a more middle-class status in the ethnic economy.[9] Born and raised in Chinatown, Lois's parents now lived and worked outside the ethnic economy but still maintained strong ties to the community. In contrast, Milly and Laura both came from suburban, upper-middle-class households, and their parents were in law, medicine, and corporate finance.

These young women, however, proved similar in at least one dimension: they had decided to major in fields that were not sanctioned by their parents. Bear in mind that none of these students were thinking of pursuing law or medicine (in which case, their field of study would make little difference since they would end up following the prescribed career trajectory anyway). In their parents' eyes, they had only their majors to recommend them, and that was not enough. Lois, a Hunter psychology major said:

> They think it's a dead-end field. Because they feel that you can't really go anywhere in psych. It's like, "Where are you going to go? Are you going to work in a hospital?" Or the highest thing that you can basically do is to open your own office, you know, and to have your own clientele. But you know, I guess in a lot of ways my parents are the typical Asian-minded parents that are, you know, "you should be in the business field somehow." Computers and stuff like that. Sciences. Unless you become a doctor or something, you're not going to accomplish anything.

According to Laura, a Columbia anthropology major:

> They don't get it. You can do an anthro major, but you have to have a good job. And you can quote this: they always say, "You can't live in the dirt forever." My aunt actually said this to me this summer in Paris: "You can't dig in the dirt forever, you know." It's like, you have to take an econ class. So they don't understand the idea, but I think they trust my decision. Still, they worry about it. My dad is like, "Why don't you be a doctor?" because he's a doctor. My mom's like, "Why don't you go to law

> school?" because she went to law school. And then my aunt, "Why don't you become like a trader?" Just like the things they do themselves. And they suggest fields that make money.

Joan, a Columbia archaeology major, put it this way:

> They're not happy about it exactly. Sometimes they try to guilt-trip me, by telling me how their friends feel so sorry for them. And then they start with money: "What happens if you get married and are dependent for an income. What else is there?" I'm not even sure they tell their friends I'm an archaeology major. They just say I'm interested in history.

According to Milly, a Columbia East Asian languages and civilizations major:

> Oh, they really dislike it. They really dislike it. They're like, "You, like, go to the States to, like, learn Chinese history, Japanese history. What are you doing?" I convinced them that, "Don't worry, look it, you know, like, my cousin's in psychology, and he comes out, he's employed, you know." I was like, "So don't worry, you know. It doesn't matter as long as I enjoy it." I mean, they're not, like, angry. They're just, like, "Why are you doing that?" What do they want me to do? Oh, that's easy—economics.

Grace, a Hunter geography major, said:

> When I told them about geography, they were really, what the hell are you going to do with that? And my grandfather found out. Every time I see him or talk to him on the phone, he's like, "How's geography going? What are you going to do?" And my aunts and uncles ask me, "What are you going to do? What are you going to do?" Geography is not like business or economics. Geography is not a discipline that you can do very much with.

This instrumental view of education bridged the many differences among these immigrant parents and was imparted to both daughters and sons. Even highly educated parents like Laura's and Milly's (who received their graduate degrees in the United States) did not perceive the practicality of fields like archaeology and East Asian languages and civilizations, with "practicality" understood to mean the potential to attract high-income jobs.

On one level, this finding seems counterintuitive. It would make sense for Chinese working-class parents to stress financial security because they probably rely on their children's financial contribution to the household (Kwong 1987; Hune 1998). In fact, several of the working-class students were either

already contributing to the household through part-time work or anticipating having to contribute once they graduated and started working full-time. Studies on Chinese and Asian middle-class parents, on the other hand, have shown that they are more likely to define their children's education as a quest for knowledge than as preparation for a particular career, less likely to define education primarily in economic terms, and more likely to encourage their children to partake of the academic curriculum (Siu and Feldman 1995; Hune 1998). My interviews, by contrast, showed a remarkable convergence in parental aspirations, as they were conveyed to children, across class. Class did matter, however, as I demonstrate in the next section.

Ethnic Networks and the Secondary Fields

My respondents saw the "Asian fields" as a set of technical fields that their parents thought would bring their children stable and high-income professional lives, but even within these fields there were differences related to class. Although all the Chinese immigrant parents wanted their children to become doctors, lawyers, or engineers, not all of them believed that their children would actually *fulfill* their expectations. It was the children of suburban, middle-class families who reported that their parents actively encouraged them to pursue these professions. The children of working-class parents reported that their parents maintained the same ideals *in theory* but at the same time suggested a secondary tier of professions. These professions did not necessarily require years of graduate school and appeared to be more realistic aspirations for their children. Seen in this light, livelihoods like pharmacy, computer science, and accounting may have lacked the prestige of medicine, engineering, and the law, and they generally were not as lucrative, but they were stable occupations nonetheless that brought in a decent income.

When I asked my working-class respondents how their parents knew of occupations that were so far removed from their own frame of reference, my respondents pointed to their parents' use of ethnic networks. They gained information through family members (some of whom had been in the United States much longer), friends, and coworkers in restaurants and garment factories. Much as Min Zhou (1997) has argued, these ethnic networks serve as forms of social capital. My respondents' immigrant parents relied on the information relayed through these networks in particular to navigate the Byzantine bureaucracy of the New York City public school system and learn of magnet junior high schools outside of Chinatown and the city's specialized high schools (Mollenkopf et al. 1997). These networks also channeled information to downtown Chinese parents about which occupations were most viable for their children. This is evident from the following exchange between

two Hunter female students whose mothers were both in the garment business, one as a seamstress and the other as an owner.

> Grace: One thing funny is that my mom, they always like to follow trends. Like, if one person's daughter is a pharmacist, that was the "in" thing this year. Being a pharmacist. She would always bring it up. Oh, you know, pharmacists make good money.
>
> Lily: What other people say, they listen. It's like, the whole workplace is saying, "My kids are into botany," or something, and they'll come home and say, "Why don't you go do botany?" It's always a trend.

What their children ended up pursuing was a further reflection of their parents' status within these ethnic networks, which had such an impact that my respondents did not report their parents feeling that their children were being locked out of the highest-tier professions (such as medicine and the law). Rather, the feeling was that, if the profession had been vetted by the ethnic networks, then it too was something for their children to aim for, and thus something that would give status to the entire family. Nor did my downtown respondents believe that they were being asked to pursue a secondary tier of professions. They understood the prestige attached to those professions for their parents.

To sum up, my second-generation Chinese American respondents—women and men from both uptown and downtown backgrounds—identified technical fields as being particularly Chinese or Asian and located immigrant parents at the heart of this phenomenon. At the same time, there were important class differences in how working-class parents suggested secondary-tier professions to their children that required fewer years of graduate study but nevertheless were seen as conferring prestige. According to my respondents, it was concern about their financial security that led to these parental expectations. In the following section, I turn to the subject of how students responded to these expectations—the majors they actually chose and why. As I demonstrate, while there was considerable common ground here as well, there were also key class differences.

How Children Respond

In the course of my interviews, I identified three groups of students—two groups chose the "Asian fields," for different reasons that at times overlapped, and the third selected non-Asian fields. I also found that social class background often intersected with the decisionmaking process.

The first category of students gravitated toward the "Asian fields" primarily

because they wanted to follow the example of family members. For obvious reasons, this scenario occurred mainly in middle-class families in which the parents worked in the mainstream economy. Most working- and even middle-class respondents in the ethnic economy did not perceive their parents' jobs in the restaurant and garment industries as anything to aspire to; rather, they viewed education as a way to avoid such jobs. For middle-class, suburban children, it was a different matter. The experiences of family members provided a particular lens through which to view their own occupational choices. Monica's uncles were all engineers, so it was natural for her to consider engineering as well. Yet one of her uncles pointed to his own experience as a cautionary tale illustrating that basing one's choice on the familiar was not necessarily the best approach:

> He always says, "Just make sure you're happy with whatever you're doing." I think I agree with his views the most. He explained to me how he got into engineering because the family convinced him that, you know, that it was the best thing to do financially. He's still working as an engineer, but I think he's going through like a life change, you know, trying to find something that makes him happier.

The second group of students gravitated toward the "Asian fields" from the intersection of genuine interest and internalization of their parents' values—it was natural for them to think about which fields were secure and which were not. A young woman at Columbia described this process: "Asian parents kind of restrict the fields, like, you know, they probably wouldn't be happy if you majored in art or music, therefore you grow up with the pressure of limiting your own fields, eventually you take on those values." Margaret, a student at Columbia's School of Engineering, exemplified this type of reasoning. She came in thinking that she would pursue biomedical engineering but quickly realized after one class that her abilities did not lie there. In thinking through her options, Margaret never lost sight of the crucial issue: "What else would be a practical thing for me?" The answer in her case turned out to be operational research, a field that uses mathematical or computer models to improve an organization's operations and thus would allow her to pursue a high-paying business career.

Several of these students excelled in the humanities, receiving their best grades in fields that seemed to reflect their true interests. Nonetheless, they continued in engineering, a notoriously rigorous curriculum, or in computer science, another challenging field, or in economics, either because they had already invested so much time or because they thought those fields were more likely to lead to a high-paying job. Paul's story is illustrative. A junior at

Hunter, he was majoring in economics and accounting despite his absorption in philosophy and history, disciplines that he believed gave him a nuanced way of understanding human behavior. His reasoning was as follows:

> I don't really like economics, believe it or not. I mean, if I had my choice, I would major in philosophy and minor in history [*his voice brightens*]. *But* I don't see a future in being a philosophy major. I really don't, so I chose something more practical, a little more practical, so economics is what I chose.

As can be seen in Paul's comments, the idea of choice was more restricted in the lives of working-class respondents. Paul came from Chinatown, where he grew up with his parents and two brothers. The family of five had for many years shared a one-bedroom, tenement apartment; as often happens in tight spaces, studying or having the time to reflect was nearly impossible. If education was to be his ticket to a life outside of Chinatown, then education had to lead to a viable job and career. Seen in this context, economics makes perfect sense, and philosophy makes no sense at all. Such circumstances framed Paul's limited conceptions of choice. In his mind, he really had no choice. His family's financial situation had already made it for him.

A third group of students, both working-class and middle-class, in the ethnic economy and outside it, followed their interests in fields that lay outside the boundaries sanctioned by their parents. Asked what he liked about his major, Robert, a psychology and sociology major, replied, "None of the Asians are doing it." Yet Robert was very proud of being Chinese, and most of his close friends were Chinese American. Still, he was proud that his choice of a major ran counter to the expectations of Chinese immigrant parents—including his own, who wanted him to pursue a career in pharmacy: "You keep on pushing me, I go the other way." He was also cheered by his younger brother's fledgling stand of independence: "He's having doubts about [pharmacy], which is kind of good in the sense of, come on, it's about time you got out of Mom's wings and start to think for yourself. Mom says this, he'll do it. Maybe mumble a word or two."

In this group, Robert was an exception, however, because most of the other students spoke of wrestling with feelings of obligation and their own sense of trepidation at venturing into the unknown, a dilemma they often described in ethnic terms. Joan viewed her decision to major in archaeology as a deeply "American" one insofar as it was rooted in individual choice. Rather than factoring in her parents' wishes, she put faith in her own counsel. At the same time, she believed that she was taking a risk:

> I'm thinking, this is my life, and I'm going to do what I want with it. I'm going to pick my major. I'm going to pick my job. Yeah, I've got to do what makes me happy, whereas I could have said, I'm going to be premed because it makes me and my parents happy. That's more of a Chinese decision. I feel guilty when I'm with more traditional Chinese Americans. Guilty because I'm not being practical. I'm not doing the sure thing.

For this group of students, mentors proved crucial. Robert specifically mentioned a generous national fellowship that allowed him to double-major in psychology and sociology and work on research projects with faculty members in both departments. Similarly, following her own interests in archaeology became easier for Joan once she was able to rely on mentors to show her how to make her way through the field. She met the mentors, all women, through classes she took at Columbia and other local colleges and institutions. These academic women introduced her to the world of archaeology, pointing her toward research opportunities and possible career paths. On one level the benefits were personal; as Joan observed: "I need the experience to be confident when I'm applying for a situation. I need to know that I actually do know what's going on, or what to do." But the benefits of mentorship also allowed her to make a stronger case for archaeology to her parents, who became persuaded of the seriousness of her intent: "My parents know they can't change my mind, and now they see that I've taken an actual effort to go to archaeology lab sessions, to go to digs, to talk to people. They're becoming more reconciled to it, as long as they can see I'm serious."

My respondents' accounts of how they chose their majors in the face of parental expectations, particularly the feelings of frustration, obligation, and guilt that many experienced, map onto the long-standing story told of the children of immigrants living between two worlds—that is, second-generation children trying to break free of parental aspirations. A missing element in my respondents' accounts, however, is the role of rebellion—none of them renounced their parents' expectations entirely. I do not mean to suggest that second-generation Chinese Americans do not rebel against their parents' wishes. Because my sample was neither random nor representative, it did not capture the experiences of those Chinese American college students who completely discount their parents' aspirations (and feel comfortable doing so). Even Robert, who saw himself as a rebel for not going into pharmacy, as his parents wanted him to do, was thinking of pursuing an advanced degree in the social sciences, which is still a high-prestige, if not high-paying, path.

In fact, what is interesting to note is the *limited* range of rebellion among my second-generation respondents—from an outsider's perspective. To many

people, choosing to double-major in anthropology and economics, as Diana did at Columbia, to pursue a perfectly viable career in consulting for non-profit organizations might seem like a sensible decision. Diana, after all, was not thinking of pursuing a career as a novelist or film actor, notoriously difficult fields to break into. To the students themselves, however, such decisions caused considerable soul-searching and anguish as they tried to negotiate their interests and their parents' very different aspirations for them. (Diana herself was deciding against a career in medicine, which her father wanted her to pursue.) Thus, in ways that were quite real to them, they did believe themselves to be rebels of a sort, albeit very conflicted ones. What is also true is that along the lines suggested by Dennis Wrong (1976), even those students who completely fulfilled parental expectations by following the prescribed route still felt pressured, since they did not completely share their parents' worldview. This disjuncture was evident when these students spoke of the "Asian parent thing" in terms of the demands and frustration undergone by children and conflict between parents and children.

Different Social Worlds and Identity Processes

The common thread in the responses of these students—their internalization of their parents' values about fields of study and careers and their feelings of guilt and obligation, especially when they charted their own paths—proved even more striking given their different educational settings and the varied social identities they were developing in these settings. Just as family class background shaped my respondents' paths to different universities, it figured prominently in how they saw themselves at these schools.

From educational mission to social space, the two colleges in this study were a study in contrasts. Although some of the Hunter students expressed discontent with the school's lack of a central campus area ("it's like high school" was a common refrain), a palpable sense of energy emanated from the four interlocking buildings, particularly during the changeover between classes as the students fanned out en masse into the hallways and onto the escalators. As they ascended the Sixty-eighth Street subway stop (a reason cited by students for coming to Hunter rather than another CUNY school), students left behind their old neighborhoods and entered a physical space that embodies a contradiction. Situated in the midst of the Upper East Side, a neighborhood known for prime real estate and wealth, Hunter symbolizes a multi-ethnic, proletariat vision of access to higher education. Reflective of the city's immigrant, racial, and ethnic diversity, it is a place where minorities are the majority and where blacks, Latinos, Asians, whites, native-born and im-

migrants, twenty-eight-year-old reentry students and eighteen-year-old freshmen, and young mothers with children all come together in search of an education.[10]

Yet as Alex Trillo (this volume) has documented at another site, my respondents expressed discontent at being shut out of the classes necessary for their graduation and, as a result, seeing their stay in school prolonged by several months to a year. Like the Latino students at La Guardia Community College, the Chinese students I spoke to and observed at Hunter were often perplexed by what they saw as complex and shifting rules governing the number of credits needed to graduate and the work requirements for their classes. Some came to rely more on each other than on already overburdened administrators and faculty.

On the other side of town, Columbia bespoke another kind of geographic inscription. Elite people from all over the nation and, indeed, the world congregated at Columbia's thirty-five-acre campus located in Morningside Heights, only blocks away from some of the city's poorest communities. At the time I was in the field, the ongoing construction of a new student center, coupled with the graceful walkways and imposing buildings, contrasted with the decaying housing stock and guarded stares of the pedestrians outside the school boundaries not more than a few blocks north and east.

None of this is to say that diversity was lacking there. Columbia is quite diverse, especially for an elite institution: minorities made up at least one-third of the university's student population during my year of research.[11] At the same time, Columbia's institutional history of privilege is also evident.

In these two singular social spaces, my Chinese respondents were following two distinct assimilation patterns. For those respondents whose parents lived, worked, and/or had strong social ties to an ethnic economic enclave, being Chinese was a natural part of their world. They had grown up thinking of themselves as Chinese, an identity that had them speaking a mix of Chinese and English slang with friends (who were also 1.5- and second-generation Chinese American), keeping up with the latest Chinese films, actors, and pop singers from Taiwan and Hong Kong, and attending Chinese pop concerts at nightclubs in Atlantic City, New Jersey. It was a particularly Chinese American world. In this regard, they differed from Sara Lee's working-class Korean Americans, who strove to downplay their ethnicity and not mingle with co-ethnics as a way of avoiding negative comparisons with their "model minority" co-ethnics. The key difference was that Lee's working-class Korean Americans were a minority in a predominantly middle- to upper-middle-class ethnic group, whereas working-class Chinese have played a much more substantial role in the group's immigration patterns.

Thus, for my respondents who came from downtown Chinese backgrounds, their ethnicity was a daily given. It was *class* that they understood as differentiating them from their model minority co-ethnics. This became clear in their takes on the model minority stereotype, which most found alienating, grounded as it was on claims that Asian Americans are superachievers and often come from wealth, neither of which claims corresponded to their experiences. Added pressures came not only from their parents' expectations for them to attend a four-year college—and ideally a prestigious, private four-year college—but also from the reality that some downtown Chinese children did go on to an elite four-year college like Columbia (as the parents were all too ready to remind their children).[12] In the face of such expectations, these students thought that they had failed in some way by attending Hunter, despite its reputation as one of the top CUNY schools. Hunter was where these students *ended up*. It was not where they wanted or had hoped to be.

And yet, by attending Hunter, a multi-ethnic institution populated by immigrant children of similar socioeconomic background, my working-class respondents found reaffirmation and extension of their ethnic identities. Ironically, this occurred in spite of the rich multi-ethnic dimensions at Hunter; for the most part, my respondents did not do much identity work at the institution itself, since they were busy negotiating school with jobs elsewhere in the city, commuting, and, sometimes, fulfilling family obligations. Additionally, the fact that Hunter was a commuter school allowed my respondents to quite literally go home to their parents and ethnic neighborhoods at night and thus to remain more closely tied to their ethnic identities as they had always known them.

In contrast, those respondents whose parents had settled in predominantly white, suburban communities and had few ties to an ethnic enclave grew up thinking they were little different from their white peers. Ethnicity among these uptown Chinese was largely confined to the home, to ethnic foods, and to the ethnic holidays they occasionally celebrated without knowing much about them (Espiritu 1994; Min and Kim 1999). In other words, it was a diluted form of ethnicity that they were experiencing, one that was tangential to their identities. For many of my uptown Chinese respondents, college was a time of ethnic awakening, either through student ethnic clubs, which provided a literal and symbolic space to engage in identity work, or simply through daily interactions with co-ethnics, often for the first time. At the same time, it was important to many of them, including Victoria, that they were not "abandoning" whites in favor of co-ethnics; rather, they actively sought a balance and blamed themselves if they were too ethnic.

In this process of becoming Chinese American, my uptown respondents at Columbia focused on the shared experiences of growing up as middle-class, second-generation Chinese Americans, but they understood this experience in particularly ethnic terms rather than class terms. This was evident in how these respondents related to the model minority stereotype. In many ways the stereotype of high academic achievement and economic privilege corresponded to their lives. Their parents were in fact doctors and lawyers, and they themselves were attending an elite college. While they were aware of the working-class stream of Chinese immigrants so present in New York City, most of my uptown respondents still believed that the majority of the Chinese were doing well. From this vantage point, my respondents felt that it was only natural that they were at Columbia.

Meanwhile, nearly all the respondents painted New York City as a unique urban environment, one that embraces all manner of racial and ethnic identities and welcomes a steady stream of immigrants, or what Sherri-Ann Butterfield and Alex Trillo have described as "cosmopolitanism." In New York City, my respondents said, being of Chinese descent is nothing out of the ordinary. By the same token, they were quite conscious that New York is a very particular case and that their experiences might be different elsewhere. Although the downtown Chinese recalled encountering hostility from other ethnic groups in the city, they believed that even worse forms of hostility existed *outside* New York City. Even Chinese who had grown up feeling part of their predominantly white communities were uncertain of their welcome in other places where people would not know them as well, and they too regarded New York City as an exception. Said one young man:

> Well, it helps that I'm in New York. There's so many different people here that I think people are a lot more understanding and accepting of differences. I think now because of the whole idea of "You're different, and I'm different. You're okay, I'm okay." Whereas in the past, it was maybe, "Oh, you're not white," like that. At least in New York, I think, I'm pretty much considered an American. I think if I was in maybe, like, Arkansas, maybe not. I'd get looked at differently.

In sum, the marked differences in my respondents' identity development, particularly in relation to the schools they were attending, only made their shared viewpoint on parental aspirations more striking. Thus far, I have focused on the role of social class background in parental aspirations and children's responses. In the next two sections, I address the impact of class and gender, taken together, on the parental message about careers, and I discuss the views of the second generation on their future.

How Class and Gender Matter

In addition to class, there was evidence of differences in parental expectations along the lines of gender, although the general pattern was for parents to have similar career aspirations for their sons and daughters.[13] Both Kim and Lee (this volume) discuss the mixed messages imparted by Korean immigrant parents to their daughters about their domestic and social roles. Like those two authors, I found evidence of some gender distinctions, mainly among Chinese working-class parents, who encouraged their daughters to pursue what one respondent described as "the traditional feminine fields." These families proved the exception rather than the norm, however, a surprising finding given that most working-class parents in my study strove to mold their daughters into "proper" women. The pervasive view among working-class parents was that daughters had to learn how to do women's work, which included but was not limited to chores such as washing the dishes, doing the laundry, sweeping, stocking up on groceries, and, of course, cooking. By grouping these tasks as specific to women, Chinese immigrant parents were attempting to socialize their daughters into traditional gender norms.

The message was clear: even if daughters did not end up performing these chores (and some refused to do them consistently, if at all), they *ought* to know how to perform them, and it was their duty as parents to ensure that those lessons were learned. It was not necessary for sons to learn these tasks because being a man meant something altogether different. Moreover, birth order and sex made little difference. Working-class women who had older brothers were just as likely as their counterparts with younger brothers to say they had to do more domestic chores. In working-class Chinese families, gender-specific conceptions were also expressed in the types of behavior that were considered appropriate for boys as opposed to girls and in the different sanctions they received for misbehaving. Boys were given greater latitude, whereas girls were expected to obey the dictates of their parents without question and faced greater punishment if they did not.

Perhaps not surprisingly, in those working-class families that did differentiate along the lines of gender in their occupational aspirations for their sons and daughters, the theme of "appropriateness" came up often. Benny, a Hunter student, spoke thoughtfully about such gender-based expectations. When he was growing up, his parents made it clear that the most Benny's sisters could hope for were jobs as clerical workers. Professional jobs were the province of men, not women. The longer they spent in the United States, however, the more their attitudes toward gender roles and work changed. What spurred the change was their understanding that things are done differently in America, a point that was made concrete when their daughter de-

cided to join the police force (most definitely not a woman's job) over their vehement disapproval. Deborah, another Hunter student, remembered being steered into certain types of jobs by her mother and raised with the sensibility that girls could not do too much in the working world:

> My mom is very old-fashioned. She didn't think women were suited for certain jobs. [She thought] that women should only work in these lesser jobs. That was the impression I always got when I was growing up. I guess secretary, like, I don't remember specifically, but it was always, don't strive for too much because you're only a girl. That was the impression I got, that, you know, girls only do these things. But I didn't understand what those things were. But I remember having conversations with her where, you know, I would say, oh, I want to do this. But it's like, but you're a girl.

It is important to bear in mind that working-class daughters did not follow their parents' wishes in this area, nor did they experience much anxiety or guilt about not following their parents' wishes (as they did when they pursued fields of study that their parents disapproved of for *both* their daughters and sons).

Middle-class parents, on the other hand, expected both sons and daughters to have high career aspirations. Still, the effects of gender were not entirely absent. Some middle-class parents linked their daughters' education to their eventual roles as mothers. Since these parents largely understood childrearing as the responsibility of women, their daughters had to have at least enough education to guide their children and serve as appropriate role models. In this vein, Mrs. Chang, Victoria's mother, said: "I think women's education is very important, very, very important, I think more important than men, because we raise the kids, right. Education is very important because we're molding our value in them."

Chinese middle-class parents were also all too aware of the burdens involved with balancing work and family. Since it was a burden that they saw as only affecting women, parents encouraged their daughters to have enough flexibility in their careers to be able to raise a family (Kim 1993). Sons did not receive this message. Mrs. Chang is one such example. She advised her daughter Victoria to pursue medicine in part because she saw it as a convenient way for her to have both a fulfilling career and motherhood. The key was that Victoria could work at the clinic that Dr. and Mrs. Chang had founded and built and she could set her own hours, a luxury she would not have otherwise:

> We think if she can be a doctor, right, she can just work with her dad. And we always say, "You can just work part-time." Because she said, "No.

> I'm not going to be a doctor, because Dad has been working too much, too long hours." And I said, my husband also said, "But if you became a doctor, probably you won't have to work like twenty or thirty hours. You don't have to work as much because we started with nothing."

Victoria, however, had her own plans that were not necessarily consistent with her parents' ideas. She did not want to follow her father's path into medicine, nor did she want to be a stay-at-home mom like her mother:

> I think career will come first for me. At least at this point in my life, I see myself establishing a career before even thinking about getting married and having a family. Sometimes I wonder, my mom gave up a lot, she could have had somewhat of a career in journalism or maybe even one at the UN. She did give it up for us, which I'm very grateful for. But then I think sometimes, and I'm like, I wonder if I ever did that, would I regret it? I'm sure she doesn't. Because it worked out pretty well for her. But I think I couldn't be like her. At least at this point in my life. I see so much that I hopefully could be doing. I definitely see that I have a future, and I want to make the most of it before I settle and have family. I'm personally of the opinion that I'm not going to become a housewife, and I'm going to have a career equal of my husband, and I definitely want to have something before I have a family.

Some middle-class parents, both in and outside of the ethnic economy, believed that too much career drive would prove wearing for their daughters and put them in an awkward position. Anita, a Hunter student whose father was a computer teacher around the city and whose mother taught in a GED program in Chinatown, hoped to pursue a career in medicine but was mindful of her parents' advice about women, careers, and family:

> Ever since I was a little kid, I was aware that I would have a family one day. So choosing what I wanted for my education, and how far I wanted to go professionally, was difficult. My father had told me that it's very difficult if you wanted to have a career and a family at the same time as a woman. He always brought to my attention that it's difficult to have both if that's what you want. They told me, when you have a kid, the first couple of years, you want to be with them, you don't want to leave, you see them grow up really fast, and you want to be there for them for their own personal experience. You don't want to lose out on that.

Children's View of the Future

Gender and class also influenced the second generation's aspirations for the future. When asked where they saw themselves in ten years, women respon-

dents always brought up the issue of work. They clearly imagined themselves performing some kind of paid work outside the home. But there were differences in the kind of work they envisioned for themselves. Middle-class women thought in terms of careers—they would be doctors, engineers, lawyers, and real estate entrepreneurs. Take Monica, for example: "I'm still trying to decide between med school or staying in engineering or, you know, some other profession entirely. And if I choose medicine, then I'll still probably be in med school. But otherwise in a career doing something." A minority of the middle-class respondents put marriage and motherhood first and then career. These women could easily picture themselves being stay-at-home moms, just as their own mothers had been.

Working-class women, on the other hand, spoke of jobs in generic terms, not of specific careers. Grace said it best: "Working. I see myself working." This does not mean that working-class women saw themselves in traditional women's vocations, such as secretarial work. Rather, their comments spoke to the challenges they perceived with finding employment in whatever field they chose. They were mainly concerned with finishing school (which was never in doubt for middle-class women), obtaining a stable job, and achieving financial security. Few talked about choosing work over children; it was assumed that they would have to manage both (as their own mothers had done).

Men expressed a similar desire to have both a family and a career that also varied somewhat by class. Middle-class men thought in terms of careers, and working-class men expressed anxieties about getting a job. However, both working- and middle-class men hoped for marriage and children in their future. The difference was that all men viewed themselves primarily as the breadwinner. No mention was ever made of any potential conflict between family and work responsibilities. Nor did any of the men see themselves in the future staying at home to raise the children. In short, Chinese American men imagined a life uncomplicated by family.

Both working-class women and men, however, expected some kind of white-collar work. The point of acquiring higher education (in their minds as well as in their parents' minds) was to avoid not only the labor-intensive ethnic economy jobs of their parents (the restaurant, the garment factory) but also blue-collar jobs in general, even those in the mainstream economy. For them, the choice was between the ethnic economy and white-collar jobs. Many believed that they could not legitimately aspire to be like their model minority co-ethnics, but on the other hand, they knew of enough co-ethnics from more modest origins who were able to use their education to gain entrée to professional jobs, or at the very least, an office job. Thus, the lessons their parents had taught them about education and mobility were reinforced by the

mobility they saw among co-ethnics whose backgrounds were in some measure similar to their own.

Historical and Contemporary Comparisons to Other Groups

In this chapter, I have tried to give depth to how second-generation Chinese Americans of diverse family social class backgrounds, who attended different colleges, understood the role of the family in their fields of study and their careers. Would I have found something similar in the occupational preferences of parents and their efforts to influence children among other immigrant or native-born groups? Historically, for example, we know that ethnicity has been associated with a group's occupational preferences in New York City, a phenomenon that Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1970, xxxiii) aptly attributed to group members' "distinctive historical experiences, cultures and skills, the times of their arrival and the economic situation they met." Nor is this a New York City–specific phenomenon, as Stanley Lieberson and Mary Waters (1988) demonstrate, using census and other national-level data. If we were to look at the first wave of European immigration to the United States and their descendants, we would see that Jews, for example, have been concentrated in the garment industry, teaching, and other professions (Slater 1969; Glazer and Moynihan 1970; Steinberg 1981) and that Italians have taken jobs that rely on both skilled and unskilled labor (Glazer and Moynihan 1970).

Contemporary comparisons along these lines are scarce. However, a review of one-fourth of the in-depth interviews from the Second Generation Study reveals that across the different native-born and immigrant groups there were similarities between the Russian Jews and the Chinese in how they spoke of the parental pressure surrounding careers and the focus on professions. Like the Chinese in my study, the Russian Jews also spoke of their parents framing careers in terms of which were "stable" and "practical."

It is worth noting, however, the important differences in the samples that may affect choice of career. For example, among the Russian Jewish sample, even among the children of highly educated parents, the emphasis was on professional jobs that did not require several years of graduate study. Thus, across class, second-generation Russian Jews said that their parents suggested fields like computer science; in doing so, Russian Jewish parents used the same kind of rationale that only the parents of my working-class Chinese respondents did in endorsing a secondary tier of professions for their children to pursue, as opposed to medicine and the law. This preference was related not only to financial considerations but also to the fact that Russian Jews typ-

ically want to start their families by their mid to late twenties. Another important factor to keep in mind when comparing these two groups is that the arrival of these first-generation Russian Jews, even the highly educated segment, represents a more recent stream of migration. Thus, their children may have had less time to adjust to the educational system, and the family may have more pressing financial needs, compared to the uptown Chinese families in my study. This difference in immigration experience can certainly affect the kinds of occupational choices that parents favor for their children.[14]

Conclusions

In this study, second-generation Chinese American college students from diverse social class backgrounds reported that their parents expected them to pursue a narrow set of fields of study that the parents viewed as a route to financially secure careers. Words like "safe," "secure," and "practical" were routinely used to describe these fields and to contrast them with those that Chinese immigrant parents viewed as dangerous, and highly impractical. As my respondents told it, such parental aspirations crossed class and gender lines.

Class did matter, however. While Chinese working-class parents hoped that their children would pursue medicine, law, engineering, and the like, such outcomes seemed unlikely given the commitment of money and time involved. Drawing from ethnic networks, these parents championed a secondary tier of technical professions (pharmacy, computer science, accounting) for their children that involved fewer hurdles and were more likely to be within their financial reach. Nevertheless, these fields represented high prestige within the Chinese enclave.

Class also mattered in how 1.5- and second-generation children made sense of and responded to these parental aspirations. It was reasonable that middle-class children would follow their parents into professional occupations, while working-class children found themselves limited by economic constraints in their academic decisions. Yet both middle- and working-class children found themselves grappling with their internalization of their parents' messages about fields of study as they made their decisions. Their experiences were remarkably similar, even though they were developing different ethnic identities and making their way through such distinctive educational settings.

Gender and class also had a role in shaping the types of aspirations that immigrant parents had for their children and how children saw the future. Some working-class parents worried about which fields were "appropriate" for women to pursue, while middle-class parents were more likely to worry about how their daughters could combine high-octane careers with their eventual

child-rearing responsibilities. Women from downtown backgrounds were more concerned about finding work and understood that they would be balancing work with family commitments. Their middle-class counterparts, on the other hand, never doubted that they would easily land professional jobs. Across class, men saw their future as uncomplicated by family, although working-class men expressed anxiety about finding white-collar work.

Choosing a field of study and, upon graduation, a career are only two steps, albeit key ones, in the transition from college to the workplace and the attempt to climb the mobility ladder. It remains to be seen where these second-generation Chinese Americans will end up. As far as class is concerned, the downtown Chinese seem likely to join the ranks of the middle-class mainstream, and the uptown Chinese will probably reproduce their parents' upper-class status. It is less clear where they will settle, if indeed they remain in the New York area. The uptown Chinese might be most comfortable living in largely white neighborhoods with perhaps a few co-ethnics; some downtown Chinese might settle in these areas but they seem more likely to live in neighborhoods that were once all-white but have a growing presence of middle-class co-ethnics. Future research should be done on whether second-generation Chinese American respondents like these attempt to socialize their own children with a utilitarian view of education and careers (and continue seeing it as an ethnic phenomenon) or whether they become less ethnically distinctive, and more like the mainstream, in their parenting strategies.

Notes

1. Asian Indians, for example, have the highest attainment rates, and East Asians (Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans) also fare well, while Southeast Asians (Laotians, Hmong, and Cambodians) have the lowest levels of education (Espiritu 1997). Among Chinese, 29 percent of the nation's Chinese immigrants have less than a high school education, while 39 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher. Among native-born Chinese, about 33 percent have a college degree, but 24 percent have only a high school diploma or less (Weinberg 1997).
2. My research drew mainly on interview respondents from Columbia College but included three respondents from Barnard and four from the engineering school. Barnard and the engineering school maintain their own faculty, curriculum, administration, operating budget, and admissions. Both Barnard and engineering students, however, can take classes at Columbia College and participate in the same undergraduate organizations.
3. Sau-Fong Siu (1996) notes that since 1980 attention has increasingly been paid to Asian Americans who are at risk of school failure, particularly Southeast Asians. However, similar attention has not been given to students attending community and city colleges.

4. As Hsiang-shui Chen (1992) observes, the ethnic economic enclave comprises several different class categories: the capitalist class, who own large factories, companies, hotels, and restaurants; the small-business class, who own knitting factories, small shops, and restaurants; the new middle class, who are professionals, civil servants, and doctors; and the working class, the people who labor in the stores, garment factories, and restaurants.
5. Although I did not have data on family income, I used the parents' education and occupations as proxies.
6. I introduced the project to classes in economics, sociology, geography, Chinese language, and Asian American studies. At Columbia the dean of students was kind enough to write a letter introducing my project to all the Asian American sophomores, juniors, and seniors and provided my contact information to those who wished to participate.
7. I spoke with the adult sister of a respondent over the phone, and I communicated with the adult brother of another respondent by e-mail.
8. For further discussion of how Asian Americans, particularly the second generation, relate to pan-ethnicity in their daily lives, see Louie (2003), Kibria (2002), and Espiritu (1992).
9. Joan's father was a garment presser, but her mother, who had taken English-language classes, spoke English fluently and did accounting work for an uptown, white-owned firm.
10. According to figures released by the Office of Institutional Research at Hunter, the student population was 39.1 percent white, 20.1 percent black, 23.3 percent Hispanic, 17.3 percent Asian or Pacific Islander, and 0.2 percent Native American or Alaskan.
11. According to figures released by the Office of Planning and Institutional Research at Columbia, Asian Americans made up 17 percent of Columbia College's student population in the fall of 1998, blacks 9 percent, and Hispanics 7.2 percent; more than 10 percent of the students were categorized as being of unknown race.
12. Survey data from the Immigrant Second Generation in Metropolitan New York Study also suggest this significant upward mobility on the part of some downtown Chinese. Although children whose fathers worked in a restaurant were more likely to attend a regional II school like Hunter (43 percent), 19 percent attended a national I school like Columbia. This pattern remained consistent when looking at children whose mothers worked in the garment industry. The restaurant and garment industries are among the leading employers in the Chinese economic enclaves of New York City.
13. This may have to do with the expectation among Chinese immigrant parents that even if their daughters marry, they are likely to continue to work, just to maintain a higher standard of living. This expectation is also in keeping with the national trend toward dual-income families in the United States.
14. I wish to thank Jennifer Holdaway for these insights regarding the Russian Jewish sample in the Second Generation Study compared to the Chinese in my study.

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The Immigration Kaleidoscope: Knowing the Immigrant Family Next Door

Etiony Aldarondo and Edward Ameen

This chapter is based on the twin premises that we are all stakeholders in the well-being of immigrant families and that we pay a high price for not having a good understanding of the facts about immigration. We use research findings to address some of the most insidious characterizations about immigrants in our country. We then focus on the immigration and acculturation processes, highlighting both the strains experienced by immigrant families and their strengths. We conclude the chapter with a description of immigrants' attitudes about the United States and how they experience life in this country.

It is 10 a.m. I (the first author) approach the hotel counter for help in printing a copy of the presentation I will be making later that day. A young woman comes to assist me, and we begin a casual conversation which quickly turns into a conversation about what we do, where we come from, and our aspirations in life. I talked some about the work my students and I do with immigrant children and families before Jenny cuts in and says:

> You know, I worry that we are losing hope. My friends are losing hope. I see it happening a lot. We are the hard-working people and *they* think we are here to do nothing. They think we are nothing. Ever since I was a little girl I had this feeling inside telling me that something was not right. I mean, how could it be that they don't see that we are here to work and take care of our families, that we are good

> people. How could it be that they don't see that we want the same things that they want—a good house, food on the table, peace, and good schools?

The printer was not working properly so we waited for the technician to fix it. In the meantime Jenny goes on to tell me about her life as a Mexican immigrant living in the United States since age five, going back and forth across the border for weddings and "quinceañeros," being scolded by teachers for speaking Spanish among friends, keeping the house in order while her mother worked two shifts, getting pregnant at the age of thirteen, raising a child while completing high school with academic honors, and so forth.

So many of us know so little about the immigrant next door. The ones we want to take care of our children; cut our lawns; grow, pick, cook, and serve our food; clean our cars; paint our homes; fix our clothes; teach our children; be at our bedside at the hospital; run the local ethnic restaurants; join our police and military forces; support the local economy; and assimilate to our preferred ways of being. Instead, slowly and passively we appropriate from media outlets and other relevant contexts in our lives (e.g., government, politicians) a narrative about immigrants as criminal, lazy, violent, and uneducated people who don't pay taxes, exploit our community resources, do not want to learn English, are here illegally, take away our jobs and drive wages down, spread epidemics like tuberculosis and AIDS, are threats to our national security, and so on.

But the immigrant next door is nothing like the demonized and toxic caricature many of us submissively come to endorse. We know so much about what *we want from them*—shouldn't we know more about them? After all, we are a nation of immigrants, and many of our ancestors were immigrants who came to this country looking for opportunities, freedom, and safety.

That we are a nation of immigrants can hardly be denied. In 2006, the immigrant and children-of-immigrants population was estimated to be about 60 million or close to one-fifth of the total population of the United States.[1] Over two-thirds of the immigrants in this country are here legally. Among the estimated 12 million unauthorized immigrants in the country, two-thirds have been here for ten years or less, while 40 percent (4.4 million) of this population have been in the United States for five years or less.[2] What do we really know about the immigrants and their families living in our neighborhoods? What is the price we pay for not having a good understanding of the immigrant family next door?

The answers to these questions are embedded in history, politics, psychology, and economics. They are worth exploring, for as we learn about immigrant families, we begin to understand why many Americans adopt a limited and negative view of immigrant families in a context where state and federal goverments often favor criminalization and deportation over support for the development of

immigrant families and their integration into society. In this chapter, we attempt to help you see immigrant families differently. As the eminent family therapist Salvador Minuchin said, "We live our lives like chips in a kaleidoscope, always part of patterns that are larger than ourselves and somehow more than the sum of their parts . . . when we look at human beings from this perspective whole new possibilities open up for exploring behavior and alleviating pain."[3]

We have divided the chapter into three main sections. In the first, we present research on immigration, and in doing so we address some of the most insidious characterizations about immigrants in our country. Rather than focusing on specific immigrant groups, we talk about immigration issues as they relate to foreign-born people of various ethnicities living in the United States. In the second section, we focus on the immigration and acculturation processes, highlighting some of the strains experienced by immigrant families. Closer attention to the immigration process helps us appreciate the resources and strengths of immigrant families while giving us a better idea about the conditions that promote and hinder their development. We conclude this chapter with a description of immigrants' attitudes about the United States and their experiences in this country. If we are to know the immigrant next door better, it seems prudent that we listen to what they have to say about living next to us.

Research on Immigration

A large segment of the American public believes that there are too many immigrants in this country, that most immigrants are in this country illegally, and that the level of immigration should be reduced.[4] This perception appears to be fueled in part by the increased movement of immigrants to small towns and suburbs, where immigrants do not blend in as easily with the general population as they do in large urban areas of traditional immigration states like California, Texas, and New York.[5] The reality, however, is that the proportion of immigrants in this country is about the same as it has been for over 150 years. In 2007, there were 37.9 million immigrants in America (12.4 percent of the country's population).[6] Comparatively, immigrants made up 9.7 percent of the population in 1850 and 14.7 percent in 1910.[7] As a matter of perspective, "the rise in immigrant population from 1990 to 2000 was much less dramatic than the one from 1901 to 1910, when the population was just 92 million and the number of immigrants had jumped by 8.8 million."[8]

In terms of documentation status, over two-thirds of immigrants have proper legal documentation to work and live in this country.[9] Interestingly, documentation status is very discrepant between children and parents in immigrant families:

Under the age of six, 93 percent of children are citizens, but only 19 percent have one or both parents with citizen status.[10] Far more children are citizens than their parents.

Public preoccupation about the number of immigrants in this country is linked to an array of perceived detrimental effects of immigration on the well-being of the nation in the areas of health, mental health, civic life, work and the economy, education and language use, and crime. Not surprisingly, many in the public see immigrants as burdens to the country.[11] If there were fewer immigrants around, the logic goes the nation will be better off in these critical domains of life. However, research suggests these judgments to be based on incomplete or inaccurate information.

Health

According to health statistics, immigrants have a life span that is 3.4 years longer (80.0 compared to 76.6 years) than that of native-born people, they experience lower mortality rates, and they have better health statuses and behavioral outcomes.[12] Immigrant children are less likely than their native counterparts to experiment with illicit substances, engage in other risky behaviors, and be obese.[13]

Due to financial, cultural, linguistic, and documentation barriers (e.g. proper identification), immigrants have been shown to access health services at a lower rate. Although some see immigrant health insurance as a "taxpayer expense" because immigrant labor has "limited value," there is conclusive evidence to the contrary: Immigrant children cost $270 a year in health care, compared to $1,059 for native-born children.[14] Examination of health-care expenditures "refutes the assumption that immigrants represent a disproportionate financial burden on the US health care system."[15] For example, when immigrants made up 10 percent of the population in 1998, they only accounted for 7.9 percent of health-care costs. Additionally, immigrants without Social Security numbers contribute $8.5 billion a year in taxes toward Medicare and Social Security, which they are not eligible to redeem.

Mental Health

Researchers have yet to reach a consensus about the mental health status of immigrants compared with that of natives, especially after taking into consideration the toxic effects of poverty.[16] For both immigrant and native adults, poverty is the best predictor of mental health problems. Thus, the more financially strapped immigrants are, the more likely they are to experience mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. But data from studies of foreign-born

and first-generation immigrant teenagers suggest that foreign-born youth are more psychologically sound than their native peers. Although the journey of migration is difficult, many immigrant teens have the benefit of protective factors that promote better health, including higher levels of parental supervision, lower levels of parent-child conflicts, involvement in religious practices, and greater satisfaction with the support offered to them by relatives, friends, and significant others in their social network. Unfortunately, the protective power of some of these factors fades away during the acculturation process.[17]

Civic Life

Given the disproportionate amount of airtime occupied by anti-immigrant voices in television and radio outlets, it is hardly surprising to find people who think immigrants are bad for American society and that whatever contribution they may make to the quality of our civic life is minimal next to the damage they cause. The data, again, do not support this view. Over 45,000 immigrants are serving in active or reserve capacity with the military and over 26,000 recruits have been naturalized as citizens since September 11, 2001.[18] (The immigration process for undocumented servicemen and -women has been expedited under President Bush and through the proposed DREAM Act in Congress.) "America gave these men, and their families, home and hope and they reciprocated with distinguished service, exceptional leadership, and boundless patriotism."[19]

Immigrant citizens are very motivated to participate in the democratic system of voting, and nearly half of all Hispanic registered voters are foreign-born.[20] The Democratic presidential debate that aired in 2007 on Univision, a Spanish-language television network, drew substantially more viewers than debates aired on English-speaking networks around the same time. Matthew Dowd, chief pollster for President Bush, said in the *Wall Street Journal* that the Hispanic vote has grown 400 percent in the last twenty years.[21] When the House passed the "Sensenbrenner Bill" in 2005, branding undocumented immigrants as criminals, the following spring saw a huge mobilization and some of the "largest civic demonstrations in the U.S. in more than a generation"[22] and resulted in the alienation of the Hispanic community from the Republican Party.

Contribution to civic life can also be thought of in terms of how often families access the resources in their community and participate in functions and events. Although accurate reporting of these data is hard to obtain, some figures suggest that immigrants may be less likely than their native counterparts to volunteer in a religious, school, or community organization.[23] To be sure, the relative lack of involvement of immigrants in broader community life is not surprising when considering that poverty, demands of physical labor, cultural, linguistic, and

documentation barriers are formidable obstacles to civic engagement and disproportionately affect immigrant families in this country. When thinking about the civic engagement of immigrant families, however, it is also important to consider that significant numbers of immigrants continue to be actively engaged civically and politically in their native countries even years after immigrating to this country. Interestingly, research suggests that this group of immigrants often translates the skills, commitments, and networks they developed in their native countries into valuable resources for civic life in the United States.[24]

Work and the Economy

We are currently experiencing what researchers call a "bimodal migration wave," in which large numbers of immigrants have either low levels of education and work-related skills or are highly skilled and educated. Combined, both groups contribute $50 billion a year in human capital to the U.S. economy.[25] In the workplace, immigrants have frequently been met with barriers due, in part, to difficulties applying skills developed in their countries of origin to the working conditions in this country. This may explain why immigrants seem to earn less than natives; nearly 2 million immigrants earn less than the minimum wage, and the average yearly income in 2001 for a low-wage immigrant parent was $14,400,[26] almost $4 less per hour. A family is in poverty when it makes below 200 percent of the federally determined income level measured according to family size. In 2007, 40.1 percent of all immigrant families and 28 percent of all native families were in poverty.[27] Compared to native families, immigrant families are not as easily lifted from poverty by having an additional working parent in the home. In fact, there were double the number of two-parent immigrant families in poverty compared to two-parent native families in 1999 (22 percent and 44 percent respectively).[28] Thus, it seems reasonable to assert that wages rather than employment levels account for much of the income disparity between immigrant families and native families.

A second factor determining family income is education at the time of arrival. The current discrepancies in wages are best explained by significant differences in education levels, particularly at a time when recent waves of immigrants are less educated than their predecessors.[29] Immigrant families, in particular those starting at low-pay, entry-level positions, take ten to twenty years to earn good incomes, become homeowners, and catch up to their native counterparts. The poverty rate for given cohorts of immigrant families decreases incrementally over time. Some argue that children who come from disadvantaged schools and live in poor and minimally educated households—regardless of their aspirations or English fluency—will continue to bear the consequences of this profile.[30] Fortunately for these families, there appears to be negligible to no difference in wages

between documented and undocumented immigrants,[31] as nearly 96 percent of undocumented immigrant men are in the labor force.[32]

Some immigrants move up the economic ladder by starting their own small businesses. Recent census reports indicate that "immigrant entrepreneurs are the fastest-growing segment of small business owners today,"[33] outpacing non-immigrant business owners. In Los Angeles, the number of Hispanic-owned businesses increased by 700 percent in twenty years, outpacing Hispanic population growth at 200 percent.[34] Furthermore, immigrants do not tend to concentrate in a few occupational sectors, as compared to native-born workers.[35] The popular image of immigrant men as farm workers and women as housekeepers is a poor match for the significant spread between managerial, professional, technical, sales, administrative, service, laborer, and farming occupations among the 18.9 million foreign-born workers in the United States in 2002.

Some wonder if immigrants have adverse affects on the labor markets for native job seekers. Aviva Chomsky[36] alerts us to the fact that this question is based on the assumption that there is only a fixed number of jobs. In fact, increases in population create more demand for products, and thus for workers to make them, whereas decreases cause the shutting down of businesses, stores, schools, and hospitals. Historically, unemployment rates have fluctuated independently of immigration rates, including during the Depression of the 1930s, when very few immigrants arrived in America. Rather than insinuate cause and effect from coincidence, it is important to investigate factors that are related to both changes in immigration *and* changes in employment. Writes Chomsky, "the same global economic restructuring that exacerbated inequality in the United States [where the wealthiest 5 percent control 60 percent of the money] *also* contributed to increasing immigration."[37]

Recently, the President's office released an economic impact statement indicating that working immigrants make the market more competitive, helping raise native-born wages by up to 1.8 percent since 1990, and increasing total U.S. native-born wages by $30–$80 billion annually.[38] Succinctly, immigrants help the economy now, and are expected to contribute in positive ways in the future.

Education and Language Use

Four out of five immigrant families speak a language other than English at home.[39] Nonetheless, there are still notably high levels of English language use within immigrant families. For example, California census data show that more than 71 percent of Latino families and 89 percent of Asian families speak English very well or exclusively at home.[40] In spite of differences in the use of language at home, children of immigrant parents "receive grades in school that are equal

to or even higher" than non-immigrant peers.[41] In fact, children of immigrants account for a disproportionally large number of high-school valedictorians in this country.[42] Overall, the immigrant population is on a par with their native-born peers in rates of having a college degree (27.3 percent and 27.2 percent, respectively)[43] but is markedly behind in terms of high-school graduates in the workforce (64.5 percent and 92 percent, respectively).[44] Foreign-born students often have more favorable views about school than their peers and drop out of school less often—half as often in Miami and one-third as often in San Diego.[45]

Many might also be surprised to learn that, while immigrant children have lower verbal and reading achievement scores on standardized tests, these discrepancies fade away after considering factors such as the trajectory an immigrant family may have taken to arrive in the United States, language proficiency, and the quality of the schools they attend. We know that English-language proficiency is a strong predictor of scores on standardized tests, much more predictive than family factors.[46] We also know that more immigrant children compared to native-born children improve their English-language skills as they move into adolescence.[47] But higher levels of English-language proficiency do not shield immigrant children from the adverse effects of attending failing schools. Education experts argue that immigrant children often attend schools that not only obstruct learning and engagement but may be toxic to healthy learning and development, making the school itself "the single best predictor of academic achievement" for this group of children.[48] Schools have the potential to educate children in a way that complements their ethnic heritages as opposed to assuming that these heritages interfere with their learning. Additive, as opposed to subtractive schooling, can boost students' confidence and connect them with their school.[49]

Most ignored in the educational system are undocumented immigrant children. Without legal status, they can rarely complete basic schooling, apply to colleges, and find stable work. In fact, only 5 to 10 percent of undocumented high school graduates go on to college.[50] This has unintended consequences on the economy and sends a clear negative message to immigrant families about the importance of education for all in this society. Meanwhile, researchers have noted that school revenues would increase, and tax payments would go up if undocumented immigrant children were able to enter college.[51]

Crime

Analyses of crime in immigrant populations make it clear that anecdotal impressions of immigrants as criminals are not met with scientific evidence. "For every ethnic group without exception, incarceration rates among young men are lowest for immigrants, even those who are the least educated."[52] Interestingly,

these findings mirror the conclusions of a study commissioned over 100 years ago that evaluated and discredited the negative stereotypes of criminal immigrants and a crime-ridden society of immigrants.[53] The available data suggest that an influx of immigrants over the last three decades may have indeed contributed to *lower* crime rates, even in cities like Los Angeles, New York, and Miami that have larger-than-average immigrant populations. Without evidence to support the view of immigrants as criminals, we must wonder if ignorance, xenophobia, and nativism—the belief that native-born people are superior and more entitled than immigrants—are the true operating forces in myths such as these.

Immigration and Acculturation Processes

Immigration Process

The immigration process is one of separation, loss, dislocation, discovery, adaptation, integration, and growth. This is a process packed with excitement, ambiguity, possibility, and stress that requires a fair amount of flexibility and skill to navigate successfully. In addition to changes in socioeconomic status and cultural life, immigrant families must negotiate the differences between their native and host environments. Most often, these differences pertain to gender roles, the various expectations of multiple generations (i.e., grandparents, parents, children) in family life, differences in the pace of acculturation of various family members, and social isolation.[54] As is to be expected, immigrant families vary in their ability to meet these challenges.

Because children typically have fewer strings attached to specific cultural beliefs and practices and have greater access and opportunity to interact with their host culture, they tend to adapt more quickly to the new environment than their parents do. Often, immigrant parents respond to this discrepancy by rigidly holding on to ways of thinking and doing consistent with their cultures of origin. This causes discord and stress for family members attempting to find their way in the new culture. As youth spend time at school, develop social bonds, and undergo their own personal development, they often mirror and embrace the new while questioning and rejecting parts of the old culture. Adolescents in particular may question the utility of their parents' culture-based beliefs, values, and practices as they form individual identities and put pressure on their parents to conform to what they perceive to be the dominant ways of being in this country. Within this context, grandparents become "defenders of traditional values and preservers of the family's ethnic identity,"[55] often clashing with their acculturating grandchildren and putting additional pressure on parents to fulfill traditional cultural expectations.

Much of the discrepancy between an immigrant's new and old cultures rests on an oversimplified representation of what counts as traditional or normal family life in this country. "The use of monolithic images of the 'Normal American Family' as a stick against which all families are measured is pervasive in the family wars. . . ."[56] Inherent in this normalized image is a code regarding what the family can be—generally white, middle class, heterosexual, headed by a breadwinning dad, and a mother who cares for the children—and what values, norms and beliefs are acceptable—generally that families should be democratic, open, flexible, and forgiving. This image creates challenges for immigrant families that hold differing conceptions of family life. Problems arise when immigrant children internalize this ideal and when society isolates families who are different. The bridge between the immigrant family's lived reality and the prevailing family codes in this country consists of systems that allow immigrant families to maintain their traditions and values while experimenting and integrating new beliefs, values, and practices into their ways of being.

Often overlooked in the experience of immigrant families is their loss of major supportive social networks from their country of origin. Virtually all immigrant families are overwhelmed when they immigrate because the functions once taken on by extended family members and friends are now the work of the family and particularly the parents. "This increase in needs and reciprocal expectations takes place precisely while the [family member] is in turn most overloaded and less able to fulfill the other's need."[57] Because there are established connections between one's well-being and one's social network, it is understandable that immigrant parents and children will experience distress over this loss of network. Apart from relying on each other more, the challenge for many families is to reestablish a broader network of community participation. Moreover, support from host communities, positive attitudes toward immigrants, work opportunities, affordable housing, and a "general level of community wealth and support services" are crucial for immigrant families to successfully navigate this process.[58]

The above-mentioned pressures notwithstanding, the typical immigrant family appears to offer a supportive and caring environment for its members. Compared to native-born households, immigrants have been found to have higher marriage rates and lower divorce rates.[59] Greater marital harmony appears to be one of the reasons why children in immigrant families are 50 percent more likely than their native-born peers to be living with both parents.[60] The 2000 U.S. Census also shows that immigrant families with children tend to have larger household sizes. Grandparents, older siblings, and other relatives are commonly found in immigrant family homes. To be sure, an expanded family household offers greater opportunity for intimate bonds, social support, and adult supervision for children, but it can also lead to overcrowding, which is known to adversely affect

child development. "Nearly half of children in immigrant families live in overcrowded housing, compared to only 11% of children in native-born families."[61]

Acculturation

Should we encourage immigrants to let go of their native identities and adopt a more generic set of American cultural beliefs, values, and practices? If you believe this to be the case, you share what was once a popular view of the acculturation and assimilation process in the United States, which was commonly referred to as "the melting pot." This notion that immigrants eventually lose their cultural identity and fully adopt American values and ways of being has been shown to be both inaccurate and unhealthy for many families. Some refer to this process as "straight-line assimilation," whereby immigrants irrespective of cultural background learn to take on dominant American values and attitudes with similar results.[62] Instead, a growing number of immigration experts are now proponents of other approaches. Portes and Rumbaut describe the concept of "segmented assimilation," leading to three profiles that can exist within contemporary immigrant families.[63] The first is consonant acculturation, where children and their parents both become full parts of the mainstream at approximately the same pace. This is contrasted with dissonant acculturation, where the children and parents acculturate at different paces (typically the children acculturate much faster), and which may lead to intergenerational conflict. The third type is selective acculturation, where both familial generations adapt to aspects of the new culture and retain parts of their native culture. With this type of acculturation, there is little conflict between family members, and the children are often bilingual. Naturally, families that differ in education, age, social support, stress, income, cohesion, and other characteristics will fall into different types in this segmented model.[64] Particularly problematic is dissonant acculturation, where gaps in the family's adaptation to life in the United States can produce tensions and even put them into a trap of downward mobility.

John Berry examined the relationship between how people acculturate and how well they adapt to their host society.[65] Dividing immigrant youth into four clusters—integrated, national, ethnic, and diffuse—he found that integrated youth, who showed favorable affiliations toward their native and host societies, had the best adjustment in terms of psychological and sociocultural outcomes. On the other hand, diffuse youth—those with ambivalent and relatively weak native and host identities—had the poorest rates of adaptation. He found similar results at the family level: The soundest families were those that maintained their cultural heritage and identity and participated in the everyday life of the larger society. These findings suggest that policy makers and mental health professionals

ought to consider the benefits of integration over the rejection or singular preference for any one particular cultural orientation.

Moderate levels of acculturation appear to be protective for immigrant youth in most circumstances, but both high and low levels of acculturation put them at risk for substance abuse and mental health problems.[66] Moderately acculturated youth from immigrant families often do better psychologically, physically, and academically relative to their native-born peers, even those peers with the same socioeconomic and ethnic background.[67] Thus, contemporary thinking in this area suggests that it is important for the well-being of children in immigrant families to maintain some form of integrated, bicultural identity.

Interestingly, researchers have reported that the protective effects of acculturation decline over time. Referred to as "the paradox of assimilation,"[68] "the immigration paradox,"[69] or "the healthy migrant phenomenon,"[70] the issue is that there is a powerful connection between the number of years lived in this country and the catching up of immigrants to the same levels of risk that their American peers are exposed to. These risks include health problems, crime, drug use, depression, anxiety, and other factors. For example, as immigrant children adopt the high-fat diets that are popular in this country, they experience a sharp increase in obesity.[71] Similarly, in the area of education, it has been noted that "immigrant children become less willing to work hard in school the longer they are in this country."[72] Thus, it seems that while some aspects of acculturation—including American educational attainment and English language acquisition—are import predictors of successful families, other factors of the acculturation process may have negative consequences.

Immigrants' Perceptions of Life in the United States

The mismatch between public perceptions about immigrants, research data on immigration, and the many challenges faced by immigrant families as they integrate into American society gives us cause to wonder how immigrants experience life in the United States. Do they feel welcome in this country? Why, in spite of the many vicissitudes they experience and the pressures of anti-immigrant forces, do they stay? What do they think about American citizens? Fortunately for us a recent national survey of over 1,000 immigrants in the United States provides answers for these and many other interesting questions.[73] Here we highlight the findings of the study most relevant for the purposes of this chapter.

It turns out that the overwhelming majority of immigrants consider the United States a special place to be (80 percent) and report being relatively happy living in this country (96 percent). They value the economic opportunities afforded to them in our society (88 percent), our commitment to promoting women's rights

(68 percent), our democratic system of government (62 percent), and having the freedom to choose how to live their lives (40 percent). They consider our legal (67 percent), health care (67 percent), and education (60 percent) systems to be better than what many of them had in their countries of origin. About three-quarters of immigrants indicate that they want to make the United States their permanent home and approximately eight out of ten say that they think of themselves as Americans or as acting like Americans outside the home while keeping their own culture and traditions at home. This bicultural identity is reflected also in the finding that many immigrants keep close contact with family and friends in their country of origin (59 percent), send money back to relatives (44 percent), keep abreast of current events in their home country (47 percent), and hold dual citizenship (32 percent).

In terms of how they are treated by others, immigrants are somewhat more guarded in their judgments—a little over half (53 percent) believe that as a group immigrants are not treated well by Americans. The majority (68 percent) indicated that Americans are not nice to each other. As indicated by the authors of this report, this last finding is consistent with data from general population studies showing that many Americans believe lack of respect and rudeness are on the rise in this country. Interestingly, most immigrants (63 percent) in this survey report having been treated well by government immigration officials.

Concerning other issues raised earlier in this chapter—for example, education, English language use, work, and civic life—reports by immigrants are fairly consistent with other research data. For example, the majority of immigrants believe that they have an obligation to learn English (65 percent) and find that learning English is essential for their personal and economic prosperity (87 percent). Nearly half (47 percent) of those coming to the United States with limited English take classes to learn the language and say they can read and communicate well (49 percent). In terms of attitudes toward work, immigrants profess a strong work ethic with a solid majority (73 percent) indicating that it is very important to work and stay off welfare. In reference to civic life, many immigrants believe that it is very important to become a citizen (68 percent), to serve in the military (49 percent), and to volunteer for community service (47 percent). "For an overwhelming majority, their connection to the U.S. is neither tenuous nor solely economic."[74]

Concluding Remarks

It is now about 11:30 a.m. I (the first author) have been talking with Jenny for over an hour. She is so articulate and clear about who she is as an immigrant and as an American that I am left hoping that more people could listen to her and wonder what it would be like if we could find ways to include the voices of immigrants

in the national conversation about immigration in this country. Jenny has just been accepted to college in a city far away from her border hometown and far away from an abusive partner who did not see with good eyes her desire to go to school and become a professional. She told me that she had thought hard and long about what to study and had decided to become a lawyer.

> Frankly, I am better at the sciences. I was always good at math and science and for a while thought about studying to become a doctor or a nurse. But I see what is happening and have decided we all need more people fighting for us. I think as a lawyer I would be able to do that.

I think Jenny is right. But the fight is not only hers to fight. Now with the copies of my presentation ready, and reluctantly getting ready to go, I ask her if she would mind me sharing her story with others. She replies, "I don't know that there is anything special in my story—it is just like thousands of others. But if you think it would help someone, go ahead."

Shortly after this encounter with Jenny we received an invitation from the editor of this volume to write a chapter on immigration to be included in a book for college students. Rather than offering an academic treatise, we thought it would be better to try to loosen the grip that the current anti-immigrant climate holds on our collective imagination by providing readers with an opportunity to reflect about immigration from the interrelated perspectives of content, process, and worldview. Each of these perspectives is offered here as an antidote to myopic and demeaning characterizations of immigrants that are rampant in popular media outlets. Together, they offer us a better appreciation of the lived experience of our immigrant neighbors and their contribution to American society.

All of us are stakeholders in the well-being of immigrant families because they are part of our kaleidoscope: Together we eat in the same restaurants, work in the same offices, learn in the same schools, and worship in the same churches. If we agree to build a shared community, benefits abound: "The mastery of different languages, the ability to cross racial and ethnic boundaries, and a general resiliency associated with the ability to endure hardships and overcome obstacles will clearly be recognized as a new cultural capital that will be crucial for success in a modern diversified society, not a handicap."[75] Immigrant families do well and make significant contributions to our economic and community well-being when we offer them the minimal supports to so do. However, "[c]hoices to develop more empowering narratives are sorely limited by the larger culture's negative views of immigrants."[76] Consequences abound from these discriminatory processes as our nation's complex history of immigration has shown. Individuals who experience the greatest amounts of perceived discrimination also show the poorest

psychological and cultural adaptations.[77] Additionally, immigration stigma can cause decreased performance in multiple domains and problematic social interactions.[78] The very thing we come to fault is something we've created.

If the one shared hope among all stakeholders is that immigrant families will contribute positively to American society, then conditions and attitudes must align to reach that goal. Otherwise we risk ending up blaming the victim while watching our distorted views turn into self-fulfilling prophecies. The challenge is not easy, considering that the majority of national magazine covers published in the last four decades of the twentieth century portrayed overwhelmingly alarmist depictions of immigration[79] and that immigrants themselves do not have much of a voice or presence in our national conversation about immigration. With more accurate portrayals of immigrant families, we are hopeful that ordinary citizens, policy makers, and service providers will be better equipped to promote the well-being of the immigrant family next door.