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Educational Achievement, Language-Minority Students, and the New Second Generation

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The increase in immigration since 1965 has given rise to a record number of children who are raised in immigrant families. About one in every five individuals under 18 is either an immigrant or has parents who are immigrants. In spite of the importance of this topic, this group has been a neglected segment of the school population. This article reviews major factors that have contributed to the uneven absorption and educational achievement of the new second generation, who come primarily from Asia and Latin America. These factors include "external factors," such as economic opportunities, racial and ethnic status, and group reception, and "intrinsic factors," such as human and social capital, family structure, community organization, and cultural and linguistic patterns. The article concludes with suggestions for further research.

Between 1971 and 1998, approximately 19.4 million immigrants were admitted to the United States (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 1997, 1999). The large increase in contemporary immigration has given rise to a record number of children who are raised in immigrant families. Since the 1980s, a new generation of immigrants has populated the nation's schools. It is the fastest-growing and most ethnically diverse segment of America's child population. About one of every five individuals under 18 is either an immigrant or has parents who are immigrants. In 1997, there were 3 million foreign-born children under 18, and nearly 11 million U.S.-born children under 18 who were living with at least one foreign-born parent (Alba, Massey, and Rumbaut 1999). This population is certain to increase. The U.S. Bureau of the Census (cited in R. Schmid 2000) estimated that between 1999 and 2050, the total number of for-

eign-born Americans will more than double, from 26 million to 53.8 million, to make up 13 percent of the population .

In spite of the increasing number of children of recent immigrants, this group has been an underrepresented segment of the school population (Jensen and Chitose 1996; A. Portes and MacLeod 1996; P. Portes 1999). A content analysis of *Sociology of Education* also confirms this trend. Since 1980, less than 10 percent of the articles have dealt with this important part of the school population, and of those that have, most have appeared in the past five years. The study of immigrants and children of immigrants not only reveals new information about this new second generation, but provides essential information on theoretical issues, including the role of family status, family expectations, race and ethnicity, and English-language ability on individual performance. It is the children of this second generation who

will, as the first generation of American citizens, define the direction and viewpoints of the various ethnic communities. In this article, I review the sociological and educational literature, concentrating on the major factors that are influencing the educational attainment of the second generation.

Contemporary immigrants and their children are an exceptionally diverse population. Unlike the earlier wave of immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, who came primarily from eastern and southern Europe, post-1965 immigrants have come primarily from Asia and Latin America. According to the 1990 census, 59 percent of Latino American children and 90 percent of Asian American children are members of the first (often referred to as the 1.5 generation; see Rumbaut 1991) or second generation, compared to 6 percent of non-Latino African American children and 5 percent of non-Latino European American children. Since 1990, the number of school-age children in immigrant families has risen seven times faster than the number of school-age children in U.S.-born families. The total school-age population is projected to grow by more than 20 percent between 1990 to 2010. More than half this growth will be children of immigrants, increasing to about 22 percent of the school-age population (Fix and Passel 1994).

Recent studies have shown that economic and educational progress among immigrant groups is extremely uneven. Asian immigrants, on average, have fared better economically than have most Latino immigrants, particularly Mexicans. From 1970 to 1990, the relative earnings of Asian immigrants rose from 88 percent of those of native-born workers to 110 percent in 1990, while the relative earnings of Mexicans fell from 66 percent to 56 percent. Particularly among the unskilled, the earnings of immigrants have not kept up with those of the rest of the population. From 1970 to 1990, the earnings of unskilled immigrants fell sharply, from 94 percent to 63 percent of their native counterparts' earnings (Hao and Bonstead-Bruns 1998).

The educational gap among different immigrant groups is also substantial. In 1990, 74 percent of Mexicans immigrants versus 95 percent of natives and other immigrants aged

15-17 were in school (Hao and Bonstead-Bruns 1998). Reading and math scores varied significantly among different immigrant groups. In general, Asian students obtained higher scores than did Latino students, particularly Mexicans (Kao and Tienda 1995). Educational achievement is closely linked to remaining in school. In turn, school attainment is one of the best predictors of future economic success (Sewell and Hauser 1975). Since the second generation is a significant and growing part of the American school population, it is particularly important to review the factors that contribute to gaps in the educational achievement among them. Only when these factors are understood will it be possible to design policies to improve the achievement of all children, whether they come from native or immigrant backgrounds.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The progress of today's second generation appears to be related to the human and financial capital that their parents brought with them from the home country and the ways in which they are able to implement these resources in the United States. Factors, such as class background, cultural patterns, family expectations, language ability, and school segregation and ethnic discrimination, as well as the "context of the reception" (Rumbaut 1995:49) also play an important role in school achievement. Many authors have pointed to the importance of social capital, which is defined as social relationships from which an individual is potentially able to derive various types of institutional resources and support (A. Portes 1998; Rumbaut 1995; Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch 1995; Zhou 1997; Zhou and Bankston 1998). Academic achievement and its relationship to the sector of American society that a particular immigrant group will assimilate to is a question of extreme importance today. A. Portes and Zhou (1993) observed that instead of a relatively uniform "mainstream" whose mores and prejudices dictate a common path of integration, today several distinct forms of adaptation are likely. The first replicates the time-honored portrayal of growing accultura-

tion and parallel integration into the white middle class. The second leads straight in the opposite direction to permanent poverty and assimilation to the underclass. And the third associates rapid economic advancement with the deliberate preservation of the immigrant community's values and tight solidarity.

This article evaluates the present state of knowledge with respect to the new second generation and academic success and suggests further areas of study. It is divided into four main sections. The first section focuses on a socioeconomic analysis of the extent to which family background explains the differences in academic achievement among the new second generation of students from various immigrant groups. The second part examines the sociocultural perspective in explaining why some second-generation students are more successful in American schools than are others. Specifically, it looks at the differences in cultural expectations and the context of reception. In this perspective, attitudes and behaviors of the immigrant group and the dominant society contribute to students' success in school and influence educational achievement. Cultural values are strongly affected by the reception of the dominant culture. The third section examines language ability and the important role it plays in school achievement and the relationship between gender and bilingualism. The final section identifies gaps in the literature and presents suggestions for further research on the new second generation.

SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS AND EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

The influence of family income, parental occupation, and family structure has been analyzed in both the educational and social stratification literatures. Status-attainment research has established that among native children, their parents' socioeconomic status (SES) has a strong and positive effect on children's achievement (see Blau and Duncan 1967; Featherman and Hauser 1978; Sewell and Hauser 1975). Children whose parents are better educated, make more money, have

higher-status jobs, and live in two-parent families tend to attain higher levels of education than do other children.

Human capital theory interprets the correlation between higher SES and educational achievement in a slightly different way. According to this perspective, parents make choices about how much time and other resources to invest in their children on the basis of their objectives, resources, and constraints (Haveman and Wolfe 1994). These investment decisions affect the students' taste for education (preferences) and cognitive skills (human capital), which, in turn, affect their educational success. According to a four-year study of the second generation in the Miami-Dade (Florida) and San Diego (California) school systems, a more cohesive, stable, and resourceful home environment leads to higher educational attainment (Alba et al. 1999). In these respects, the findings on children of immigrants are identical to those on native-born children (A. Portes and MacLeod 1996; Steinberg, Blinde, and Chan 1984; Warren 1996). Children who come from intact immigrant families in which both parents are present have higher grade point averages, lower dropout rates, and higher aspirations than do children who are raised in stepfamilies or single-parent families. Similar patterns were found to be evident for indicators of SES, such as parental education, homeownership, and poverty (Alba et al. 1999).

Empirical evidence suggests that socioeconomic factors can explain the generally low educational achievement of the new second generation of Mexican American students. Using data from the 1990 Public Use Micro Samples, Warren (1996), in his study of educational inequality among white and Mexican-origin adolescents in the Southwest, found that family background factors do the most to explain the educationally disadvantaged position of Mexican-origin adolescents relative to non-Latino white adolescents, whereas English-language ability and migration history do relatively little. However, even after SES, migration history, and language ability are taken into account, adolescents of Mexican origin are still at an educational disadvantage relative to their white counterparts

in the final years of high school. Kao and Tienda (1995), using national data, also found that SES provided the best explanation of the difference between grades and test scores between Latino immigrants and native students.

The low educational achievement of Latinos is far more complex than has often been painted. The latest U.S. government figures, covering the 1994–95 academic year, indicated that Latino students have a higher dropout rate than do either white or black students. The dropout rate is defined as the proportion of young adults (aged 16 to 24) who are not enrolled in a high school program and who have not completed high school. During the 1994–95 school year, 30 percent of Latino young adults, compared to 8.6 percent of non-Hispanic white young adults and 12.1 percent of non-Latino black young adults were classified as dropouts (McMillen, Kaufman, and Klein 1997).

Among Latino adults, dropout rates include many individuals who never enrolled in school. Several studies have shown that the relatively low in-school participation of high school-age Mexican immigrants is due primarily to their not "dropping in" to school in the first place, rather than to their "dropping out" of school. About one-third of the 30 percent dropout rate for Latino young adults is due to nonenrollees. The true dropout figure is about 20 percent. In 1990, one out of every four immigrants from Mexico in the 15–17 age group was not in school. By age 15, Mexican immigrants had already been out of school in Mexico for two years, on average (McMillen et al. 1997). The high rate of dropouts among Latinos is related primarily to economic factors. Rumberger (1983) found that among Latino male dropouts, only 4 percent versus 8 percent of male non-Latino white students said that the reason for dropping out was "poor performance in school." Economic reasons were given by 38 percent of the Latino students compared to 22 percent of the non-Hispanic white students.

Several factors have been identified as predictors of dropping out among Latino students, including the inability to speak English, low socioeconomic class, the presence of only one parent, recent immigration, and the lack

of a family support system (in terms of monitoring homework). When these factors are controlled among racial and ethnic groups, no difference is found in the dropout rates of Latinos and other groups. The stark reality is that the economic conditions of Latino children are much more likely than those of other children to be dire. Approximately 40 percent of Latino children live in poverty, compared to 15 percent of non-Latino white children, and only 45 percent live with parents who have completed high school, compared to 81 percent of non-Hispanic white children. Only 68 percent live with both parents, compared to 81 percent of non-Latino white children (Rumberger 1991, 1995).

In addition, generation has played a significant, if conflicting, role in predicting educational outcomes. Rong and Grant (1992) found a positive association between years of education and generation for Latinos. Yet, generation may also play a negative role in affecting students' outcomes. Controlling for SES narrowed but did not close the gap between the chances of graduating from high school of U.S.-born and Mexican-born students of Mexican origin (Warren 1996). By differentiating Mexicans not only by their place of birth, but by their parents' place of birth, Wojtkiewicz and Donato (1995) found important differences among U.S.-born Mexicans with U.S.-born parents and U.S.-born Mexicans with parents who were born in Mexico; those whose two parents were foreign born had significantly higher chances of completing high school than did those whose two parents were U.S. born. Wojtkiewicz and Donato (1995) observed that although U.S.-born Mexican students had high school graduation rates that were comparable to whites', this finding masked a strong difference according to the parents' birthplace. Other studies have confirmed this finding. Rumberger (1995) found that second-generation Mexican Americans were less likely to drop out than were their third-generation counterparts, even though their SES was, on average, lower. Driscoll's (1999) study of immigrant and native Latino youths also found that U.S.-born students of U.S.-born parents were more than twice as likely to drop out of high school as were U.S.-born

students with foreign-born parents. Furthermore, the third-generation sophomores in her sample were almost three times as likely to drop out as were the immigrant sophomores.

The tensions between different paths of integration were analyzed in Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco's (1995) comparison of recent Mexican immigrants with U.S.-born Mexican Americans. According to the authors, who used primarily qualitative data, the recent immigrants in their sample often had a "dual frame of reference," a dual orientation that contrasted their previous lives before migration to their current lives. Such a frame of reference enabled the immigrants to believe that their lives in the United States were markedly better than the lives they left behind. However, their children, who did not have access to a dual frame of reference, did not think that their current status was better; rather, they saw themselves as marginalized in comparison with the dominant culture. They seemed to identify with the "dominant American paradigm of adolescent ambivalence" (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco's 1995:188). Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco concluded that Mexican youths in Mexico and recent Mexican immigrants are comparatively more achievement oriented than are second-generation Mexicans and white American adolescents.

In general, the families' ability to invest in their children's education is limited by their economic, social, and human capital resources. Asian American students' performance is enhanced by their SES. In an analysis of Asians, Latinos, African Americans and whites, Blair and Legazpi (1999) found that social class was the strongest predictor of academic performance for all the groups. Overall, they concluded that Asian American students' academic success can be attributed to a combination of both cultural and class-related attributes, but the effects of the families' SES are the stronger of the two sets of predictors. Much of the educational success of Asian American children in the United States can be attributed to their relatively high SES (Kao 1995). Asian Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, and Korean American adults surpass whites in average educational attain-

ment (Hsia 1988). In California and Florida, the second-generation Haitian, Mexican, Vietnamese, and Cuban students studied by A. Portes and MacLeod (1996) were heavily influenced by their families' SES and by the average socioeconomic levels of their schools. The national background of the new second generation also played a significant independent role.

In contrast, there is a body of literature that questions whether differences in SES are sufficient to explain the large gap in educational achievement among Latino American and Asian students. For example, Rumbaut (1995) found that first- and second-generation Mexican American students had significantly lower grades and test scores than did other immigrant students even after differences in English ability and family SES were controlled. Fejgin (1995) also reported that even when family income and parental educational levels were held constant, Jewish and Asian students performed academically better than did other students. Thus, the socioeconomic approach does not account for all the variation in the academic performance of racial-ethnic groups. In a meta-analysis of more than 200 studies from the late 1970s and early 1980s, White (1982) found that social class accounted for only about 5 percent of the variance in performance.

A SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Even after class differences are eliminated, according to this perspective significant differences in intellectual achievement remain. In a sociocultural perspective, school performance can be explained more fully in terms of factors related to the cultures of various ethnic groups (Fejgin 1995; Ogbu 1992; Rumberger and Larson 1998, Zhou and Bankston 1998) and the context of the groups' reception in the United States. Among children of immigrants, there are large differences by national origin. Alba et al. (1999) observed that these differences portend a significant ethnic segmentation of socioeconomic trajectories as youths make their transition into the adult labor force

Several theories have been proposed to

explain why some, notably Asian, groups have succeeded to a greater degree than most Latino groups, even when parents' SES and the quality and location of the schools the students attend are controlled. Ogbu (1991, 1992) and Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi (1986) classified ethnic and national-origin immigrant groups into two types. The first group, called "voluntary minorities," included European Americans and recent Asian Americans, who came to the United States voluntarily. The second group, labeled "involuntary minorities," consisted of African Americans and early Mexican Americans, who were brought to the United States against their will, either through forced immigration or domination. Because of their different reception and treatment in the United States, these groups have had different trajectories with respect to integration in the labor market and the success of their children. They also have different identities that have aided or impeded their success, which is conditioned on their treatment in the society. As Ogbu (1992:9) noted:

Voluntary minorities seem to bring to the United States a sense of who they are from their homeland and seem to retain this different but non-oppositional social identity, at least during the first generation. Involuntary minorities, in contrast, develop a new sense of social or collective identity that is in opposition to the new social identity of the dominant group after they have become subordinated. They do so in response to their treatment by White Americans in economic, social, psychological, cultural, and language domains.

Whereas voluntary immigrants and their children do not perceive learning the attitudes and behaviors required for school success as threatening and generally encompass these behaviors, involuntary minorities often see these same behaviors in a negative light. Ogbu (1987, 1991) concluded that voluntary immigrant groups frequently promoted upward mobility and achieved this goal by placing a high value on education. Ogbu's (1989) research on Chinese American students in Oakland, California, found that in spite of cultural and language differences and relatively low SES, the students maintained high grade point averages. Cultural values,

such as a tradition of respect for teachers, may also have contributed to the positive value they placed on education (Zhou 1997). "Accommodation and acculturation without assimilation" also led to the success of the U.S.-born Punjabi children in Gibson's (1998) study in spite of their parents' relatively low SES. The Punjabi parents wanted their children to acquire competence in the dominant culture but not at the expense of their Indian identity. Cultural values aided the academic success of the Punjabi children. The children became skillful in the dominant culture, but at the same time held strongly to their ethnic identity.

On the other hand, involuntary minorities, according to Ogbu (1992), may be unable or unwilling to separate their attitudes and behaviors from other symbols of assimilation to the dominant white majority and hence may view success in school as "selling out" to the dominant culture. Although Ogbu's (1992) dichotomy between voluntary and involuntary minorities appears to fit Asians and Cubans as opposed to African Americans, recent Mexican Americans present a more difficult case. Most post-1965 Mexicans have arrived voluntarily in the United States.

Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi (1986) argued that Mexican Americans tend to behave more like involuntary minorities. Because their treatment is more like native-born Mexican Americans, who have been subject to considerable discrimination, they do not have the same expectations as do other voluntary minorities. One problem with this theory is that it fails to differentiate between Mexican immigrants who come with high aspirations for educational success and those who equate academic success with giving up their ethnic identity to the dominant group.

P. Portes's (1999) analysis of data collected by the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS), representing 77 nationalities in the Miami-Fort Lauderdale (Florida) and San Diego (California) areas (see A. Portes and Schauffler 1996, Rumbaut 1996) found that the influence of cultural background remained and could not be disaggregated by key demographic, SES, and sociopsychological factors. However, P. Portes observed that the two groups who were found to excel in

American schools, Asians and Cubans, have more established inroads in the community and therefore may have been able to provide greater social and cognitive support. The lowest achievers, Mexicans and Haitians, were from groups that had the least support, encountered language problems in school, and felt most unwelcome by the mainstream. One unresearched issue concerning Mexicans and Haitians is the impact of parents' illegal status on children's achievements.

A. Portes and MacLeod (1996) refined the sociocultural theory, also emphasizing the importance of social incorporation and the context of reception in the United States (see also A. Portes and Rumbaut 1996). They observed that the Cuban and Vietnamese groups were products of communist takeovers in their respective countries, and most of the original members were political refugees and hence were treated sympathetically and received various forms of federal assistance. The Cubans and Vietnamese were able to use governmental and private resources to create solidarity and entrepreneurial communities. They tend to live in close-knit communities, in which academic achievement is encouraged. Cuban and Vietnamese immigrants are optimistic about their children's chances of attending college and have high expectations for their children.

The conditions of Haitian and Mexican communities, who are primarily "economic" immigrants, are quite different from the "political" immigrants, such as the Cubans and Vietnamese). The Haitian and Mexican communities contain a large number of unauthorized immigrants and thus have been subject to deportations, and they have been less sympathetically received than the Cubans and Vietnamese. Unlike the Cubans, the Haitians were routinely denied refugee status, and Mexican immigrants, especially in California, have often experienced pervasive discrimination even when they have entered the United States legally. Neither Haitians nor Mexicans are eligible for federal assistance granted to Southeast Asian refugees. Because of the marginal jobs both groups tend to hold and their often-disputed status, Mexicans and Haitians have a more difficult time maintaining cohesive communities. They are also

deprived of the economic subsidies granted to legal refugees.

The differences between the academic success of these four national groups may give rise to invidious comparisons of their cultures and the success of the second generation. A. Portes and MacLeod (1996) cautioned against this conclusion. They observed that "the factors that account for the significant differences among these groups have to do with the human capital that immigrants bring with them from their countries of origin and the social context that receives them and shapes their adaptation in the United States" (p. 271). Inequalities in the situation of various immigrant national-origin groups influence the academic success of the new second generation, indicating that both class and ethnic privilege are transmitted from generation to generation.

Zhou and Bankston's (1998) book embodies the sociocultural perspective. The authors argued that ethnic-immigrant children who remain close to their families' culture do better than those who acculturate more rapidly. In his first-person account of Versailles Village, a poor community in New Orleans, Bankston (1997) analyzed how the immigrant community serves as an integrating device for second-generation Vietnamese youths, demonstrating how a close identification with being Vietnamese is highly associated with success in local public schools. Zhou and Bankston found strong associations among measures of Vietnamese language proficiency; ethnic identification; association with same-race peers; and such values as respect for elders, obedience, and belief in hard work that they attributed to the Vietnamese culture.

Further evidence of sociocultural influences was presented in Fejgin's (1995) study of Jewish and Asian students, which found that Jewish and Asian students performed better than did other students from similar socioeconomic backgrounds. Fejgin concluded that racial-ethnic differences in school performance "should not be reduced to class differences. Different ethnic groups, even within the White category that we researchers tend to view as unitary, have distinct values and attitudes related to schoolwork and use different socialization patterns to encourage or

discourage academic performance" (p. 28). The findings on the salience of cultural traits appear to hold true for both white ethnic groups and racial minorities in the United States. In a study of the Irish, Italian, Jewish, and African Americans in Providence, Rhode Island, Perlman (1988) found that even when family background was held constant, ethnic differences in levels of schooling and economic attainment persisted in the second and later generations.

The sociocultural approach places major emphasis on the values and cultural baggage that interact with the society's reception of new immigrant groups. According to Goyette and Xie (1999), the socioeconomic approach is unsatisfactory as a general framework for explaining the educational achievement of Asian American children. To explain why distinct Asian American groups have higher academic expectations than do whites, they analyzed three factors: socioeconomic and background characteristics, demonstrated academic ability, and parents' high expectations. They found that the explanatory power of the three sets of factors varied across different Asian groups. Socioeconomic factors explained much of the difference between the educational expectations of well-assimilated Asian groups, like Filipinos, Japanese, and South Asians, but none of the difference in the expectations of the Chinese, Koreans, and Southeast Asians. Ability explained some of the high expectations of the Chinese, Koreans, and Southeast Asians, but none of those of the Filipinos or Japanese. Perhaps the most significant finding by Goyette and Xie was that parental expectations play an important role in explaining the Asian-white gap for all the major Asian national groups.

An important and largely unanswered question is to what degree "segmented assimilation" is a new phenomenon. Socioeconomic class, cultural values, structural constraints, and societal reception appear to have played an important role in each new wave of immigrants and their children. These segmented educational aspirations and performance are not recent, especially for newcomers from rural and less privileged backgrounds. Rothstein (1998:102-03) observed:

Test after test in the 1920s found that Italian immigrant students had an average IQ of about 85, compared to an average for native-born students of 102. . . . The challenge of educating Italian immigrant children was so severe that New York established its first special education classes to confront it. A 1921 survey disclosed half of all special education children in New York had Italian-born fathers.

A. Portes and Zhou (1993) argued that how the first generation adapts to living in the United States creates differential opportunities and social capital in the form of ethnic jobs, networks, and values that, in turn, create different types of pulls on the second generation. Among immigrant groups who face societal discrimination and reside in close proximity to American minorities, the second generation is more likely to develop the "adversarial stance" that American minorities, such as poor African Americans and Latinos, hold toward the dominant white society. For some groups, the different pulls inherent in the second generation are less clear. The distinctiveness of skin color, especially of those who are deemed phenotypically black, may exert a powerful influence on assimilation and achievement in school. Murguía and Telles (1996) found that the lightest skin-toned and most European quarter of the Mexican American population had about 1.5 more years of schooling than did the darker and more Indian-looking majority. These differences in schooling persisted when social economic factors were controlled.

In her analysis of West Indians in the United States, Waters (1999) showed how quickly structure affects culture. "Within one generation, structured racism—the institutional racism of substandard schools, racially segregated and disinvested neighborhoods, and the discrimination of employers"—combined with "interpersonal racism" have often given way to "disinvestment" and oppositional identities in the second generation (Waters 1999:335). It remains to be seen how long the ethnic-identified second generation will link themselves with their parents' birthplace and culture. In the end, this identification may be more dependent on their reception by the dominant white society than on their own judgments.

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

Before I examine how language itself influences academic achievement, I discuss the intersection of English proficiency with other factors. Language, coupled with socioeconomic background and marginal schools, influences the low educational attainment of many limited English proficient (LEP) students. Racial and ethnic segregation and poor and underfunded urban schools, rather than the lack of desire to learn English, are major factors in insufficient English communication skills and low educational attainment. In several studies, Lopez (1976, 1996) found a strong association between Spanish fluency and low SES.

Crawford (1997:9) summarized the difficult odds that recent immigrant students and LEP children of immigrant parents must overcome. Latino students are more segregated than any other ethnic or racial group of students, including African Americans. In 1991–92, 73 percent of Latino children attended elementary and secondary schools with predominantly minority enrollments, an increase from 55 percent in 1968–69. Over a third of Latinos went to schools where more than 9 out of 10 students were minorities, up from 23 percent a generation earlier. LEP children, on average, are even more segregated. In 1991–92, 55 percent of Latino students attended schools with 91–100 percent minority enrollments, compared with 19 percent of other language minorities and 5 percent of native English speakers. During the same academic year, about half the LEP Latino first-grade students were in high-poverty schools, in comparison to 8 percent of Asian first graders (see also Bennici and Strang 1995; Orfield et al. 1993).

Another problem that many language minority students face is overrepresentation in special education classes. Teachers and administrators often confuse the consequences of the lack of English proficiency with underachievement, learning difficulties, lack of attention in class, and language disorders. Latino students who were labeled "language disabled" actually lost ground in IQ tests and other achievement tests after three

years in special education classes (Crawford 1997, Ortiz 1992).

LEP students who need help learning English are often handicapped by the lack of qualified teachers. Between 22 and 30 percent of LEP children do not receive any language assistance whatsoever. Furthermore, many classroom teachers are inadequately prepared to teach these students. According to the 1995 National Education Goals Panel, 40 percent of American teachers had LEP students in their classrooms in 1994, but only 29 percent had received any training in serving LEP students. The inadequate supply of bilingual and English as a second language teachers has forced many schools to rely on aides whose only qualification is the ability to speak a language other than English. In 1991–92, almost 60 percent of LEP children in high-poverty schools nationwide were taught English reading by such paraprofessionals, most of whom had no education past high school (Crawford 1997; Moss and Puma 1995). More than half the minority-language speakers and more than a third of those who reported some difficulty in English were born in the United States (Fix and Passel 1994).

In her participant observation study of a California high school with numerous first- and second-generation immigrant adolescents, Olsen (1997) noted how politics, rather than educational research, have shaped the education of LEP students. Despite the fact that research has established that students learn best in a language they can comprehend, the public's demands to assimilate immigrants as quickly as possible and fear that the nation cannot absorb more diversity have limited the use of second languages in the public schools (see also C. Schmid 2001).

It should not be surprising that LEP students are less successful than are those with better English language skills (Warren 1996). Some studies, however, have found that once family background and migration history are taken into consideration, English-language ability has only minor significance (Fligstein and Fernandez 1985; Kao and Tienda 1995; Kennedy and Park 1994). Warren (1996), for example, found that when socioeconomic factors and migration were controlled, more

English-ability had statistically significant effects only in the transition from the 9th to the 10th grade.

On the whole, the new second and subsequent generations have learned English rapidly (A. Portes and Hao 1998; A. Portes and Rumbaut 1996; C. Schmid 2001). The CILS, discussed earlier, found a near-universal knowledge of English (A. Portes and Hao 1998). In 1992, 73 percent of the children in the CILS preferred to speak English than their parents' native tongue, including 64 percent of the foreign-born and 81 percent of the U.S.-born youths. However, over 90 percent of the second-generation children reported speaking a language other than English at home, primarily with their parents. By 1995–96, when the students were in high school, the percentage who preferred English had increased dramatically to 88 percent, including 83 percent of the foreign born and 93 percent of the U.S. born (Alba et al. 1999).

Latin groups were positively associated with foreign language proficiency. Mexican Americans were the most mother-tongue retentive group. However, even among this group, language assimilation proceeded at a rapid pace. In 1992, only 32 percent of the Mexican-born children preferred English to Spanish, but by 1995–96, that number doubled to 61 percent. In contrast, most Asian immigrant groups except the Vietnamese had less language proficiency in their parents' language. For all nationality groups, the longer a child lived in the United States, the weaker his or her command of the parents' language, regardless of social class and other background characteristics. Bilingualism was more likely among girls; students who had coethnic friendships; and those who came from intact, non-English-speaking families (Alba et al. 1999; A. Portes and Hao 1998).

Even highly educated parents who make a conscious effort to transfer Spanish to their children do not stand much of a chance of their children retaining Spanish. Nativist fears that Spanish will surpass English are entirely unfounded. The results of the study indicate that only in places where immigrant groups concentrate and manage to sustain a diversified economic and cultural presence will language survive past the first generation. "In

the absence of policies promoting bilingualism, even these enclaves will be engulfed, in all probability, in the course of two or three generations" (A. Portes and Schaufli 1996:29). What is at risk is not English, but the preservation of some fluency in the immigrants' home languages.

In contrast to LEP students, most evidence from studies in the United States, Canada, and other societies points to the positive association of fluent bilingualism with intellectual development (see Hakuta 1986; Peal and Lambert 1962). In their study of a Vietnamese community in New Orleans, Zhou and Bankston (1998; see also Bankston and Zhou 1995) discovered a strong relationship between average grades and native language proficiency. Second-generation Vietnamese Americans who could read and write Vietnamese well were much more likely (46.8 percent) to report receiving top grades than were those who were less fluent in their parents' native tongue. Among those who could read and write only fairly well, just 25 percent reported being "A" students. For those who could not read or write Vietnamese, a mere 8.2 percent reported being "A" students. Zhou and Bankston also found that the more fluent the students were in Vietnamese, the more time they spent on homework.

In the heat of the campaign against bilingual education in California, it was often suggested that speaking two languages was an important source of academic failure among Mexican Americans (C. Schmid 2001). Bilingual education is certainly not the cause of the high dropout rate among Latinos. At least two recent studies have shown that maintenance of the Spanish language and culture in addition to English either does not make a difference in the dropout rate or may actually lower it. In their analysis of 1994-95 data McMillen et al. (1997) found that there was no difference in the dropout rates of those who spoke Spanish at home (20.3 percent) and those who spoke English at home (17.5 percent). In a study of 15,000 high school students in San Diego, Rumbaut (1995) observed that the group that was classified as bilingual (fluent in both English and another language) actually had better grades and a slightly lower dropout rate than the

group that was monolingual in English. This was the case even though the parents of the English-only students were of a higher SES than were the parents of the bilingual students.

Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch (1995) concluded that highly bilingual working-class Latino students have an advantage over both LEP and English-dominant students in gaining access to adult social capital. They found that bilinguals had significantly higher grades and educational expectations in spite of lower SES than did English-dominant students. The fluent English proficient (FEP) students were better able to acquire the institutional support necessary for school success and social mobility.

The failure to distinguish between LEP and FEP students obscures the benefit of bilingualism. Evidence from the CILS indicated that the FEPs outperformed both the LEPs and the English monolinguals. After other predictors were controlled for, the FEPs retained a strong advantage over both groups; they scored higher on standardized reading and mathematics tests, and their grade point averages were significantly higher. Among the second-generation youths in the sample, less than a third were fluent in their parents' tongue and English. Zhou and Bankston (1998) found similar results; the second-generation Vietnamese in their study who were fluent in the ethnic language and English showed greater overall scholastic achievement.

Not all immigrant children gain from bilingualism. Lopez (1976) reported that Spanish usage depressed educational achievement among Chicanos. Mouw and Xie (1999) found no evidence that FEPs did better than students who were fluent only in English. Their analysis failed to find support for either the "cognitive perspective" or the "cultural perspective." The cognitive perspective contends that bilingualism is beneficial to mental development because it allows children to switch easily between two languages and thus stimulates cognitive development (Cummins 1977, Peal and Lambert 1962). The cultural perspective holds that being fluent in the parents' language and English allows immigrants a means of resisting unwanted assimilation and connects them to

a system of ethnic supports that encourages academic performance (Bankston and Zhou 1995, Zhou and Bankston 1998). Mouw and Xie's research contradicted both these models. Rather, their data supported a "transitional theory" of bilingualism. Mouw and Xie concluded that fluent bilingualism has a statistically significant effect on academic achievement only when the parents have yet to complete their assimilation to English. These contradictory results raise important questions about the value of bilingualism and academic success among the children of immigrants that warrant more research.

Gender appears to be a significant factor that is often ignored in studies of language retention. Sex roles also influence language maintenance in the new second generation. Data from the CILS found that female students are more likely than male students to be fluent in both their parents' native language and English (A. Portes and Hao 1998). Little explanation, however, was given for this finding. Are girls more protected than boys in ethnic families, and does this protection also promote bilingualism?

In a study of settlement activities in the Los Angeles area, Valenzuela (1999) found that gender interacts with immigration among Mexican American children. That is, the girls in immigrant households were more likely to serve as translators, mediators, and surrogate parents than were the boys and were rewarded with a modicum of independence for performing these roles. These roles also brought the girls into closer contact with their Spanish-speaking parents and relatives and thus promoted more fluent bilingualism among them than among the boys.

The findings of two California studies suggested that gender is an important factor in school success among Mexican Americans. Rumberger and Larson (1998) found that female Mexican American students earned higher academic grades than did their male counterparts in both middle school and high school in an urban Los Angeles school district. Gibson (1998) found that two-thirds of all the Mexican American girls but only half the Mexican American boys in a rural, agricultural area in California graduated from high school. The differences were even more striking

ing when both gender and generation were analyzed: 69 percent of the third-generation Mexican American girls, compared to just 35 percent of the third-generation boys, finished high school in 1995. Furthermore, twice as many Mexican American boys as girls were placed in remedial math and/or remedial English classes in the ninth grade. Only 39 percent of the students in the remedial tracks completed high school. These students, according to Gibson, are the ones who tend to develop an oppositional or adversarial relationship with their teachers.

In some immigrant groups, male students experienced considerably more academic success and freedom than did female students. Although most Punjabi students did much better than indicated by their families' SES, their school records revealed gender differences in the college preparatory courses they took (Gibson 1998). While most of the male Punjabi students expected to attend four-year colleges, their female counterparts expected to attend either two-year colleges or to terminate their education directly after high school. Zhou and Bankston (1998), in their study of the Vietnamese enclave in New Orleans, also revealed the personal costs, especially for girls, of being caught in dense networks of expectations in which social control is all encompassing. Thus, an understanding of gender is critical both to an understanding of school success and to the trajectory between and within the second generation.

As the number of children who speak languages other than English swells the public schools, questions related to the positive or negative effects of bilingualism will take on greater urgency. Education in the United States strongly encourages immigrant children to lose their fluency in the languages they speak at home. This policy is in agreement with nativist interests but is at odds with the interests of individuals and a global economy (A. Portes and Hao 1998).

CONCLUSION

Several hypotheses have been put forth in the literature to explain different patterns of academic performance among the new second

generation. Overall, though, the relationship between socioeconomic class, cultural characteristics, social reception, and language proficiency has not been resolved. More research is needed on the relationship between external and internal factors and the academic performance of the second generation. External factors include racial and gender stratification, economic opportunities, and group reception. Factors intrinsic to the groups encompass human and social capital, family structure, community organization, and cultural patterns. The focus on these two sets of factors will shed new light on the complex process of assimilation in the second generation.

Research on the new second generation has revealed that social class heavily influences the academic success of the sons and daughters of immigrants. In this respect, there are few differences between these children of immigrants and those of the former waves of immigrants at the beginning of the 20th century or the native populations. Preliminary evidence has challenged some of the earlier understandings of the steps that children of immigrants needed to follow to do well in school (Rumbaut 1996). The notion that the new second generation must completely shed their old cultures and languages and remove themselves from their ethnic enclaves to be academically and economically successful is not supported in the literature. The children of immigrants who remain strongly anchored in their ethnic cultures and communities and acquire fluency in both the ethnic and English languages are, in many instances, able to surpass the third generation who are usually English dominant.

Students who are most at risk of academic failure are from poor and minority backgrounds that view schooling as an alienating force that provides unequal opportunities. These students, often from Mexican and other Latino backgrounds (Cubans Americans are an exception), believe that their identities and languages are undermined or depreciated. The concept of segmented assimilation provides an alternative to understanding the different trajectories of children of immigrants. According to A. Portes (1997:818), "the experiences of the present second gen-

eration cannot be inferred from those of children of earlier European immigrations . . . there are reasons to doubt that a similarly benign and straightforward course will be followed by members of today's second generation." The major reasons to doubt a similarity between the early and late waves of immigrants during the 20th century have to do with discrimination against nonwhites, the changing requirements of the American labor market, and blocked mobility experienced by less educated immigrants of color whose experiences may translate into an oppositional stance toward the mainstream society. The changes in the employment structure has emphasized the role of education and skills, and thus low levels of education, job training, and poor language skills limit the potential for successful acculturation in American society (Borjas 1995; Clark 1998). The context of reception also appears to interact in complex ways with ethnic assimilation and the social support systems in ethnic communities.

The academic progress of the second generation is essentially linked to concerns about assimilation of the numerically largest wave of immigrants in American society. The most clearly articulated current effort to renew our understanding of the assimilation process was put forward by Alba and Nee (1997), who argued that segmented assimilation and the related "second-generation decline" (Gans 1992) are not inevitable. There are considerable historical reasons to believe that for most European groups in the early part of the 20th century, the assimilation of the second generation was partial and affected by their ethnic origins. In this respect, the current wave of Latinos and Asians may be closer to the earlier immigrants than is often imagined. Much of the data about new immigrants is related to the earliest phases of their settlement in the United States (Alba and Nee 1997). Even race is a shifting category (at least for white ethnic groups). Waters (1999) observed that in the 19th century, Irish immigrants were referred to as "niggers turned inside out." The position of Asian Americans has changed significantly from the time they were an excluded minority. As a group, Asians Americans are better educated and have higher family incomes than does the white majority.

On the other hand, there may be something fundamentally different about "blackness" in U.S. society. The way in which immigrants of color are labeled by the dominant society will certainly have important ramifications for the way different national groups are absorbed and acculturated in American society.

The segmented-assimilation perspective also raises many questions about the ethnic enclave and the further success of immigrant children. At what point does the ethnic enclave, with its dense networks of obligations and traditions, outlive its usefulness? Does avoidance of incorporation into U.S. culture also have costs? Will the ethnic enclave be sustained into the third generation? Is the ethnic enclave able to sustain a stable pattern of bilingualism into the third generation? In his study of the maintenance of mother tongues, Schrauf (1999) found that among the seven factors that were measured, only two—settlement in geographically bounded ethnic communities and the practice of native religious forms—were significantly associated with retention of the mother tongue by an immigrant community into the third generation.

P. Portes (1999) observed that the variance among immigrant groups appears to be related to four interacting factors: (1) the cultural history and traits of the immigrant group; (2) the degree to which the immigrant group's culture is compatible with or conducive to adaptation to the mainstream middle-class culture as opposed to that of poor minorities; (3) the mainstream's reception of the immigrant group, inclusive of its reaction to ethnic markers (phenotypic and cultural) in a particular historical moment; and (4) the political and social capital developed by the immigrant group in the host culture. Asians, for example, often combine high SES with a positive reception from the dominant society and/or support from ethnic enclaves, which tends to increase the social and human capital of the group and therefore supports high achievement among many second-generation students. Mexicans, on the other hand, more often combine low SES with a negative reaction from the dominant society, which tends to increase their association with poor

minorities and makes it more difficult to develop the social and human capital necessary to support high achievement, particularly among the third generation.

The children of immigrants will define the outlook of their respective ethnic communities for many years to come. Adaptive outcomes in the schools are important indicators of future trends. The available evidence points to the repetition of the historical record. Children of immigrants are being absorbed into American society, although at different rates. Many second-generation immigrants, especially those who are well connected to their ethnic community, are experiencing upward mobility. For some immigrants, however, the conditions of acceptance and participation in American life include not only dropping their native languages and adopting English, but dropping their national identities to become American and leaving behind the immigrant dream that school success is the path to economic mobility and the product of individual effort.

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Naomi Fejgin

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