Assimilation: The Second Generation and Beyond,
Then and Now

by

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INTRODUCTION

The emerging scholarship on the children of immigrants has begun on a note of inflected pessimism. Recent publications by Herbert Gans, Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou outline the reasons for concern with clarity and acuity: coming from everywhere but Europe, today's newcomers are visibly identifiable, and enter a mainly white society still not cured of its racist afflictions. Shifts in the structure of the economy aggravate the impact of discrimination: while poorly-educated immigrant parents can start at the very bottom, the shift toward knowledge-intensive jobs means that the next generation will have to do well in school if it wishes to surpass the achievements of the foreign-born. If second-generation expectations are high, their schooling less than competitive and their reception in a discriminatory market poor, we can count on a mismatch between the aspirations of immigrant children and requirements of the jobs which they seek.'

One might find cause for comfort in the success of yesterday's downtrodden, but the emerging scholarship on the topic thinks not. To begin with, the immigrants of old shared a common European heritage with the then-dominant WASPs, and that blunted discrimination's edge. The old factory-based economy also allowed for a multi-generational move up the totem pole. Immigrant children could do better if they just hung on through the high school years, after which time well-paid manufacturing jobs would await them. The third and fourth generations would continue on through college and beyond. By contrast, the restructuring of the U.S. economy gives the children of today's immigrants no time to play catch-up, requiring strong, and extended performance as the condition for moving ahead.

It is in this context that Richard Alba and Victor Nee recently presented a convincing

case for the extraordinary assimilative power of American society in the past, and the extent to

which that assimilation has by now progressed for the European immigrants.[2] While their

important, detailed, work has not yet appeared in print, their conclusions are hinted at in a briefer

paper that Alba wrote for the The Public Interest. "Assimilation," Alba bluntly begins, "has

become America's dirty little secret. Although once the subject of avid discussion and debate,

the idea has fallen into disrepute, replaced by the slogans of multiculturalism . . . . However,

assimilation was and is a reality for the majority of the earlier waves of immigration from

Europe. Of course, it does have its varieties and degrees."[3] Moreover, Alba and Nee argue, just

as convincingly, in our view, that the pressures thought to be militating against the assimilation

of today's immigrants may not be as powerful as commonly thought. Indeed, the evidence

collated from a raft of studies suggests that today's newcomers are making impressive steps

toward the mainstream of American society -- perhaps even more rapidly than did their

predecessors. Alba and Nee seek to rescue the concept of assimilation and the indicators of

assimilation -- while willingly sacrificing the conceptual frameworks that have been invoked in

efforts to comprehend the conditions under which assimilation can occur. That is, the end result

is visible, even if we do not have a good way to generalize about how and why society has

evolved to that end.   We offer reflections stimulated by the conjuncture of these

formulations and the concerns about how the future may differ from the past. In Part 1, we take

up the canonical account of assimilation, focussing as do Alba and Nee on the work of Gordon.

In the rest of our remarks, we reconsider in detail the reasons why the future might differ from

the past. We group these comparisons under four headings. In Part 2 we consider issues of

race, and in Part 3 the changing nature of the labor market; then, in Part 4, we treat a topic

thought to emerge from the joint operation of the new labor market forces and from racial

dynamics, the resentments and oppositional culture ascribed to members of the contemporary

second generation.   And finally in Part 5, we consider the fact that the contemporary

immigration is continuing; new immigrants arrive to 'replenish' the pool of those well-connected

with the old country.   Will this replenishment retard the dynamics of assimilation in our time,

compared to assimilation of older ethnic groups during the years 1925-65 (when immigration

was restricted)?

1. ON THE CANONICAL ACCOUNT

    To say that assimilation has occurred, even if we cannot generalize adequately about the

process, may well be true.   The end results certainly make the experience of the European

immigrants and their descendants instructive. It would still be more relevant if we could explain

why and how this happened, but that intellectual effort would entail identifying the factors that

made assimilation possible, which is where theory would help.   The Alba/Nee formulation, that

assimilation remains a strong possibility because it worked with such effect in the past, leaves a

good deal in a black box.   It also gives the impression of inevitability, of something mysterious,

perhaps another American exceptionalism in a world of unending ethnic hostilities.

        There is also a second troublesome feature about this formulation, namely the implication

that while the end result will be assimilation, not only how but when it will occur is uncertain.

We can take a long view of the now-distant past, and interpret the troubles endured in connection

with earlier waves of immigration as difficulties of adjustment, short-run irritations that would

get worked out over the long run.   However, in connection with the current immigration, we are

at some considerable distance from the predicted end of assimilation. Consequently, it is not unreasonable for us to be at least as concerned about near-term developments as with ultimate outcomes -- and on this score, consideration of the past might imply that we are headed for roiled waters, even if smooth sailing awaits us later on.

And even over the long run, the timing and pace of assimilation matter. Suppose, for example, that this time around the process of assimilation were to involve two generations of serious race-based violence; or that this time around the Mexicans would require 50 years longer than did the Italians (in a different labor market) to reach a point at which the group is economically at the mean of other native-born groups. Should we still conclude that the end results of assimilation will "be like those of the past," -- for example, that national politics will develop in isolation from such differences？ Timing and process matter not just as explanations, but in their own right.

1A. IMMIGRATION, ETHNICITY, ASSIMILATION. Today the question of assimilation arises in a context of mass, and in all likelihood, continuing immigration. But what is now the canonical account of assimilation emerged in a very different period, when immigration fell to its nadir, and not even the most far-seeing of social scientists could imagine the events that would transpire after 1965. Under those circumstances it was understandable that an effort to illuminate the integration of ethnic groups in American society could be decoupled from a sociology of immigration itself. Framing the problem as if one could take the processes of migration and settlement for granted had consequences for the entire conceptual apparatus that this earlier generation of scholars put in place. A now massive and familiar literature tells us that the embedding of migration in social networks improves the quality of information circulated in

immigrant communities and generates trust that serves as social capital among newcomers who are often deprived and rarely able to access helping mechanisms available to the mainstream.[4] As it happens, the predilections of immigrants match the preferences of employers, who try to reproduce the characteristics of the workers whom they already have, and continue to dip into the immigrant hiring pool. Thus, once established, the social organization and social relations of the immigrant community operate with an independent effect. As Nathan Glazer wrote, "The ethnic group in American society became not a survival from the age of mass immigration, but a new social form."[5] In this light, assimilation entails the destruction of the same social structures that migration creates. That destruction may well have happened before and may be occurring again, but everything that we know about the social structures of migration suggests that they are durable and self-reproducing. We cannot take their dissolution for granted; indeed, this is the very problem that any theory of immigrant integration needs to address. As it is hard to imagine how the prospects for assimilation are not intimately related to the particular articulation of immigrant and mainstream social structures, a sociology of assimilation that is divorced from a sociology of migration and settlement does not seem like the right candidate to ask, let alone answer, the questions at hand.

1B. GORDON'S TAXONOMY, SOCIAL MOBILITY, AND SOCIAL CLOSURE. However, a sociology of assimilation is the material with which we have to work. In our view, Gordon's scheme, helpful as it is, does not move far beyond the level of taxonomy. Gordon's central contribution was his formulation of the still useful distinction between acculturation and structural assimilation. Gordon could have been clearer about the components of structural assimilation, but these can be easily teased out of the overall framework. More problematic is

the fact the relationship between acculturation and structural assimilation is nowhere specified, though it is certainly implied in ways that are telling about the nature of Gordon's overall conceptual scheme.

There is at least one implied theoretical proposition in Gordon's analysis: once contact probabilities shift, increasing exposure to persons on other sides of the ethnic divide, the affiliations and identities transmitted by the immigrant generation inevitably erode. Why might contact probabilities change? The likeliest answer points to movement out of the socio-economic cellar, and the occupational and residential clusters to which low incomes and skills confined the immigrants, and toward the middle-class. Thus social mobility seems to us crucial as an engine driving the changes in ethnic boundaries that in turn permit structural assimilation to proceed. And we think this answer would be widely accepted today: for example, were we not worried about the mobility prospects for today's second generation, current debates would carry a good deal less bite. However Gordon's position on the connections between mobility and structural assimilation are difficult to grasp, since, as Alba and Nee perceptively note, he "oddly slighted . ..socioeconomic assimilation."

In any event, even if socio-economic mobility does provide one motor force of change, there is another as well. Immigrants move into the system as outsiders and the established group of insiders may well prove reluctant to accept them. Sometimes membership is withheld though informal means and without concerted effort on the part of insiders: a preference for dealing with known parties with an established track record can be sufficient to exclude outsiders on considerations of a purely rational kind. But if insiders also enjoy privileged positions, they are likely to engage in more deliberate, conscious efforts at social closure. An adequate theory of

assimilation must tell us how boundaries between insider and outsider groups get traversed (not just that discrimination declines but why it does); however, Gordon proves unclear on this point too.

We need not insist upon the salience or pervasiveness of ethnic exclusion to argue that it operates or has operated with some force on most American ethnic groups. "Large-scale entrance into cliques, clubs, and institutions of the host society on [a] primary group level" (Gordon, 1964: 71) is indeed likely to unhinge ethnic attachments (emotional, symbolic, relational), but access to the new set of interpersonal relationships is conditional on a series of anterior shifts. The newcomers and their descendants have to overcome, through concerted effort, the obstacles put in their place by earlier arrived, higher status groups. Changes in power relations allow for socio-economic advancement; they also constrain discriminatory behavior; as patterns of conduct alter, so too do the beliefs that justified behavior now deemed unacceptable. Progress up the social structure thus creates the potential for changes in contact probabilities, while also inducing the social-psychological shifts that sanction inter-personal relations across once impermeable ethnic divides.

One advantage of this approach is that it shifts the discussion from an analysis of the changing contours of social interaction to one that includes social interaction itself. By focusing on the process of assimilation, and not just its outcome, we tell a story in which a group of outsiders became insiders. Such a story implies greater indeterminacy and also raises new questions having to do with the social closure strategies that insiders pursue, the conditions that make those strategies more or less successful, and the actions of excluded groups.

1C. AN EXAMPLE. This section provides one such story -- a comparison of the first

generation of Jewish and Asian youths who sought admission to American colleges and universities, the former ca 1920 and the latter ca. 1980.   The story rests on a background of socioeconomic mobility and (precollegiate) educational achievement -- on an engine of mobility. Yet the story cannot be told without discussing social closure, ethnic conflict, shifts in power and changing historical contexts.

   The history of the quotas against Jewish students is reasonably well-known.   By the second decade of the twentieth century, the numbers of Jews seeking admission to elite institutions grew to numbers that discomforted the dominant WASPS,   Administrators at Columbia University fretted that the university's "position at the gateway of European immigration" could make it "socially uninviting to students who came from homes of refinement".   The first efforts at restricting Jews soon followed: new application blanks that asked for the candidate's birthplace, religious affiliation, and father's name; interviews; and psychological tests. By 192 1, Jews made up 22 percent of Columbia's entering class, down from 40 percent just a few years earlier.   By the end of the 1920s, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Duke, Rutgers, Barnard, Adelphi, Cornell, Johns Hopkins, Northwestern, Penn State, Ohio State, Washington and Lee, and the Universities of Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Texas, Virginia, and Washington, had all adopted measures that restricted Jewish enrollment.   Professional schools followed the same course, especially in medicine, often dispensing with the subterfuges that the undergraduate institutions employed, such as legacy admissions and geographical preference; instead they set outright ethnic quotas, extending these to Catholics and such particular ethnic groups as Italians.   By the 1930s, a 10 percent Jewish quota was common at many medical schools; by 1946, 11 percent of law students were Jewish, down from the 26 percent mark recorded eleven years earlier.[6]

Less well-known are the circumstances under which those policies were reversed; here, a crucial factor was the new legal and social environment that emerged after the Second World War. In 1946, New York's City Council passed a resolution, clearly aimed at Columbia, that threatened the tax exempt status of colleges and universities that used racial or religious criteria in selecting students. Anxious to avert any similar threat, Yale acted pre-emptively, outlawing quotas and giving first priority to students of highest merit. In 1948, New York State forbade discrimination on grounds of religion or race in higher education and simultaneously established a state university, threatening the hegemony of Columbia and the other privates while also promising greater accessibility to Jews, Catholics, and blacks. Authoritative reports from a Presidential Commission and the American Council on Education provided additional confirmation and condemnation of discriminatory practices. And so the era of anti-Jewish discrimination in higher education ended, in some places, like medical schools, quickly; in others, like Yale or Princeton not until the mid- to late-1960s.' An echo of this earlier controversy arose in the 1980s, amidst charges that prestigious colleges, private and public, had established quotas against Asians, just as they had against Jews several decades before. By the mid-1980s, it was apparent that something strange was happening at elite educational institutions. Public institutions, even the more selective among them, were rapidly increasing their Asian enrollments, and admitting Asians in much the same fashion, and using the same criteria, as everyone else. However, at the most selective private institutions, Asian students with records comparable to those of their white counterparts were not being admitted at comparable rates. Asian enrollments, which had been rising quite sharply in the late 1970s and early 1980s, suddenly flattened out at schools like Princeton, Brown, Harvard, Stanford, and their like.*

If the pattern was reminiscent of the earlier experience, the controversy worked itself out in different ways. In contrast to the earlier experience, Asian administrators, faculty, and students were sufficiently numerous and influential that their voice could not be ignored, and they were willing and able to use demonstrations and confrontational techniques. Several of the universities accused of discrimination -- Princeton, Harvard, Stanford, and Brown, to name just a few -- took a critical look at their own admissions practices and those steps often led to significant increases in Asian-American admissions.

The external response also proved different from before. In contrast to the Jews, who, in the 1920s and 1930s, were isolated politically and intimidated by a rising tide of anti-Semitism, Asian American organizations were able and willing to use political influence; that, in turn, galvanized the scrutiny of outside monitors. In California, where admissions policies at UC Berkeley became highly suspect, the state's leading Democratic politicians "held numerous fact-finding hearings, intervened by bringing together university officials and Asian American community leaders, passed special resolutions on admissions, and had the state Auditor General undertake an unprecedented audit of admissions policies..." In Washington, both liberals and conservatives kept the spotlight on allegations of discrimination in admissions. And even Harvard was not exempt from review, with the Office of Civil Rights undertaking a major investigation, which cleared Harvard of charges of discrimination, but finding that Asians did suffer from the preferences granted to alumni children and athletes.[9]

We note several points of variance between this story and the order of developments expected by the canonical account of assimilation. The first point concerns the sequence of changes in the Jewish case. Acculturation proceeded rapidly, and the children of Russian Jewish immigrants

did unusually well in school, often preferring the professions to the rag trade and the other,

similarly grubby pursuits of the immigrant generation. However, the second generation did not

find that their parents' ethnic economy served "as a platform enabling them to climb into the

mainstream economy at high levels," as Alba and Nee's description of the canonical account

would have it.   Above a certain level of attainment, and outside of the expanding Jewish

economic niche, Jews encountered exclusion. These barriers did not come down simply because

Jews acquired skills.   And the reaction in the academic world reflected broader social patterns.

Jews seeking employment outside the ethnic economy ran into similar barriers; as Heywood

Broun and George Britt wrote in a study completed just before the Great Depression, the doors of

New York's large, corporate organizations -- "railroads, banks, insurance companies, lawyers'

offices, brokerage houses, the New York Stock Exchange, hotels...and the home offices of large

corporations of the first rank" -- were infrequently opened to Jews."   Instead, scholastic

success moved them into competition with the nation's elite, who found effective means of

blocking Jewish ascent up the social ladder. In the strongly nativist, anti-Semitic environment of

the 1920s and 1930s, organized efforts to overturn discriminatory practices were of little avail.

Hence, the second generation was forced to fall back on the domains in which Jews did have an

entry, which by the 1930s included not just a greatly expanded business sector but also

substantial employment in the civil service.

Changed power relations after World War II ended the exclusionary practices put into

place during the inter-war years.   Once quotas were removed, the Jewish presence on campuses

swelled, though the change was often gradual, in part because recruiters never developed much

affection for institutions of high Jewish density, such as New York City's specialized high

schools. But by the 1970s, Jewish numbers were high; and with fraternities and other social organizations likewise curbed in their ability to use religion as a criterion of selection, contact probabilities shifted, producing greater exposure to Gentiles -- and the concomitant rise in Jewish intermarriage rates that Alba and Nee describe. Thus, our story also yields structural assimilation, but with a twist. The acquisition of skills and the most obvious forms of acculturation were enough to lead Jews to the threshold of membership, but were not sufficient to carry them across the barriers created by insiders. Contact probabilities only shifted following conflict, mediated by the relative ability of contending ethnic groups to maintain or overturn strategies of social closure.

Finally, the story is not simply made up of two identical episodes; the later episode arose in a different cultural, organizational and political matrix. Thus, earlier struggles against discrimination had changed the rules of the game, making the more recent efforts at exclusion seem illegitimate; it was far more difficult for dominant groups to engage in strategies of social closure than was the case earlier in the twentieth century. And while insider groups operated under greater constraint, outsider groups enjoyed more leverage within the affected institutions and more scope for mobilization outside them.

2. RACE

Under this heading our comments fall into two groups. In section 2a, we discuss how the immigrants of the past came to be defined on one side of America's crucial racial divide; the outcome was not a self-evident result of skin color. And then in section 2b, we speculate about how that process may be working today as well, how the crucial black-white divide may be

relevant to immigrant efforts to fall on the 'right' side of the classification system.   Then, in the later sections of Part 2, we consider the issue of race from a different angle: taking up the concern that in today's classification system, most immigrants and their offspring appear farther from 'native whites' than the descendants of the Europeans have come to be classified -- in the common parlance, that today's immigrants are members of racial minorities.   How seriously should we regard that difference from the immigrations of the past?

2A. THE RACIAL IDENTITY OF EUROPEAN IMMIGRANTS.   Alba and Nee note that Gordon's formulation "originated in a two-group scenario (the "Sylvanians" and **"Mundovians"**). This feature of his presentation is in fact crucial to bear in mind, not least because immigrants entered a society in which the black-white divide was so important.   The European immigrants, as Portes and Zhou write, were "uniformly white", and consequently "skin color reduced a major barrier to entry into the American mainstream ."   Or, as Gans writes, "while dark-skinned immigrants from overseas cultures will also acculturate, racial discrimination will not encourage their assimilation, at least not into white society."

    However, these contentions either ignore that 'race' in this context is (as sociologists like to repeat) a social construction or they assume that the social construction of race was clearly fixed in such a way that the immigrants' place was universally perceived to be with the 'native whites.'"   In this connection, Alba and Nee do their readers the great service of recalling that white southern and eastern European immigrants were earlier characterized as distinct races. That this feature of American thought was neither abstracted from daily life nor without consequences even a cursory reading of John Higham's Strangers in the Land will confirm. Moreover, the racial classifications applied to Europeans were described in terms of visible

physical features, including perceived (imagined?) differences in skin color. In the 19th century,

the Irish were labeled a "race", regularly characterized as "savage", "simian", "low-browed", and

"bestial"; black Americans were also referred to as "smoked Irishmen." E.A. Ross, the

prominent sociologist of the early 20th century, approvingly cited a physician's opinion that "the

Slavs are immune to certain kinds of dirt. They can stand what would kill a white man." Later

than E.A. Ross, indeed after the reaction to Nazi racism (usually thought to have purged such

concepts from American social science), Warner and Srole could still distinguish between

"Caucasoids" who were "light" and "dark", the latter "a mixture of Caucasoid and Mongoloid"

blood, slated for very gradual assimilation -- anywhere from six generations to "a very long time

in the future which is not yet discernible."*

From these descriptions, it would not be a stretch to have predicted that the European

immigrants would assimilate, in a segmented way, into the darker side of the American racial

dichotomy. Instead they evolved (within a few years of Warner and Srole's comment) into

'white ethnics.' Explaining that this occurred primarily because their skin color was ultimately

light enough so that they 'had' to be taken as whites seems circular, and insufficiently respectful

of human ingenuity; nor was it clear that the racial classification could not become more

complex, fitting the southern and eastern Europeans in between blacks and whites, as racial

thinking of the turn-of-the-century period tended to do.

Just how and why European ethnics and their offspring in fact 'became white' is a complex

question which the historical and sociological literature has only begun to address. However,

clearly part of that story will have to deal with how the immigrant, who may have arrived a racial

naif, learned to know and learned to participate in the American distinctions of skin color.

"Proximity -- real and imagined -- to the dark-skinned other was pivotal to the emergence" of the hyphenated identities that the European ethnics established in their quest for acceptance in America.[13]   Whatever the complex of motivations, the immigrants and their descendants became party to strategies of social closure in a contested ethnic order, strategies that maintained black exclusion.

Labor competition furnished part of the incentive, though as the Italians often found themselves pitted against the Irish, and the Irish against the Germans, the conflict over jobs does not suffice to explain why they all became white.   In the course of becoming insiders, then, European immigrants and their descendants eventually overturned the barriers that impeded their progress; but that transformation involved another part, namely excluding black Americans, whom insiders deemed the most undesirable.[14]

2b. CONTEMPORARY IMMIGRANTS AND THE ESTABLISHED RACIAL DIVISIONS.
Can today's immigrants play a similar ethnic card? While the answer is not yet in, there is no question that they can certainly try, especially when it comes to differentiating themselves from poorer, less educated African-Americans who fall at the bottom of the racial order.   We all know about the tensions that suffuse the relations between African-Americans and the new middleman minorities that run businesses in the Harlems and Watts of today's United States.   But if commercial success has its price, it also generates a reward in judgments that put immigrants on the advantaged side of America's racial divide.   It is not that difficult to imagine that Koreans, and other professional or entrepreneurial immigrants should have learned on which side of the racial divide they 'belong.'   We suggest the same can even be said for the labor migrants whose presence so many Americans now seem to dislike.   Certainly, urban employers in New York, Los

Angeles, or Chicago have come to prefer immigrants to native-born, American blacks.[15]

As in the past, conflict at the racial divide coexists with tensions among workers of diverging national or regional attachments. We have repeatedly heard reports of bad blood between Mexicans and various Central American groups, as well as of intra-ethnic conflict within Central American populations, when interviewing employers in the Los Angeles region. But far more hostility appears directed towards blacks. "And I have to tell you that there is natural resentment between the two races," reported one manager referring to blacks and Latinos. "They do not get along well together in manufacturing." The owner of a large furniture company, with almost 40 years in the business, told Roger Waldinger that:

> The shop has always been 98 percent Latino. I have hired some blacks. But you
>
> put two men on a machine, Mexicans won't work with a black. [They will]
>
> aggravate him till he quits. They can't make it inter-racially. I'm not going to be
>
> a sociologist and tell them "you're in the same boat, you ought to work together."
>
> The only place where we have blacks is in the trucks, because they work by
>
> themselves.

A hotel manager provided an almost identical account in recounting what happened when he hired an African-American male as a houseman,

> . . ..a traditional Hispanic job in L.A. [There was a lot of] resentment from the other
>
> staff. Leroy (the black employee) was a hard working guy but they were at each
>
> other's throat all day long. Constant fighting. [The Hispanic workers] could find
>
> nothing wrong with the work, but they were ready to leave blood on the floor.
>
> Can't put my finger on it -- can't blame it on recession and higher competition for

lower-level job.

Granted, the second generation is unlikely to move into the same type of jobs that parents currently fill. But they will move into a context in which their parents have been busily at work distancing themselves from blacks. And, in Los Angeles, that work has produced dividends, since Mexican immigrants, exploited proletarians that they are, have nonetheless moved into a wide swath of the region's economy, from which they are unlikely to be dislodged. In this respect, the most oppressed of America's new immigrants occupy a position of structural centrality, quite unlike the marginal role filled by urban African-Americans at a comparable point in their movement to urban centers.

2C. RACIAL HETEROGENEITY AND CONTEMPORARY IMMIGRATION. Here we consider the argument that the immigrants today are themselves members of what America has defined as racial minorities. That argument urges us to take seriously historical continuity by stressing the distinctive role that race has played in the past, and at the same time to urge discontinuity by stressing that the immigrants of our own time differ from those of the past by virtue of racial distinctiveness. The continuity suggests that racial divisions will continue to be as crucial as they have been, and the discontinuity suggests that the non-white immigrants will suffer from the continuity. We do not wish to appear polyanish; nevertheless, there are also other ways of thinking about how this new racial context will shift over the middle-term of a generation.

First, the argument for continuity does not rest on the American experience with 'race' but on the black-white distinction. In particular, were we to regard the history of racism with regard to Asians in this country, and look at the present dynamics of white-Asian relations today, we

would never argue for historical continuity. It is not just that all of the legislated racial divisions seem now curiously barbarous and are disowned; in crucial respects the eradication of the legal barriers is paralleled by changes in social conditions. Asians at the bottom of the class structure there may be; but Asians throughout the class structure there are as well, in impressive numbers. And the educational achievement of large numbers of Asians ensures that for significant numbers of the second generation of Asians, the disappearance of the lower rungs of manufacturing jobs is about as relevant to their economic advancement as it is for readers of this paper. Moreover, as Alba and Nee emphasize, trends in intermarriage between the offspring of new Asian immigrants are far closer to historic trends in immigrant-native intermarriage than to historic trends in black-white intermarriage. Today, there is for the first time in modern America a quantitatively meaningful plurality of races on the national scene. At the same time, there is for the first time a meaningful intermingling of white and Asian groups. The conjunction of these two facts alone may help diminish the significance of the black-white divide in American life. In the same way, the fact that tremendous numbers, and great proportions, of the Latin American immigrants have an interracial legacy -- having 'Indian' and/or black ancestors as well as white ancestors -- also creates a novel and quantitatively massive race complexity in America. All this may help erode the centrality of the black-white divide.

Acknowledging these tendencies, we think, yields a pessimistic and an optimistic scenario. The pessimistic scenario suggests that the crucial line will remain between blacks and all others, with some segmented assimilation leading a fraction of the second generation to integrate into the black population and the rest into -- into what? Into some sort of 'all other' that may not be 'white' in any meaningful sense, and may not remain designated as such. All we lack

to make this scenario more plausible is a term in the popular culture to replace white -- a term that can include Asians and Hispanics easily enough and that means something like 'native-born who are not black'. If such a term emerges, we should note it as an important and worrisome development.

The more optimistic scenario rests on the evolution of black-white relations themselves. It may seem worse than polyanish -- in a year of so much black-white tension and discussion -- to insist on this perspective; nevertheless, this is also the year in which leaders of the more conservative of the two major political parties donned sackcloth and ashes because a black would not run as their candidate for the presidency.   During the last great wave of immigration, it was claimed that a president who ate lunch at the White House with a black had done so because the luncheon was necessitated by his busy schedule, and that it was not a social function.[16]   One needn't argue that black-white dynamics are at a happy pass to understand that they have shifted enormously in the direction of equality over the past six decades.   It is highly significant that black-white intermarriage remains low; but it is also rising, if still glacially.   And if the social class and educational situation of inner-city blacks is a national disaster, there is nevertheless also a serious growth in the black middle class and in black collegiate enrollment that also may serve to increase what Gordon would have called acculaturation, structural assimilation and amalgamation in the next generation.   The point is simply that the black-white divide, while remaining terribly salient, is itself very different from it was when immigrants and their children defined themselves in the past.

Anyone who doubts how quickly all this is evolving should ask themselves whether anyone talks today of the browning of America in the sense in which it was used so recently -- to

imply an America in which all those who were not non-Hispanic whites would be united in a

loose sort of coalition marching into the future.   It is not merely that social scientists now

understand that the earlier predictions -- and those the Census Bureau still produces -- in effect

assume that there will, in effect, be no intermarriage across race lines in the future.   It is more

than that: the term 'Browning of America' is about as central today as is the 'Greening of

America.'   During the past month Richard Rodriguez, in an essay on the PBS News Hour

bemoaned the fact that 'pundits' continued to speak of the black-white divisions in Los Angeles

when Hispanics were the largest group in L. A.   A piece in the New Yorker in the same month,

"How to date a Brown Girl," written from the perspective of a Dominican teenage narrator in the

New York area, writes of blacks, whites and halfies.   The problems federal agencies have in

earnestly trying to fit all this into their racial classification systems should be viewed, in this

reading, as sympotoms of transition to a time in which those classifications seem quaintly

passe. [17]

     We do not mean to belabor what readers will appreciate without us: that the situation is in

flux and that to predict from it is foolhardy.   But it is as important to underscore those platitudes

as to argue that the racial dimension in American life cannot be ignored.

3. MOBILITY, ASSIMILATION, AND THE ECONOMY: PAST AND PRESENT

     We have already stressed that the ability of the immigrants' descendants to move, over

several generations, from the bottom of the occupational structure has been a key feature in the

process of assimilation.   If the prevalence of fairly low-skill manufacturing jobs were crucial to

the paths of ascent taken by the second generation (the first and the second, we would note in

passing), and those jobs are disappearing, we need to ask about the future prospects of ascent for

the descendants of the new immigrants.   Given the centrality of connections between class and

ethnicity in contemporary thought about American society, the importance of the question can

hardly be overstated.   We consider first how historical studies of social mobility might help

clarify the record of the earlier experiences, and then we consider the bearing of the so-called

hourglass economy on ethnic economic mobility today.   Studies of the economic

mobility of European immigrants fall into two groups.   The first is a group of historical studies

of mobility among European immigrants and the children -- or more precisely among these

groups as well as others in the American population at various periods in the past, typically from

1850 and after (there is also a good deal of evidence in studies of socioeconomic attainment that

include older cohorts of immigrants and the second generation).   The second is the series of

ancestry studies based chiefly on the 1980 and 1990 Censuses. These provide novel information

chiefly because they include (and on occasion are able to clearly isolate) individuals who are

later-generation descendants of immigrants -- third, fourth, fifth or later generations.   To

describe the studies in this way, is to accentuate that a certain gap exists between studies of

immigrants and their children and studies of the more distant descendants of immigrants.   And

the results of the studies tend to highlight the gap: the historical studies of social mobility tend

to show that ethnic differences in the economic standing of groups remained very important into

the second generation, while the outcome studies based on ancestry show that eventually these

differences disappeared.

The American studies of American social mobility were mostly conducted in the sixties

and seventies, when they were a staple crop among the then-new social historians.   Associated

most closely with the name of Stephan Thernstrom, these studies came to a crashing halt in the late seventies, probably for many reasons.   There was increasing disenchantment with quantification among historians; quantitative techniques never died out among them, but neither did they ever get established as firmly as in the social sciences.   And as a result, when their early fad ended, quantitative historical studies contracted from a smaller, weaker base than in those disciplines.   Second, the studies of social mobility in particular quickly reached a conceptual impasse.   The purpose of these studies had been to explore the extent to which upward mobility had indeed been a salient characteristic of American life.   Several conclusions quickly emerged: 1) that social mobility in America had indeed been considerable 2) that it was not as salient as stated in the most naive versions of the Horatio Alger stories (rags to riches) 3) that it was more salient than the paradigmatic first study by Thernstrom (of Newburyport) had suggested it was, 4) that the quality of the data and of the quantitative skills of most authors were too poor to determine 4a) whether the extent of American social mobility varied much across time and place and 4b) whether American social mobility differed much from European rates of mobility. Given this state of affairs, interest declined.   Economic historians have, during the last decade in particular, returned to this field with their own concerns, such as whether or not mobility of wealth and occupation was much greater for those who were also geographically mobile.[18]

   Among the variables on which historical information was rare was school attainment (since the U. S. Census began asking about grades of school completed only in 1940, and since the question that had been asked earlier, whether a given child was in school in the census year, was a poor proxy for that information), The studies that did manage to include information on schooling suggest 1) that some immigrant groups differed dramatically in the amount of

schooling their children received, although 2) much of this difference is easily explained by dramatic differences in the levels of economic well-being of the families.   Nonetheless, 3) there do appear to have been some significant ethnic differences in years of schooling completed by different ethnic groups, even when all measurable family background factors are taken into account.   The classic comparison between 3a) the Jews and other immigrant groups from southern and eastern Europe, such as the Italians, is a case in point.   On the other hand, 3b) the major other easily observed line of division that has been observed is between immigrants from more and less economically advanced parts of Europe (and between the parts characterized by more or less developed systems for popular education): between, for example, Slavs and Italians circa 19 IO- 1940 and the British, Germans or Scandinavians in that period.   The 4) value of schooling for the social progress of these groups -- returns to schooling -- may have differed somewhat (again, contrasts between Jews and others have been made in the literature), however, the truly glaring ethnic difference in terms of returns to schooling is 5) the low degree of occupational advancement experienced by relatively better educated blacks in the North compared to various groups whites with the same education.   The results from the older cohorts of socioeconomic attainment studies are roughly consistent with this description of the progress of the first two generations as well.[19]   All this impinges in tantalizing but ill-developed ways on our present concerns.   Studies of immigrant and second generation mobility, compared to native-white mobility is mildly interesting they establish, for example, that there were indeed differences in the starting points and in the degree of upward mobility by ethnic origins -- although explaining such differences is another matter.   The description of the extent of mobility through the second generation sounds rather different if one reads Thernstrom's

summary or **Bodnar's** summary -- two efforts at **synthesis**.[20]   However, the most important

observation about this literature in the present context is that it focussed on the question of the

extent of mobility much more than on paths of mobility.   It may prove useful for many purposes

to compare the extent of immigrant and second generation mobility past and present; however,

our question here is more directly addressed by a focus on changing paths -- the significance of

the declining manufacturing sector to mobility.   Just how much the second generation was in

fact indebted to semi-skilled jobs in factories, and how much the decline in those jobs today

blocks their mobility are not in fact well-developed themes emerging from this historical

mobility literature.

Given the historical literature's reliance on local studies, small samples, and often poor

technique, and given its concern with the extent rather than than paths of mobility, we probably

do better by looking at the historical record anew rather than in teasing answers from those

studies.   We now have available to us the historical PUMS Census data that were not available

then.   At the moment, these huge national samples cover 1850, 1880, 1900, 19 10, 1920, and

1940-90.

Studies of the occupational trajectories of past first and second generation groups (and we

suspect, comparisons of past and present rates of mobility generally) can be fruitfully advanced

by using these datasets.   We can construct large, precisely comparable ethnic groups -- such as a

1910 sample of Slavic immigrant men of age 20-35 in the United States and a 1920 sample of

Slavic immigrant men of age 30-45 who had lived in the United States for at least 10 years; or

second generation members of such groups (of the same birth cohorts) in 1940, 1950, 1960 and

1970.   We would abandon in this way the terribly time-consuming effort at tracing individuals

for the more fruitful information about the social structural position of relevant groups over time.
This approach would give us a firmer sense of the reliance of the second generation of the
European immigrants on the 'disappearing rungs' of the economic ladder, as well as on other
routes to amelioration.

Skipping a generation or two to the 'twilight' of this process, we have the ancestry studies
from 1980-90.[21] These show that socio-economic assimilation has been largely accomplished
for the European white groups.   The Jews appear an exception, and there may be others; but the
rank ordering of well-being today is generally unrelated to that at the turn of the century.   We
note, one curious divergence here: while noting that much convergence also occurs, the emphasis
in a recent paper by George Borjas is on the persistence, over at least three generations, of
notable differences among ancestry groups.**   Reconciling his work and that of the sociologists
who have studied the same groups in the same **datasets** is probably a matter of emphasis and of
care in specifying the generations being studied.   Nevertheless, to the best of our knowledge,
neither he nor the relevant sociologists have in fact reconciled the relevant studies.   Since
economists read Borjas and sociologists read their colleagues' work, we wonder how far the
difference in emphasis has affected 'common knowledge' in the two disciplines.

In any case, our perspective leads us to understand that the 'catching up' occurred in those
generations on whose experience data are hard to obtain -- not in the first or second generations,
and before, or possibly only with, many of the current day-descendants who are described in the
ancestry data.   But the problem of highlighting specific later generations involves more than
discontinuities between datasets.   By the third generation, the levels of intermarriage among
groups of European origin became very high, so that the grandchildren of Slavic immigrants are

also the grandchildren of many other ethnic groups.   The ancestry question bypasses this

problem by throwing it in the lap of the respondent: with whom does he or she identify?   Yet if

our goal is to understand socioeconomic mobility from the second generation to the present-day

generation, resolving the problem of ethnic origin in terms of the respondent's choice of ethnic

identity is problematic.   For example, Alba has noted that in the 1980 Census, in the ancestry

question, "'English' was among the first examples given, and 49.6 million Americans claimed

English Ancestry; in 1990, it was omitted from the examples, and the number who identified

themselves as of English ancestry fell to 32.7 million, a decline of one third."   Simultaneously,

the prominence given to the 'Italian' and 'German' examples rose and so did the numbers

claiming this ancestry -- by a fifth. [23]   Thus, intermarriage makes the question of trajectory from

immigrant origins to present-day outcomes much messier than it at first appears; and the point is

not to clean up the messiness but to realize that it is central to an accurate understanding the

process -- that the later generations are typically not simply emerging from Italian immigrant

origins by climbing one ladder, but rather that many economic (as well as cultural) ladders have

been involved.   Thus the story of socioeconomic assimilation of immigrants' descendants

occurred at the same time that the meaning of ethnic descent became complex and indistinct.

The passage from notable second-generation ethnic niches to the homogeneity of the ancestry

data is and ought to be hard to describe with the ethnic categories derived from the first and

second generation.   Let us return to the second generation, since our interest is ultimately in

past-future comparisons.   We need to consider the 'hourglass economy' hypothesis directly - the

hypothesis that important rungs at low levels of the economy are disappearing, as the economy

comes to rest more on the jobs of the educated at the top and to retain a large low-skill service

and labor sector at the bottom.   The manufacturing economy of old allowed for a three, possibly four generational move beyond the bottom-most positions to which the immigrants were originally consigned. Even though low-skilled jobs persist, occupational segmentation has "reduced the opportunities for incremental upward mobility through well-paid, blue-collar positions".[24]   Similarly, the declining viability of small business reduces the possibilities for advancement through the expansion of enterprises established by the immigrant generation. And the general stalling of mobility reduces the chances for ethnic succession: Jews and Italians followed the Irish into the public sector as the latter moved on to more lucrative pursuits; today's civil servants are unlikely to enjoy the same options, which will close off this path of mobility to today's second generation.

We want to first of all raise two caveats, without belittling concern with this hypothesis. The first caveat is that somewhat similar fears were raised at the turn of the century; these dealt not so much with the large number of jobs that would remain at the bottom of the hourglass, but they did deal with the reliance of increasing proportions of decent jobs on extended education, for which the children of workers generally, and the children of immigrant workers in particular, would be prevented from competing unless they were convinced to stay in school longer than it seemed their wont to do.[25]

That earlier predictions were exaggerated does not prove that the same is true of contemporary predictions. Nevertheless, insofar as the predictions were exaggerated, they do suggest caution in simply assuming that the hourglass economy with its negative implications for the second generation is upon us.   Moreover, the historical parallel is instructive also insofar as the earlier predictions contained some truth: the economy did in fact require more jobs for the

educated, but the second generation and their children also found pathways to amelioration (in part by adjusting their educational horizons, of course).   Both the relatively slow pace of economic change and the ability of the ethnics to respond to the changes are relevant.

Our second caveat concerns the heterogeneous economic and educational characteristics of the contemporary immigration.   A far greater proportion of immigrants arrived at the lowest level of the economy in 1890 or in 1910 than did so in 1970 or in 1990.   True, there were entrepreneurs among the turn-of-the-century arrivals -- those with a background in trade or those unskilled laborers who managed to move into entrepreneurial endeavors. And indeed, the concerns of the present moment presses us to ask more of the past in connection with these earlier immigrant entrepreneurs.   However, it remains true that higher proportions of immigrants were unskilled laborers then than are unskilled laborers now, and that in particular far more now are immigrants in professional or semi-professional occupations. Thus if the routes out of the cellar are fewer or narrower today, a smaller proportion of immigrants need to use them; at a minimum this must be part of the historical comparison as well.   In this sense the effort of Portes and Rumbaut to create a topology of modes of immigrant incorporation is a very welcome effort to link ethnic mobility issues and prospects for assimilation.

Yet even with these two caveats, the 'hourglass' hypothesis, modified only slightly retains urgency: while the prospects for some groups and for some members of other groups are good, the socioeconomic prospects of those entering at the bottom may well be worse than in the past because of the labor-market transformations.   Still, this hypothesis may be stated too generally; the contemporary situation needs to be clarified.   The proportion of manufacturing jobs has indeed declined, but the proportion of immigrants in the workforce and the proportion of their

children in the workforce is lower than in many years of the past. Nor does the hourglass

economy hypothesis take into account the possibility of other jobs in service sectors that may be

increasing. The point is not that these service jobs are attractive; but they may serve the same

purpose that other unattractive jobs in the past served. Also, it is well to bear in mind that the

workforce is enormous and that the new second generation comprise a relatively small fraction of

that workforce. If there is one cliche about ethnicity and the economy, it is that ethnic groups

are not randomly distributed but are clustered in various types of niches. In other words, the

observation that manufacturing jobs generally have declined does not end the task of analysis but

begins it; it is not impossible, for example, that despite the decline, the remaining jobs are

heavily populated by, and are sufficient for, the current day immigrant aspirants.

Another aspect of economic change, partly related to the hourglass economy hypothesis,

is also worrisome: income disparities are increasing in America. This situation (while perhaps

not unprecedented) may well bear upon possibilities for second-generation mobility. However,

does this problem bear distinctively on the second generation? If the bottom 3/5 or more of the

workforce are suffering from declining incomes, the problem is vastly more general than a

second-generation problem, and it is a problem within which the second generation component

does not seem to stand out with special clarity *or* by virtue of distinctive features.

4. SECOND GENERATION REVOLT?

As Michael Piore has stressed, the immigrants differ from their hosts in their economic and

job expectations, and this difference is a main reason for the continual recourse to immigrant

labor.[26] From this standpoint, the acculturation of the second generation has two components:

one involving growing convergence with the cultural patterns of the mainstream society; the second, involving convergence with the mainstream society's economic expectations and standards.

It is worth noting in passing that Gordon's account of acculturation (encompassing only such matters as language, dress, food, and so on) seems too narrow to accommodate this second component of the process.   So too, a presentation that does take into account these changes in expectations and standards is unlikely to be a 'straight line' depiction of assimilation, since the second generation experiences alienation and resentment when its expectations are juxtaposed with its labor market prospects.

For Piore, the generational shift in immigrant aspirations was inherent in the processes of migration and settlement; "second generation revolt," as he called it, was therefore a recurrent phenomenon; Piore's approach would suggest continuity between yesterday's and today's second generations.   However, contemporary analysts argue for a difference between past and present on the grounds that the mismatch between second generation expectations and labor market prospects is much worse today than in the past, and therefore the likelihood of frustration is greater as well.   The conundrum of the contemporary second generation lies in the transformations of the U.S. economy already discussed.

Portes and Zhou also emphasize an exogenous factor: the new immigrants converge on central cities where they live in close contact with earlier established, native minorities. Proximity to African- and Mexican-Americans yields two effects. One has to do with outsider categorization: oblivious to finer distinctions of nativity and ethnicity, whites simplify reality, identifying immigrants with their native-born homologs. More importantly, propinquity yields

exposure to the "adversarial" norms of "marginalized youth". As immigrant children come into contact with the reactive subculture developed by native minorities, they undergo a process of "socialization" that "can effectively block parental plans for intergenerational mobility."[27]

In the concept of an "oppositional" or "adversarial" culture we see the shadow of the anthropologist John Ogbu. For Ogbu, an oppositional culture is the indigenous response adopted by African-Americans and other supposedly like groups to the experience of oppression and exploitation in America. On the one hand, the legacy of discrimination breeds ties of extraordinary, kinlike solidarity; not only does group loyalty take primacy over the quest for individual achievement; but any effort to break out from the pack is seen as a betrayal of the group, and appropriately sanctioned   On the other hand, African-Americans have pursued a strategy of cultural inversion, as have the other subordinated groups, responding to mainstream society's rejection by rejecting the mainstream and its values. As Foley puts it, "This sort of occupational logic dictates that they must choose between being occupationally successful (white) and culturally successful (black). Quite ironically, the battle to preserve their ethnic culture becomes the very thing that dooms castelike minorities of color to academic failure."[28]

But just as second-generation revolt is not a phenomenon distinctive to African-Americans or Ogbu's other caste-like minorities, we ought not to assume that only in those groups is an oppositional cultural orientation the source of such behavior.   As we've emphasized, discrimination and stigmatization were well-known to the earlier generations of European immigrants.   Whatever the faults of today's multicultural education, they do not sin through being as dismissive of the immigrants' background and culture as were the Americanization programs of the 1920s or 1930s.   Among the range of feelings generated in reaction to those

programs, is it romantic to think resentment and opposition would loom large?   Moreover, the

solidarity to which observers of oppositional culture point has always been a cherished value of

working-class life.   Ewa Morawska describes the second-generation Slavic reactions in a

Pennsylvania steeltown: . ..the sons and the daughters of the immigrants

were...keenly aware of the gulf between . ..[the] ideals [of

the dominant society] and their actual chances in

Johnstown. This perception was summarized by Mike T., a

second generation Serb, born in 1905: "At school we

learned [about how man is master of his fate], but we knew

that we had a double strike against us, foreign extraction

and poor and uneducated parents." In the perceptions of the

second generation, some schooling and some personal

advancement were correlated, but education, the basis of

individual achievement in the dominant cultural paradigm,

"was not the most important [factor] for your future." By

and large, success was determined by particularistic

considerations: "In 70 percent of the cases, it mattered more

who your father was, his nationality and all...and whom he

knew, and whom you knew."

Skepticism toward the value of education, combined with cultural conflicts between

school and community, accounted for the intensity of the conflicts experienced by earlier

generations of immigrant children.   "Among the boys in the district," wrote Caroline Ware

describing the Italians of Greenwich Village in the 1920s and the 1930s, "it had always been very

much the code to hate school. Although there is nothing unique in boy's antagonism to school,

the intensity with which the local boys hated school was conspicuous." As Ware tells it, conflict

had various roots: the curriculum and teachings had little in common with what the children

learned in the streets; the schools disregarded the cultural background of the children; they also

rejected the behavioral norms that the children had acquired at home, which "often set the

children vigorously against the school."   Writing contemporaneously, Leonard Covello recounts

a similar story about the Italians of East Harlem; there the accent lies on the extraordinary

cohesion of the Italian community and on the way in which parental pressures and children's

preferences converged to produce high dropout rates by high school years.

     Composed twenty-five years later, Gans' description of the Italians of Boston's West End

differs only in degree: the students are poorly motivated; the parents are ambivalent; the schools

clash with the attractions of the children's peer groups; the "junior high school principal's main

problem [is] truancy, and the parental acquiescence concerning this."   The school was

"anathema to many" of the teenagers, in large measure for the reasons adduced by Ware

twenty-five years earlier: it sought to train them for a way of life diametrically opposed to the

one for which they had been prepared at home. And a good part of that opposition stemmed

from the parents' rejection of middle-class society and its values and their hostility toward

individualistic striving. What little we know of more contemporary, ethnic working-class

communities suggests that the school-child antagonism has not since been significantly

tempered.[29]   Similarly, the accommodation to the routine of working-class life was often made

grudgingly and few working-class adolescents who dropped out of high school made a beeline

for the factory. Instead, they spent their time on the street corner, hanging around, drinking

liquor, and getting into fights; in his recent memoir recounting his Brooklyn youth in the late

1940s and early 1950s, Pete Hamill describes the "times of the gangs", in pages differing little

from those of today's newspaper, only in that the arsenal of violence was not as complete.

Whether gangs were present or not, the nature of the youth labor market made for an extended

"moratorium", as Paul Osterman termed it, in which youth were excluded from positions of the

primary or craft type, and bounced from one more or less casual job to another. Are such

attitudes, and the behavioral patterns to which they are linked, reminiscent of those described as

oppositional today?[30]

Perhaps there are subtle differences, but there is surely considerable overlap, and one

would be obliged to state clearly why it is the subtle differences and not the similarities that are

critical for school and labor force behavior. Moreover, it behooves us to avoid a false

concreteness: are the values described by these older observers, and the ones described as

oppositional today really so fixed and so well-elaborated that we can confidently claim that

second-generation communities today are characterized by the one and second-generation

communities then by something crucially different? The historical evidence just reviewed is

certainly not definitive; but it does imply that an "oppositional culture" can emerge from the

immigrant experience without exposure to a "proximal host" comprised of visible, stigmatized,

native-born minorities. This conclusion points to greater continuities in the experiences of

immigrants past and present; it reminds us of the difficulties experienced by the earlier groups; it

also suggests that the time frame for immigrant accommodation was extended and that we should

not expect different today.

There is also a hint of another factor missing from current debates, namely class. Though the context for the discussion above is ethnic, the explanatory factors seem to be of a different nature, having to do with the disarticulation between schools, on the one hand, and the world of manual work to which immigrant children were destined, on the other. That disconnection breeds revolt: working-class children correctly perceive that school has little to do with their chances in life; and they also react against the middle-class culture of the school and its denigration of the working-class life and labor. That revolt, however, is almost certainly conditioned by the subsequent opportunities that working-class children encounter. School could be flouted with relative impunity, as long as there was a vibrant factory-based economy, which unsuccessful students could access through the help of relatives and neighborhood-based friends. The stronger the industrial economy, the greater the value placed on manual work, which in turn sanctioned youth rebellion and gave it a ritualized form. Though the literature is fragmentary, it appears that these same circumstances persist, in attenuated form, in the remaining ethnic working-class enclaves in the Northeast and Midwest.

One can certainly hypothesize that similar conditions come into play in Los Angeles, with its massive, thriving factory-based economy, and the movement of Mexican immigrants and Mexican-Americans into the ranks of the skilled working-class. But outcomes are sure to take a different form in a deindustrialized city like New York or a service-based city like Miami, where school leavers have few alternatives and the erosion of the industrial economy has sorely devalued manual work. As these are also the conditions that have intensified the "oppositional culture" among native minorities, it may be common experience, and not exposure, that yields self-defeating rebellion among the children of the inner city, whether of foreign- or native-born

roots.

5. ASSIMILATION IN THE CONTEXT OF REPLENISHMENT

The fate of ethnicity under conditions of replenishment is likely to differ from conditions of non-replenishment; but it may well differ by less than observers today seem to think. It is important to distinguish the impact of replenishment on the vibrancy of immigrant institutions (a foreign-language newspaper, for example) from the impact of replenishment on the outlook and behavior of descendants of immigrants (for example, whether many third-generation members read a foreign-language newspaper). There is much more that the historical record can tell us about the relationship between replenishment and assimilation than appears to have entered the discussions. First, it is well to remember that the turn of the century immigration lasted for a long time. A great many native-born children of Southern and east European immigrants were born and grew up in the context of 'replenishment': for example, those born by 1900 reached age 20 in the context of replenishment; they grew up in an America of many new arrivals. Yet the historical record is not replete with generalizations about how these second generation members differed notably in their development from than those born after 1920. The subject should in fact be explored more given our present interests; but in any case, it is fair to say that the differences have not been so great as to have been central to past discussions of American ethnic history. And second, immigration was a major factor in American life from 1830 until 1925, with breaks of no more than a few years -- for economic downturns and for

wars.   There was never, during that century, a multi-decade break in massive immigration, as there was between 1925 and 1965 (indeed, the closest parallel to that four-decade break may rather be in the three decades preceding 1 830[31]).   And as a result, many millions of second and third generation Irish, German and Scandinavian children grew up and lived their entire adulthood in the context of very considerable replenishment -- in the years between 1850 and 1925. How did they assimilate?

We have already noted the existence of the historical PUMS data -- huge samples from the censuses of 1850, 1880, 1900-1920.   From these we can and should learn a good deal about neighborhood, social class, language use, and intermarriage. And from other sources, other aspects of assimilation can be studied. But again: the historical record to date is not replete with generalizations about the inability of these earlier immigrant groups to lose their ancestral cultures in the context of replenishment.

TOWARDS A CONCLUSION

It may seem contradictory to insist both upon the reasons why tensions of race, economy and replenishment may not seem to have the implications they are often thought to have, and at the same time to urge that our account of immigration, ethnicity and assimilation must be sensitive to the issue of agency and conflict in establishing and overturning social closure. Yet these are not contradictory viewpoints, only reflections of a complex ethnic reality.

NOTES

1. Herbert Gans, 1992, "Second-generation decline: scenarios for
the economic and ethnic futures of the post-1965 American
immigrants," Ethnic and Racial Studies, V. 15, 2; Alejandro
Portes and Min Zhou, 1992, "The New Second Generation: Segmented
Assimilation and its Variants among Post-l 965 Immigrant Youth,"
Annals No. 530, 1993: 74-96.

2.Richard Alba and Victor Nee, "The Assimilation of Immigrant Groups: Concept, Theory and
Evidence," paper prepared for a conference of the Social Science Research Council, January,
1996.

3.Richard Alba, "Assimilation's Quiet Tide," The Public Interest, 119 (Spring 1995), 1.

4. Alejandro Portes introduction to Portes volume on Economic
Sociology of Immigration, New York: Russell Sage Foundation,
1994.

5. Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, Beyond the Melting Pot, Cambridge; MIT Press
[1963] 1969, p. 16; italics in the original.
5 Milton Gordon, Assimilation in American Life, New York: Oxford University Press, 1964: 8 1;
italics in original; cited by Alba and Nee on p. 5])

6. This paragraph and the next are derived from Harold Wechsler, The Qualified Student, New
York: Wiley; Marcia Graham Synnott, The Half-Opened Door: Discrimination and Admissions
at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, 1900-1970, (Greenwich, CT: Greenwood, 1979); Dan A. Oren,
Entering the Club: A History of Jews and Yale, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985; and
Leonard Dinnerstein, Anti-Semitism in America, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

7. The tide had begun to change during World War II, when the
draft made it harder for colleges, like so many institutions, to
pursue discriminatory practices without immediately harming
themselves.

8 .Between 1979 and 1993, the percentage of Asians entering as
freshman at Brown University from 2.6 percent to almost 15
percent; at Harvard, Asians made up just over 14 percent of the
entering class in 1992, as against 5.5 percent nine years
earlier. Asian enrollment in law schools skyrocketed from 1,382
in 1977-78 to 5,028 in 1991-92, and shot up still more
spectacularly in medical schools, moving from 1,422 to 9,43 8 during
the same period of time. The State of Asian Pacific America:

Policy Issues to the Year 2020, Los Angeles: LEAP Asian Pacific
American Public Policy Institute and UCLA Asian American Studies
Center, 1993, pp. 52-3.   "To maintain their privileged status and to perpetuate their domination," wrote the head of UC Berkeley Ethnic Studies Department, the nation's elite colleges and universities "have been forced in the 1980s to modify their admissions criteria in order to slow down the Asian American 'invasion', much like what these same institutions had to do from 19 18 to 1947 when they discovered the "Jewish problem...." L. Ling-Chi Wang, "Meritocracy and Diversity in Higher Education: Discrimination against Asians in the Post-Bakke Era," Urban Review, V. 20, 3 (1988), p. 201,205.   While the rhetoric is slightly over-heated, the description is not entirely off the mark.   Jayjia Hsia, Asian Americans in Higher Education and at Work, Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1988, pp. 90-91.

9.United States Civil Rights Commission, Civil Rights Issues
Facing Asian Americans in the 1990s, 1992, pp. 1 1 1- 112.
Don Nakanishi, "A Quota on Excellence? The Asian American
Admissions Debate," in Don Nakanishi and Tina Yamano Nishida, The
Asian American Educational Experience, New York: Routledge, 1995,
p. 277.

10. Heywood Broun and George Britt, Christians Only, New York:
Vantage Press, 193 1: 224; Leonard Dinnerstein, Anti-Semitism in
America, New York: Oxford, 1994, pp. 89.

11 .Portes and Zhou, p. 76; Gans, p. 177; Indeed, a look at other societies confirms that we don't need "race", as we understand it in American terms, to yield racism or racial oppression in its most brutal form. The central complaint of modern European anti-Semitism was precisely the point that the Jews had become indistinguishable from everyone else.   And French attitudes today are far less antagonistic to black Africans or Antilleans than they are to North Africans, who are almost as frequently to be blond and of fair complexion as of some darker hue.

12. John Higham, Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism. 1860-1925, New Brunswick, 1955; Jonathan Rieder, Canarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn against Liberalism, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985, p.32; David R. Roediger, The Wages of Whiteness, London: Verso, 199 1; Noel Ignatiev, How the Irish became White, New York: Routledge, 1995; Stanley Lieberson, Piece of the Pie, Berkeley:
University of California Press, p. 25. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole, The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups, Yale University Press, 1945, pp. 286-293.

13. Robert Orsi, "The Religious Boundaries of an Inbetween People: Street Feste and the Problem of the Dark-Skinned Other in Italian Harlem, 1920-l 990," American Quarterly, V. 44, 3 (1992), quote from p. 313.

14. Thus, in early 20th century New York, conflict suffused Jewish-Gentile relations in the construction trades: when Jewish painters held a city-wide strike just before World War I, rival non-Jewish construction unions sent strikebreakers to replaced the struggling alteration workers. While the gentile and Jewish unions in the painting trades learned to live with one another, and Jews moved into all of the skilled crafts as well, blacks were effectively shut out until the protests of the civil rights era opened a few doors. In the garment shops, Jewish skilled workers saw the Italians as clannish and the Italians resented the Jews' dominance of the industry and its unions. But the Italian-owned shops kept blacks out until the dire labor shortages of World War II forced them to do otherwise; and while Jewish employers hired blacks, their Jewish workers did their best not to teach blacks the tricks of the trade.   When LaGuardia sought greater control over New York's police in the 1930s, Father Coughlin, the Irish, anti-Semitic radio priest, waded in to protect "the boys from Cork and Galway and Yorkshire and Bavaria...90 percent of them good Christians" against their opponents "who could not tell a nightstick from a streak of salami."   Just a few years later, the Irish, Jews, and Italians settled down into a happy co-existence in the police and elsewhere in the civil service; meanwhile few blacks managed to enter the ranks of the NYPD, and until the 1960s, those who did found themselves confined to patrolling Harlem.   Roger Waldinger, Still the Promised City? New Immigrants and African-Americans in Post-Industrial New York, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996.

15. Joleen Kirschenman and Kathryn Neckerman. 1991. "'We'd Love to Hire Them, But...': The Meaning of Race for Employers." Pp. 203-234 in Christopher Jencks and Paul Peterson, eds. The Urban Underclass, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution; Moss, Philip and Chris Tilly. 1991. "Raised Hurdles for Black Men: Evidence from Interviews with Employers." Paper presented at the annual conference of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, Bethesda, MD. An unpublished paper by Roger Waldinger, "Black/Immigrant Competition Reconsidered: New Evidence from Los Angeles," (Department of Sociology, UCLA, 1994) is the source of the material reported in the remainder of this section.

16.   Louis R. Harlan, Booker T Washington (Vol. 2, The Wizard of Tuskegee,1901-1915), New York, 1983, 3-5.

17.Junot Diaz, "How to Date a Brown Girl," The New Yorker, December, 1995, 83-85: "A halfie will tell you her parents met in the movement. Back then she'll say, people thought it was the radical thing to do.   It will sound like something her parents made her memorize.   Your brother heard that one too and said Sounds like a whole lot of Uncle Tomming to me . . . . Black people she will say, treat me real bad.   That's why I don't like them.   You'll wonder how she feels about Dominicans. Don't ask. Let her speak..." (84).   On the state of official difficulties with classification of mixed races, see especially another piece in The New Yorker: Lawrence Wright, One Drop of Blood," July 25, 1994 46-55.

18. On the historical studies see especially overviews of the literature in Stephan Thernstrom, <u>The Other Bostonians: Poverty and Progress in the American Metropolis. 1880-1 970</u> (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), Chapter 9 and John Bodnar, <u>The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America</u> (New York, 1985), chapter 6.   On the economic historians' recent smaller corpus see references cited in Joseph P. Ferrie, "Up and Out or Down and Out? Immigrant Mobility in the Antebellum United States," <u>Journal of Interdisciplinarv History,</u> 26 (Summer 1995) 33-55 and works cited there.

19. Joel Perlmann, <u>Ethnic Differences: Schooling and Social Structure among the Irish. Italians, Jews and Blacks in an American Citv. 1880-1 935</u> (New York, 1988); Stanley Lieberson, <u>A Piece of the Pie: Blacks and White Imminrants since 1880</u> (Berkeley, 1980); David L. Featherman and Robert M. Hauser, <u>Onportunitv and Change</u> (New York, 1978); Peter Blau and Otis Dudley Duncan, The American Occupational Structure, New York, 1967;   George J. Borjas, "Long-Run Convergence of Skill Differentials: the Children and Grandchildren of the Great Migration," <u>Industrial ad Labor Relations Review,</u> Vol. 47, No. 4 (July 1994) 553-73.

20. Compare Thernstrom, 249-52 and Bodnar 169-175.

21. Stanley Lieberson and Mary C. Waters, <u>From Manv Strands: Ethnic and Racial Groups in Contemnorarv America</u> (New York, 1988). Lisa J. Neidert and Reynolds Farley, "Assimilation in the United States: an Analysis of Ethnic and Generational Differences in Status and Achievement," <u>American Sociological Review,</u> 50 (December 1985), 840-850. See also Richard Alba, "Cohorts and the Dynamics of Ethnic Change," in Matilda White Riley, Bettina J. Huber, and Beth B. Hess (eds.), <u>Social Structure and Human Lives</u> (Newbury Park, 1988); Charles Hirschman and Luis Falcon, "The Educational Attainment of Religio-Ethnic Groups in the United States," <u>Research in Sociology of Education and Socialization,</u> 5 (1985), 83-120; Richard A. Alba, <u>Ethnic Identitv: The Transformation of White America</u> (New Haven, 1990), <u>Italian Americans: Into the Twilight of Ethnicitv,</u> (Englewood Cliffs, 1985) and Mary C. Waters, <u>Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America</u> (Berkeley, 1990).

22. Borjas, "Long-Run Convergence."

23. Alba, "Quiet Tide," 5.

24. Portes and Zhou, 85

25.   See, for example, Paul H. Douglas, <u>American Apurenticeshin and Industrial Education,</u> New York, 1921; Marvin Lazerson, <u>Origins of the Urban School: Public Education in Massachusetts. 1870- 1915,</u> Cambridge, Mass., 197 l, Ch. V (e.g.: 144) on vocational education and the dropout; Edward A. Krug, <u>The Shaping of the American High School 1880- 1920,</u> Madison, 1969, Chs. 8 and 10; Robert H. Bremner et al., <u>Children and Youth in America: A</u>

<u>Documentary History</u>, Cambridge, Mass. (sections on late nineteenth century child labor and extended schooling).

26.Michael Piore, Birds of Passage, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

27. Portes and Zhou, 83

28. John Ogbu, Minority Education and Caste: The American System
in Cross-Cultural Perspective, New York Academic Press.
Publications by some of Ogbu's associates have had considerable
influence on the emerging debate on today's second generation.
See Margaret Gibson, Accommodation without assimilation, Ithaca,
NY: Cornell University Press, 1988; and Matute-Bianchi, Maria
Eugenia, 1986, "Ethnic Identities and Patterns of School Success
and Failure among Mexican-Descent and Japanese-American Students
in a California High School," American Journal of Education, V
95(1): 233-55 Douglas Foley, "Reconsidering Anthropological Explanations of Ethnic School
Failure," Anthropology and Education Quarterly, V. 22, 1991, p. 66.

29. Ewa Morawska, For Bread with Butter, New York: Cambridge
University Press, 1985, pp. 267-8. Caroline Ware, Greenwich Village, 1920-l 930: A Comment
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Leonard Covello, The Social Background of the Italo-American School Child, Leiden: Elsevier
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37 Gans, Urban Villagers, p. 68. Jay McLeod, Ain't no makin' it: Leveled aspirations in a
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30. Pete Hamill, A Drinking Life, New York, pp. 110-l 11; 146. Paul Osterman, The Youth
Labor Market, Cambridge: MIT Press,
1980.

3 1. Thomas Archdeacon, <u>Becoming American: An Ethnic History,</u> New York, 1983, 61-64.