

TRAJECTORIES FOR THE IMMIGRANT SECOND GENERATION IN NEW YORK CITY

1. INTRODUCTION

It has become a truism to say that immigration has transformed American society since 1965. Beginning with “gateway” cities like New York and Los Angeles, the effect of new immigrants now extends to small pork- or chicken-processing towns in Iowa or North Carolina. Indeed, the March 2004 annual demographic supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS) indicates that almost 12 percent of America’s residents were born abroad, doubtless an underestimate. In places where first-generation immigrants concentrate, like New York City, immigrants now make up almost half the adult population—and in the case of Miami, more than three-fifths. This outcome has led scholars to undertake many studies of the new immigrants, for example, using individual traits to model individual earnings or looking at the school performance or health conditions of the children of immigrants.

One leading researcher, George Borjas, has warned that the relatively low skill levels of recent immigrants bode poorly for their lifetime earnings and chances for upward mobility (Borjas 1990, 1999). Incorporating new immigrant ethnic groups also poses many other challenges, such as heightened tensions among ethnic and racial groups (Gerstle and Mollenkopf 2001). Despite problematic aspects of the effect of immigration,

however, many observers, including this one, think that the new immigrants constitute a clear net plus for American society. Immigrants are “positively selected” from their populations of origin (Feliciano 2005). They pass a difficult test by resettling themselves and their families in the United States. They often take jobs natives do not want to perform, work hard for long hours, contribute a great deal of entrepreneurial creativity, and bring valuable cultural capital—qualities that their wages or other standards may not reflect immediately. While competition from immigrants may put some low-skilled natives, often members of minority groups, at a disadvantage in the labor market—and indeed highly skilled immigrants may compete against highly skilled natives—it seems to me that the strong work effort, relatively low labor cost, and varied talents of immigrants expand the overall economy and benefit most native-born people. Certainly, the official New York City position is that immigrants have prevented the city from becoming smaller, poorer, and more like Philadelphia (Lobo and Salvo 2004, p. xiv). Regardless of how many books scholars write on this topic, however, they are not likely to resolve anytime soon the question of whether new immigrants are good or bad for America.

That may not be the most important question, however. Instead, the fates of their children—the new second generation—will likely shape how we evaluate the current

John Mollenkopf is executive director of the Center for Urban Research of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.
<jmollenkopf@gc.cuny.edu>

Much of the data and most of the ideas presented here have been developed in collaboration with Philip Kasinitz, Mary Waters, and Jennifer Holdaway, my partners in the Study of the Immigrant Second Generation in Metropolitan New York. They provided valuable criticism of the first draft but do not necessarily agree with all of my conclusions. They inspired the good qualities of this study, and any remaining errors are mine alone.

The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York or the Federal Reserve System.

epoch of immigration. If the children of immigrants continue on their parents' upward path, the judgment is likely to be positive. After all, we judge the last great era of immigration, the 1880s to the 1920s, to have been a success because subsequent generations advanced, on average, beyond the previous ones (DiNardo and Estes 2000; Card 2005). As more and more descendants of post-1965 immigrants come of age today, scholars have begun to focus on what is happening to them. In addition to studies of individual outcomes, studies of this group, which includes native-born children of immigrants, have considered their family and neighborhood contexts (Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, and Waters 2004). To paraphrase Max Frisch, "we asked for workers, but families came."

The children of immigrants are numerous. The March 2004 CPS indicates that 10.6 percent of America's residents are native-born individuals with at least one immigrant parent (who might, following Rumbaut [2003], be termed 2.0- or 2.5-generation immigrants). If we subtract the 1.5-generation youngsters (defined as those who arrived by age twelve and then grew up here) from the immigrant total and add them to the native children with at least one immigrant parent, then adult immigrants over seventeen make up about 9.4 percent of the national population, while their 1.5-, 2.0-, and 2.5-generation children make up 12.9 percent. According to the March 2004 CPS, more than half the youngsters under eighteen in New York and almost two-thirds of those in Los Angeles County have at least one immigrant parent. Clearly, the fates of these youngsters are vital to the future of such cities.

The decennial census provides a way to take a more detailed look at young people growing up in immigrant households than is possible from the Current Population Survey. Unlike the CPS, the census no longer asks where one's parents were born. But if we look at young people still living in their parents' homes, we can use the U.S. Census Bureau's Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) to identify the nativity of parents. The 2000 PUMS indicates that 1.62 million biological children, adopted children, or stepchildren under the age of eighteen lived in families headed by their parent or parents in New York City in 2000.¹ (As they age past eighteen, children are increasingly likely to leave their parents' households, preventing us from knowing from the census the nativity of their parents. Almost all of those younger than eighteen, however, live in their families of origin, so we can analyze them from census data.) About 1 million of these youngsters lived in families with a household head and spouse, while 619,000 lived in families with a householder, typically the mother, and no spouse present. (Such families often did, however, include other adults, such as an unmarried partner or a grandparent.)

Table 1 shows that 513,000 (50.8 percent) of those living in two-parent families had two immigrant parents, while another

TABLE 1

Families with Related Children under Age Eighteen and Number of Related Children under Age Eighteen by Nativity of Family Head and Spouse and Family Type

Household Type	Households	Percentage of Households	Related Children	Percentage of Related Children
NB 2PF	211,472	20.7	373,410	22.9
NB 1PF	259,959	25.4	370,227	22.7
Mixed 2PF	67,743	6.6	122,763	7.5
FB 2PF	299,504	29.3	512,537	31.5
FB 1PF	183,441	17.9	249,047	15.3
Total	1,022,119	100.0	1,627,984	100.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 5 Percent Public Use Microdata Sample.

Notes: The sample is all New York City households in 2000 with related children under age eighteen. NB is native born, FB is foreign born, 2PF is two-parent family, 1PF is single-parent family.

123,000 (12.2 percent) had one immigrant and one native parent. Almost two-thirds of those growing up in two-parent households therefore had at least one immigrant parent. Among children living in single-parent families, two-fifths had a foreign parent. Taking both types of families together, we note that children with at least one immigrant parent thus made up 54 percent of the young people in New York City families in 2000. If something differentially bad is happening to them, or even a large subset of them, it would not be good for the city's future.

There is reason to worry about the future of this second generation. While New York City can be tough on any young person, regardless of where their parents were born, the children of immigrants face extra difficulties. First, only a third of New York City's 3 million households are families with related children under eighteen. (In other words, two-thirds of the households do not face the burdens of rearing children.) Within that group of families with children, those headed by immigrant parents are much less likely to speak English at home (only 19 percent do, as opposed to 60 percent of those headed by native parents) and they may not even understand English (about a quarter, as opposed to only 4 percent of native parents).² Only half the parents in immigrant families are citizens, compared with 100 percent of native parents, giving them far less political influence than native parents have.³

Most crucially, immigrant parents are less likely to be well educated than native parents: a third lack a high-school degree, compared with one-fifth of native parents; while only a fifth have college degrees, compared with a quarter of native parents. As a consequence, they have less income. Immigrant

parents had a mean household income of \$54,404 in 1999, compared with \$73,983 for native parents. Although white immigrants move to New York, only 18 percent of immigrant parents classify themselves as non-Hispanic whites, compared with 41.5 percent of native parents. Immigrant parents often live in neighborhoods surrounded by families with similar characteristics, potentially reinforcing their disadvantages. While living among fellow immigrants may also convey some advantages—for example, through employment opportunities available via ethnic networks—it would not seem logical that they outweigh the challenges of immigrant life. In short, kids growing up in immigrant families have parents with less English facility, less education, less political clout, and less income than those growing up in native families. It would not be surprising if these factors constituted barriers to their progress.

Scholars speculating about second-generation trajectories have also worried that the larger social patterns of racial inequality and discrimination will force those children of immigrants who are not classified as white into the ranks of persistently poor native minorities. Gans (1992), for example, was concerned that being black would trump the aspirations for upward mobility of dark-skinned children of immigrants, and his hypothesis received support from Waters' (2001) ethnography of Afro-Caribbeans in New York City. Building on this concern, Portes and his colleagues developed the "segmented assimilation" model of second-generation trajectories (Portes and Zhou 1993; Portes 1995; Zhou 1997; Portes and Rumbaut 2001a, pp. 44-69, 280-6; 2001b, pp. 303-12).

While the nuances and subtleties of this formulation allow for a wide variety of individual outcomes, its core idea is that whether they like it or not, groups of immigrants are forced to face the fundamental American condition of racial stratification and discrimination. Depending on immigrants' national origins, group socioeconomic characteristics, and the particular conditions of the places where they end up settling, the segmented assimilation model posits three general trajectories that groups might follow. A positive reception from the white middle-class majority would enable light-skinned immigrants from relatively high-income countries to assimilate relatively easily into the mainstream. Racial inequality, however, would force dark-skinned immigrants from poorer countries to assimilate downwardly into a native minority lower class. Groups that cannot easily be classified into white and black categories, however, might try to retain their cultural distinctiveness in service of economic achievement, especially when a group has developed a strong ethnic economy.

While this model has been subject to theoretical and substantive criticism (Waldinger and Feliciano 2004; Alba and Nee 2003), the notion that the dynamics of racial inequality in host societies will force major parts of the second generation toward downward mobility and socioeconomic exclusion has motivated a growing and intense debate in the United States and Europe. While Europe lacks an exact analog to African-Americans as an historically subordinated domestic racial group in the United States, many European nations must contend with difficult colonial legacies (European Commission 2003). In both places, some second-generation immigrant groups occupy particularly problematic positions. Most first-generation immigrants who entered bad situations in the receiving countries ultimately had higher earnings or income over time than they would have had in their old countries (otherwise, they would have gone home). In the United States, a striking number moved well beyond their low starting points. As a result, some degree of upward mobility seems practically built into the first-generation immigrant experience, even if earnings remain low compared with those of natives. We can make no such assumption about the second generation. In fact, first-generation achievements may soften the second-generation desire for mobility, even as the new second generation remains less well positioned than its native peers to make the transition to adulthood (Mollenkopf et al. 2004).

What, then, do the data tell us about how the passage of the children of immigrants through adolescence to young adulthood compares with that of the children of native parents in New York City? How do the characteristics of the parents, or the choices they and their children make, or the experiences they accumulate, shape such important outcomes as educational attainment, entry into the labor market, and family formation? Does the impact on children in immigrant families differ from the impact on youngsters with native-born parents? And how do racial differences affect the answers to these questions?

Until now, researchers have had only limited data to explore the trajectories of the second generation. Although the CPS in 1994 began to ask about a parent's place of birth, this relatively small random sample of the national population is designed to gather labor market information on adults, not detailed demographic and life-course information on specific immigrant groups in specific locales. (The CPS sample included 2,564 individuals in New York City in 2004.) One can combine CPS samples from different years, but this does not overcome limits on the kinds of questions the CPS asks or on the structure of its sample. The PUMS sample is not subject to this problem because it is 100 times larger than the CPS sample, but it does not identify parents' nativity once a youngster moves out of the

family of origin. The PUMS also reports only the answers to the twenty-nine questions on the census long form.

To address these data shortcomings, the Russell Sage Foundation initiated a research project that enabled the author and his colleagues to gather data on representative samples of young adults aged eighteen to thirty-two from five immigrant group backgrounds (Dominican, Colombian/Ecuadorian/Peruvian, Anglophone Afro-Caribbean, Chinese, and Russian) and three native-born racial and ethnic groups (white, African-American, and Puerto Rican) living in metropolitan New York. The project is the Immigrant Second Generation in Metropolitan New York (ISGMNY) study.⁴ This paper uses the 2000 PUMS data on youngsters under eighteen in New York City to paint a broad, descriptive picture of the earlier years and uses the ISGMNY data to examine the details for specific groups as they enter adulthood.

2. THE PARENTAL CONTEXT

We have noted that immigrant parents tend to have less English language ability, education, and income than native-born parents. When comparing the two groups, however, it is useful to distinguish both their racial and ethnic backgrounds and family forms so we can analyze similar groups. Table 2 shows the distribution of families by nativity, race, and form.⁵ Three patterns emerge. First, the different racial groups tend to

TABLE 2
Families by Type and Race of Family Head
Percentage of Households with Related Children
under Age Eighteen

Family Type	Race of Family Head				Total
	Hispanic	NH Black	NH Asian	NH White	
NB 2PF	4.4	3.8	0.2	11.9	20.7
NB 1PF	8.6	12.6	0.1	3.6	25.4
Mixed 2PF	2.1	1.1	0.4	2.8	6.6
FB 2PF	8.9	5.1	7.9	5.6	29.3
FB 1PF	8.4	6.0	1.4	1.3	17.9
Total	32.4	28.6	9.9	25.2	100.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 5 Percent Public Use Microdata Sample.

Notes: The sample is all New York City households in 2000 with related children under age eighteen. NB is native born, FB is foreign born, 2PF is two-parent family, 1PF is single-parent family, NH is non-Hispanic. The family head may be either sex. Native American and NH other-race households (3.8 percent of total) are not reported.

have strikingly different family forms. Overall, 57 percent of all families with children under eighteen have a household head and spouse; however, this is true of more than four-fifths of white and Asian households, less than half of Hispanic households, and only a third of black households. Second, within these broad racial groups, the native families are more likely to be single-parent families than are the immigrant families. Finally, these broad racial categories have different mixes of native and immigrant families. Black and Hispanic families are roughly evenly split between native and immigrant parents, but white households are predominantly native and Asian households are predominantly immigrant. These patterns have a number of implications.

How does controlling for a family's race affect the previously noted differences in English-language use, education, and income between native and immigrant parents? It turns out that the native-immigrant parental language gap is greatest among whites and large among Asians, but far less wide among blacks and Hispanics. This is because most black immigrants come from English-speaking countries in the Caribbean, so most speak English at home—just like the native born do. Similarly, most Hispanic immigrant families speak Spanish at home, but so do almost all native Hispanic families. To the extent that differences in household language from the native racial and ethnic comparison group impede the transition to adulthood, the differences should have the greatest impact on whites and Asians, less of an impact on blacks (although it is still an issue for Haitians), and the smallest impact on Hispanic immigrant families.

Controls for race and family form also attenuate the educational gap between immigrant parents and their native counterparts. Table 3 shows parental levels of education across native and immigrant families, controlling for race and family form. In general, all three factors—race, nativity, and family form—seem to have a stronger relationship to educational outcomes. In general, the rates of college education are much greater for white (42 percent) and Asian (35 percent) family heads than for black (14 percent) and Hispanic (8 percent) family heads. (White two-parent families are also much more likely to have a college-educated spouse.) Within each of these racial groups, heads of two-parent families are always more likely to have college educations than are heads of one-parent families.

After controlling for race and family form, however, we note that the pattern between native and immigrant family heads and spouses is less clear. For whites and Asians, the native-born parents are substantially more likely to be college educated than are the immigrant parents in both one- and two-parent families; this is also true, to a narrower extent, for Hispanic families. Blacks, however, constitute an exception: the

immigrant parents are more likely to be college educated than are the native parents. Note that although the racial groups differ greatly in terms of parental levels of education, and whites and Asians have higher levels than blacks and Hispanics, blacks are not the group with the lowest levels.

TABLE 3
Education of Family Head and Spouse by Race of Family Head and by Family Form and Nativity Percentage of Households with Related Children under Age Eighteen

Race of Family Head	Family Form and Nativity	Family Head Lacks High-School Diploma	Family Head Has B.A.	Spouse Lacks High-School Diploma	Spouse Has B.A.
Hispanic	NB 2PF	31	10	32	11
	NB 1PF	43	06	—	—
	Mixed 2PF	29	13	32	15
	FB 2PF	50	09	51	08
	FB 1PF	50	07	—	—
	Total	44	08	43	10
NH black	NB 2PF	22	16	22	15
	NB 1PF	28	10	—	—
	Mixed 2PF	14	26	15	24
	FB 2PF	26	20	28	16
	FB 1PF	28	14	—	—
	Total	26	14	24	17
NH Asian	NB 2PF	07	53	07	48
	NB 1PF	18	22	—	—
	Mixed 2PF	14	55	18	46
	FB 2PF	29	35	34	28
	FB 1PF	31	30	—	—
	Total	28	35	33	29
NH white	NB 2PF	07	47	07	45
	NB 1PF	14	32	—	—
	Mixed 2PF	13	44	09	41
	FB 2PF	18	37	19	34
	FB 1PF	19	36	—	—
	Total	12	42	11	41
Total	NB 2PF	15	33	15	32
	NB 1PF	31	12	—	—
	Mixed 2PF	18	31	18	29
	FB 2PF	33	24	35	20
	FB 1PF	38	14	—	—
	Total	29	21	26	25

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 5 Percent Public Use Microdata Sample.

Notes: The sample is all New York City households in 2000 with related children under age eighteen. NB is native born, FB is foreign born, 2PF is two-parent family, 1PF is single-parent family, NH is non-Hispanic. The family head may be either sex. Native American and NH other-race households (3.8 percent of total) are not reported.

These controls also shed light on the overall patterns of employment, workers in the family, and household income (Table 4). Once more, racial differences are strong, with white and Asian parents having substantially higher rates of employment than black and especially Hispanic parents. As might be deduced from the high levels of education among

TABLE 4
Employment of Family Head and Spouse and Median Household Income by Race of Family Head and Family Form Households with Related Children under Age Eighteen

Race of Family Head	Household Type and Nativity	Family Head Employed (Percent)	Spouse Employed (Percent)	Mean Workers in Family (Percent)	Median 1999 Household Income
Hispanic	NB 2PF	65	50	2.62	\$47,000
	NB 1PF	42	—	1.82	\$16,100
	Mixed 2PF	68	53	2.68	\$43,000
	FB 2PF	61	41	2.78	\$36,900
	FB 1PF	48	—	2.16	\$20,900
	Total	54	45	2.33	\$28,400
NH black	NB 2PF	65	62	2.72	\$54,000
	NB 1PF	50	—	1.90	\$21,100
	Mixed 2PF	75	66	2.81	\$56,000
	FB 2PF	75	64	2.88	\$55,000
	FB 1PF	66	—	2.25	\$30,000
	Total	61	63	2.29	\$33,000
NH Asian	NB 2PF	74	63	2.60	\$64,000
	NB 1PF	58	—	2.20	\$30,500
	Mixed 2PF	81	59	2.84	\$67,000
	FB 2PF	77	49	2.73	\$40,750
	FB 1PF	67	—	2.37	\$33,900
	Total	75	50	2.68	\$40,900
NH white	NB 2PF	85	60	2.71	\$83,100
	NB 1PF	67	—	2.05	\$42,000
	Mixed 2PF	82	57	2.66	\$71,000
	FB 2PF	76	48	2.61	\$49,000
	FB 1PF	61	—	2.07	\$27,300
	Total	79	56	2.55	\$64,300
Total	NB 2PF	77	58	2.69	\$66,600
	NB 1PF	50	—	1.90	\$21,610
	Mixed 2PF	76	58	2.70	\$57,220
	FB 2PF	71	49	2.74	\$43,000
	FB 1PF	57	—	2.20	\$26,000
	Total	65	53	2.42	\$38,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 5 Percent Public Use Microdata Sample.

Notes: The sample is all New York City households in 2000 with related children under age eighteen. NB is native born, FB is foreign born, 2PF is two-parent family, 1PF is single-parent family, NH is non-Hispanic. The family head may be either sex. Native American and NH other-race households (3.8 percent of total) are not reported.

white parents, their income levels are even higher than their employment rates compared with other groups. Family form also has a strong effect on employment rates and income, with two-parent families by definition being much more likely to have an employed spouse, more workers in the family, and higher incomes than single-parent families.

Finally, nativity counts too, but not in a consistent way. Among Hispanics and whites, immigrant parents are somewhat less likely to work than their native-born counterparts; among blacks and Asians, however, they are more likely to be working. Immigrant single parents are also more likely to work than their native-born counterparts in every group but whites. (This is probably related to the fact that the black and Hispanic native-born single parents are substantially more likely to have had public assistance income.) Finally, the fact that immigrant families consistently have a higher mean number of workers than their native-born counterparts is also significant. This combined work effort helps to bring the median household incomes of the immigrant families closer to, and in some cases actually above, those of their native counterparts, despite their parental gaps in education and English-language proficiency. In particular, it is noteworthy that the median household income of the immigrant black, Hispanic, and Asian single-parent families exceeds that of their native counterparts, given the relative prevalence of this family form among blacks and Hispanics.

Beyond the ways in which two-parent families have obvious material advantages over single-parent families, work conveys moral authority in our society, and the mainstream often takes

income as a measure of social achievement. Immigrant household incomes compare well with those of their native counterparts, given the disadvantages they face. Note also that white and Asian immigrant household incomes lag those of their native counterparts, partly because native whites are the best-positioned group and native Asians are relatively few. The incomes of Hispanic immigrants lag those of their native counterparts the least, partly because both groups are having the hardest time. Remarkably, black immigrant household incomes are doing the best compared with incomes of their native counterparts, despite the fact that this group is theoretically most at risk of downward assimilation.

The ISGMNY gives more detail on the family backgrounds of immigrant second-generation and native young adults aged eighteen to thirty-two who grew up in New York City and still live there. Some of the major dimensions are given in Table 5. As hinted at in the PUMS data, the type of family situation in which young people grow up and enter adulthood is an important factor differentiating blacks and Hispanics from whites and Asians, and to a lesser degree native parents from immigrant parents. Table 5 shows how fragile family life has been for many young New Yorkers, especially members of native minority groups. More than half of African-Americans and large minorities of West Indians, Puerto Ricans, and Dominicans grew up without ever knowing a parent, usually the father. Even a third of the native white children grew up without one biological parent. Of those who did grow up with two parents, in many cases those parents had split up by the time the child reached young adulthood, so that significantly

TABLE 5
Family Background: Children of Immigrants and Native Born
Percent

Group	Grew Up with Both Parents	Parents Still Together	More Than Two Parental Figures	Mean Number of Siblings Growing Up	Father Lacks High-School Diploma	Father Has B.A. or Higher	Mother Lacks High-School Diploma	Mother Has B.A. or Higher
CEP	68.1	51.2	16.6	1.98	26.8	18.1	33.2	12.3
DR	58.9	40.1	14.2	2.35	44.4	15.5	48.8	7.1
PR	55.0	34.9	12.2	2.16	41.0	10.0	37.9	11.8
WI	52.4	32.0	20.4	2.23	14.7	24.4	10.3	25.6
NB	43.0	21.0	9.8	2.69	22.2	17.1	16.1	19.8
CHI	88.9	79.8	25.7	1.55	38.1	19.3	42.9	14.8
RJ	82.0	73.0	28.8	1.00	5.4	58.7	4.6	68.2
NW	68.5	47.5	11.7	1.65	11.2	35.8	11.7	39.2

Source: Immigrant Second Generation in Metropolitan New York study.

Notes: The sample is people aged eighteen to thirty-two who grew up and still live in New York City. CEP is parents are from Colombia, Ecuador, or Peru, DR is parents are from the Dominican Republic, PR is parents are native Puerto Rican, WI is parents are from Anglophone West Indies, NB is parents are native black, CHI is parents are Chinese born abroad, RJ is parents are Jews from former Soviet Union, NW is parents are native white.

fewer than half have an intact family of origin for many of the groups we studied. Among our native black respondents, only one in five has such a situation. (In every comparison, the situation is more dire for the native groups.) Conversely, the immigrant groups often had additional adult figures beyond their parents in their household, such as a grandmother or uncle. Meanwhile, the groups that had relatively few parent figures to care for them also had larger mean numbers of siblings, with the native black families being the largest. This points toward what might be called differing “family strategies of intergenerational mobility” across the groups being analyzed—with some groups having significantly higher ratios of adults caring for children and working to receive income relative to the number of children to be cared for.

Finally, Table 5 makes it clear that most of the minority and immigrant young people we interviewed have parents with relatively low levels of education; even the native whites who grew up in New York City did not come from particularly well-educated families. Only the Russian parents stand out as highly educated. (If we include native whites who grew up outside New York, educational attainment for white parents would be substantially higher.) Within this overall pattern of relatively low rates of parental education, several striking differences emerge across the groups. The Dominican and Puerto Rican parents are the least educated, followed by the Chinese, the black groups and the South Americans are in the middle, and the West Indian parents are the best educated, while the two white groups have the highest levels of education. In each case, the immigrant parents are somewhat better educated than their native counterparts, with the Russian Jewish parents enjoying a particular advantage over the parents of native white New Yorkers. To the extent that parental education is a dominant factor in explaining children’s educational attainment, and therefore their lifetime earnings, we might expect the outcomes for the children to follow the same general pattern (Sewell et al. 2001, pp. 20, 27).

3. SECOND-GENERATION OUTCOMES

The census PUMS data provide only very limited information for assessing the educational outcomes of the new second generation—whether school-age children are enrolled in grades appropriate for their age and whether they have completed those grades in a timely manner. (PUMS also tells us whether enrollment is in a public or private institution.) However limited this measure is, it is still an important yardstick. Since PUMS provides the most complete coverage, we begin with this source. To explore enrollment in an age-

appropriate grade, we calculate measures to determine whether a child was enrolled in fifth grade or higher by age twelve or was enrolled in ninth grade by age sixteen. (Since children typically enter the first grade at age six, they have definitely fallen behind if they are not enrolled in the fifth grade six years later or in the ninth grade ten years later.) Table 6 presents the results for young New Yorkers categorized by their family’s nativity and form and the race of the head of the household.

Looking first at the 526,000 youngsters aged twelve to seventeen, we note that about 2.5 percent overall have failed to

TABLE 6
Enrollment in Appropriate Grade and Private High School, Related Children under Age Eighteen by Household Type and Nativity and by Race of Householder
Percent

Race of Family Head	Household Type and Nativity	Not Enrolled in Fifth Grade by Age Twelve	Not Enrolled in Ninth Grade by Age Sixteen	Enrolled in Private High School
Hispanic	NB 2PF	3.8	6.2	19.6
	NB 1PF	3.3	8.0	10.3
	Mixed 2PF	2.1	3.1	12.3
	FB 2PF	2.6	7.7	12.4
	FB 1PF	2.9	6.6	7.7
	Total	3.0	7.0	11.7
NH black	NB 2PF	2.6	6.4	13.4
	NB 1PF	2.8	7.5	7.8
	Mixed 2PF	2.4	6.4	14.0
	FB 2PF	2.3	5.7	13.3
	FB 1PF	1.4	4.7	10.4
	Total	2.4	6.3	10.6
NH Asian	NB 2PF	1.4	4.4	10.9
	NB 1PF	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Mixed 2PF	7.1	13.9	8.2
	FB 2PF	2.5	4.8	8.2
	FB 1PF	1.4	4.3	5.8
	Total	2.5	4.8	7.9
NH white	NB 2PF	1.7	3.6	54.0
	NB 1PF	1.9	4.0	35.3
	Mixed 2PF	1.1	3.7	61.7
	FB 2PF	1.5	4.2	31.4
	FB 1PF	4.0	10.7	31.8
	Total	1.7	4.2	45.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 5 Percent Public Use Microdata Sample.

Notes: NB is native born, FB is foreign born, 2PF is two-parent family, 1PF is single-parent family, NH is non-Hispanic. The family head may be either sex. Native American and NH other-race households (3.8 percent of total) are not reported.

enroll in the fifth grade. Table 6 suggests that this trend does not vary greatly across racial groups, although whites are doing best and Hispanics worst, with blacks and Asians in between and blacks actually doing better than Asians. For Hispanics and blacks, the children in immigrant households are doing better than those in the comparable native-born households, but the opposite is true in white and Asian families. Family form does not seem to have a consistent or marked impact, which may be good news. Table 6 shows similar patterns for the 170,000 youngsters aged sixteen or seventeen. Whites continue to be the least likely not to have achieved the appropriate grade for their age, while Hispanic children are the most likely to be lagging. Blacks have now moved in front of Asians to be the second most likely group to be lagging. Children in native-born single-parent families are now more at risk than those in two-parent families across all racial groups, but unexpectedly, children in immigrant single-parent families are *less* likely to be behind than children in native-born single-parent families, except for white immigrant single-parent families, which seem to be having large and increasing difficulties over time compared with the other racial groups. As before, the largest consistent differences seem driven by race. Family form and nativity count, but not as expected. Strikingly, the children in Hispanic and black immigrant single-parent families are less likely to be lagging their native counterparts, but children in Hispanic and black immigrant two-parent families are more likely to be lagging.

The racial differences in age-appropriate grade enrollment are accentuated by the fact that white families are more than four times as likely to send their children to private high schools compared with the other racial groups. Hispanic and black native two-parent families are also more likely than other groups to send their youngsters to private high schools; single-parent families, with less means, are less likely to do so. Ironically, the group that shows the highest levels of educational attainment in relation to their parents' low levels of education—the children growing up in Asian immigrant families—are the *most* likely to stick with the public high schools. As the work of the ISGMNY has shown, the Asian second generation is the most able to navigate the New York City public school system to find the best schools, while the black and Hispanic groups are the least able (Mollenkopf et al. 2001). Since the age limit of seventeen for the PUMS data prevents us from computing high-school graduation rates, the ISGMNY data, presented in Table 7 in a form comparable to that of the prior PUMS data, confirm these patterns.

Table 7 shows the strong differences in outcomes according to the race, family form growing up, and nativity of the families of our respondents. The two native minority groups, African-Americans and particularly Puerto Ricans, are most likely to

TABLE 7

Educational Attainment by Group and Family Form Growing Up Percent

Group	Two-Parent Family	No High-School Diploma	High-School Diploma, No B.A.	B.A./Enrolled	Males, No High-School Diploma
CEP	Yes	14.4	45.5	40.1	13.8
	No	16.3	48.1	35.6	23.1
	Total	15.0	46.3	38.7	16.5
DR	Yes	19.4	47.1	33.5	23.8
	No	23.9	50.3	25.8	24.8
	Total	21.2	48.4	30.3	24.0
PR	Yes	23.0	48.5	28.4	25.7
	No	39.3	44.6	16.1	31.9
	Total	30.4	46.8	22.8	28.4
WI	Yes	15.8	50.0	34.2	16.4
	No	20.9	49.4	29.7	23.9
	Total	18.2	49.7	32.0	19.6
NB	Yes	19.9	56.7	23.4	22.5
	No	26.6	54.3	19.1	31.4
	Total	23.7	55.3	21.0	27.8
CHI	Yes	8.1	22.3	69.6	8.3
	No	15.5	25.9	58.6	20.0
	Total	8.9	22.7	68.4	10.0
RJ	Yes	7.5	18.5	74.0	10.7
	No	8.0	32.0	60.0	14.3
	Total	7.6	20.9	71.5	11.4
NW	Yes	16.1	33.9	50.0	6.4
	No	13.7	45.1	41.2	3.8
	Total	15.3	37.4	47.2	5.8

Source: Immigrant Second Generation in Metropolitan New York study.

Notes: The sample is people aged eighteen to thirty-two who grew up and still live in New York City. CEP is parents are from Colombia, Ecuador, or Peru, DR is parents are from the Dominican Republic, PR is parents are native Puerto Rican, WI is parents are from Anglophone West Indies, NB is parents are native black, CHI is parents are Chinese born abroad, RJ is parents are Jews from former Soviet Union, NW is parents are native white.

lack a high-school diploma and least likely to have a B.A. (or to be seeking one). Failure to obtain a high-school degree ranges 23 percentage points, from a low of 7.6 percent among Russian Jews to a high of 30.4 percent among Puerto Ricans. (The spread on college achievement is greater, 50 percentage points, from 21 percent among African-Americans to 71.5 percent among Russians.) The spread across family types is smaller, but still marked, generally on the order of 5 to 7 percentage points, depending on the group. As the last column of Table 7 suggests,

the men in each group are doing less well than the women in both types of families. In particular, except for native whites, males growing up in families headed by their mothers seem particularly vulnerable—the rate at which they fail to get a high-school diploma ranges from only 3.8 percent among native whites to almost 33 percent among Puerto Ricans and African-Americans. This result is worthy of a paper all its own; suffice it to say that young men are more exposed to the vicissitudes of the street and negative encounters with authority while also being surrounded by a peer culture that values toughness and boldness, while young women receive more encouragement for academic achievement and are more sheltered from the street by their families. (These patterns hold even when looking at all respondents who grew up in the metropolitan area, so they are not simply the product of the out-migration of the more successful members of less successful groups.)

Much about these outcomes jibes with the standard status attainment model. Young adults from groups characterized by two-parent families, better educated parents, parents with jobs, and fewer siblings did the best. Those who grew up in the opposite contexts generally had the hardest time getting an education. Still, multivariate analysis that regresses educational outcomes on family and parental characteristics shows that significant group differences remain even after applying these family controls (for elaboration on this point, see Kasinitz et al. [forthcoming]). As one can sense from Table 7, the Chinese are doing extraordinarily well given their modest family origins—indeed, they are far outperforming what family backgrounds alone would predict—while Puerto Ricans and African-Americans are achieving significantly less education than family background alone would predict. That the second-generation youngsters are getting consistently although not hugely more education than their native counterparts even after controlling for family background says as much about how bad things are for native minorities as it does for how well the children of immigrants are doing. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that after family background is controlled for, the educational attainment of second-generation South Americans, Dominicans, and West Indians is not statistically significantly different from that of New York–bred native whites. (Of course, because these second-generation groups have different family backgrounds than do whites, they are not getting as much education as whites in absolute terms.)

One important fork in the road faced by young New Yorkers is where to go to high school. While the literature on educational attainment has found that school characteristics do not have much effect on educational attainment net of family background, that seems not to be the case in New York City. Some high schools had high graduation and college

attendance rates, while our respondents told us that others lacked discipline or had teachers who they felt disrespected their students. These characteristics were clearly associated with post-secondary enrollment net of family characteristics (Mollenkopf et al. 2001). Faced with bad public schools, many families sought private alternatives for their children, mostly parochial schools (or Jewish yeshivas in the case of Russian youngsters).

Table 7 shows that native whites were most likely to exit the public school system, followed by Russians and South Americans. The pattern across family types shows that, except for Chinese and Russians, where there were no differences, the two-parent families were consistently more likely to send their children to private high schools, largely because their incomes were higher and more could afford to do so. Interestingly, two groups with quite different educational attainment profiles, native blacks and Chinese, were the most likely to attend public high schools, followed by native blacks, West Indians, Dominicans, and Puerto Ricans. One reason why the Chinese, unlike the other second-generation groups, were highly likely to stay in the public schools is that they tended to live in less segregated neighborhoods near whites that had better primary schools that fed into better high schools. Whites, Russians, and Chinese were least likely to go to public high schools in the bottom quintile of school performance rankings. Indeed, almost one-fifth of Chinese went to one of New York City's famed selective high schools, such as Brooklyn Tech or Townsend Harris in Queens, as did one out of ten Russians. Meanwhile, a third of those from the poorer Hispanic groups—Dominicans and Puerto Ricans—went to badly performing public high schools, as did a quarter of native blacks and a fifth of West Indians. These high schools drew from the poorest neighborhoods of the city, had overwhelmingly minority student bodies, and often had many students from Spanish-speaking families. The table shows that many two-parent families, even from these relatively low income groups, sacrificed to take their children out of the public system.

These different kinds of high schools tracked directly into the disparate experiences with post-secondary education already outlined above. Using the *U.S. News and World Report* ranking system, with National I being the highest rating and Regional IV the lowest rating, Table 8 shows the percentage of those attending college whose institution falls into the lowest category. While the pattern overall is similar to that for high-school quality, several departures stand out. West Indians, who had been less likely than African-Americans to attend the lowest performing high schools, were about as likely to attend the lowest ranked colleges and universities. In addition, the Russian second generation, which had almost entirely avoided

TABLE 8

Type of High School and College Attended
and Educational Attainment by Group and Family
Form Growing Up
Percent

Group	Two-Parent Family	Public High School	Lowest High-School Quintile	Attended Regional IV College	Aged Twenty-Five and Older with B.A.
CEP	Yes	80.5	12.1	10.0	24.5
	No	89.2	10.0	25.0	21.9
	Total	83.2	11.4	15.6	23.8
DR	Yes	84.6	29.7	25.0	26.1
	No	92.3	36.4	46.7	20.8
	Total	87.7	32.4	35.5	24.1
PR	Yes	82.0	33.3	29.4	14.1
	No	92.2	39.8	40.0	11.3
	Total	86.6	36.5	35.1	12.9
WI	Yes	85.6	14.4	38.9	27.6
	No	94.7	24.6	44.4	13.6
	Total	89.9	19.4	41.7	21.5
NB	Yes	92.8	22.3	44.4	14.3
	No	94.1	25.5	45.5	9.0
	Total	93.5	24.2	45.1	11.3
CHI	Yes	95.3	7.6	3.1	60.0
	No	91.2	7.3	0.0	18.2
	Total	94.9	7.6	2.9	56.7
RJ	Yes	82.6	0.0	42.9	45.3
	No	82.0	0.0	33.3	22.2
	Total	82.5	0.0	40.0	39.4
NW	Yes	58.3	12.0	0.0	22.6
	No	62.0	4.0	14.3	19.0
	Total	59.5	9.3	7.7	21.7

Source: Immigrant Second Generation in Metropolitan New York study.

Notes: The sample is people aged eighteen to thirty-two who grew up and still live in New York City. CEP is parents are from Colombia, Ecuador, or Peru, DR is parents are from the Dominican Republic, PR is parents are native Puerto Rican, WI is parents are from Anglophone West Indies, NB is parents are native black, CHI is parents are Chinese born abroad, RJ is parents are Jews from former Soviet Union, NW is parents are native white.

the low-performing public high schools, also often found itself in the lowest ranked post-secondary institutions. Meanwhile, the Chinese almost entirely escaped them and were among the most prevalent of any group in higher ranked institutions. The last column of Table 8 looks only at those young people who grew up and still live in New York who are aged twenty-five to thirty-two and who have had more time to complete a college degree. Two second-generation groups, Chinese and Russians,

substantially outperformed all the others in attaining a B.A. and in performance, followed by Dominicans, native whites, West Indians, and South Americans—all bunched around one in five. Puerto Ricans and native blacks achieved only half that rate. For every group, children growing up in two-parent families were more likely to have gotten their degrees.

Outcomes other than education are also of considerable interest, particularly labor force status and the balance between working and parenting. These are summarized in Table 9. The majority of every group of our respondents found a job by age twenty-three, in most cases the great majority. South Americans, Chinese, Russians, and West Indians all had employment rates that exceeded that of whites. Once again, however, the two native-born minority groups, African-Americans and Puerto Ricans, were least likely to be working. Reciprocally, a third of African-American and a quarter of Puerto Rican young adults were neither at work nor attending school. (Subtracting the first two columns of data in Table 9 from 100 yields the percentage of those in each group who are attending school but not working.) Growing up in a one- or two-parent family did not seem to have a great direct effect on participation in the labor force, although those from two-parent families were consistently somewhat more likely to have a job. Only among Chinese, Russians, and whites, where growing up in a single-parent family was comparatively rare, did this seem to have a big effect on people neither having a job nor going to school at age twenty-three or older. Having an arrest record probably was related to labor market status: the males among our respondents were twice as likely as the females to have been arrested. Table 9 shows that a good many males in every group except Chinese and Russians were likely to have gotten into trouble with the police, rising to one-third among African-Americans. Except for Dominicans, males growing up in single-parent families were more likely, and in some cases substantially more likely, to have been arrested. Needless to say, this can have a deleterious effect on one's job prospects, although the damage is likely greater for minority young people than for whites (Pager 2003).

Similarly, most of our respondents remain unmarried and are not cohabiting with a partner. Only among Dominicans are a majority married or cohabiting. Chinese are far and away the least likely to be forming relationships, just as they are among the more likely to be working or going to school. Interestingly, those who grew up in two-parent families are consistently less likely to have formed a serious relationship, while those who grew up in single-parent families are more likely to have exited their parent's household and formed a new relationship of their own. More troubling are the continuing patterns of forming single-parent households among African-Americans and Puerto Ricans and to a lesser extent West Indians and

TABLE 9

Labor Force Participation, Male Arrest, and Family Formation by Group and Family Form Growing Up

Group	Two-Parent Family	Aged Twenty-Three and Older, Working (Percent)	Aged Twenty-Three and Older, Not Working and Not in School (Percent)	Males Aged Eighteen to Thirty-Two, Ever Arrested (Percent)	Aged Twenty-Three and Older, Not Married or Cohabiting (Percent)	Females Aged Eighteen to Thirty-Two with Children but No Partner (Percent)	Mean 1999 Household Income
CEP	Yes	79.6	13.9	15.5	58.4	7.8	\$46,200
	No	85.2	13.0	28.0	51.9	3.8	\$28,600
	Total	81.2	13.6	19.3	56.5	5.8	\$40,400
DR	Yes	78.6	15.9	21.3	43.7	9.1	\$34,900
	No	71.0	26.0	19.7	31.9	16.0	\$21,400
	Total	75.9	19.5	20.6	39.5	12.2	\$29,400
PR	Yes	70.9	26.0	24.1	56.7	17.7	\$33,300
	No	69.0	28.7	27.7	40.2	25.5	\$24,600
	Total	70.1	27.1	25.7	50.0	21.2	\$29,400
WI	Yes	81.0	13.0	21.4	60.0	18.5	\$50,900
	No	78.3	12.0	30.4	54.2	19.0	\$30,700
	Total	79.8	12.6	25.1	57.4	18.8	\$41,600
NB	Yes	63.1	31.7	25.9	62.1	45.3	\$27,700
	No	63.8	33.9	41.9	52.8	36.3	\$24,800
	Total	63.5	33.4	35.2	57.0	40.2	\$26,100
CHI	Yes	81.1	12.0	6.7	80.8	0.9	\$43,300
	No	70.0	20.0	25.0	61.9	0.0	\$29,200
	Total	80.1	12.6	9.0	79.0	0.8	\$41,700
RJ	Yes	84.3	7.2	10.5	53.0	1.8	\$50,100
	No	75.0	21.4	15.4	40.7	0.0	\$54,500
	Total	82.0	10.8	11.4	50.0	1.4	\$57,900
NW	Yes	81.1	14.9	14.0	53.4	6.0	\$42,300
	No	68.0	20.0	40.0	58.3	8.3	\$29,000
	Total	77.8	16.2	20.7	54.6	6.7	\$37,700

Source: Immigrant Second Generation in Metropolitan New York study.

Notes: The sample is people aged eighteen to thirty-two who grew up and still live in New York City. CEP is parents are from Colombia, Ecuador, or Peru, DR is parents are from the Dominican Republic, PR is parents are native Puerto Rican, WI is parents are from Anglophone West Indies, NB is parents are native black, CHI is parents are Chinese born abroad, RJ is parents are Jews from former Soviet Union, NW is parents are native white.

Dominicans, many of whom grew up in such households. Table 9 shows that about twice as many African-American women—two out of five—have had children but are neither cohabiting nor married. This is also true for about one out of five Puerto Rican and West Indian women.

Given the high level of risk among the native minority groups—African-Americans and Puerto Ricans, followed at some distance by West Indians and Dominicans—it is perhaps not surprising that these groups have lower rates of labor force participation and educational attainment and the lowest mean

household incomes. Across the board, those who grew up (and often still live in) single-parent families have lower mean household incomes. By contrast, Chinese and Russians are more likely to grow up in two-parent families and attend better schools; the men are less likely to face arrest and the women are much less likely to have had children on their own. (Chinese, in particular, are also highly unlikely even to get married in their twenties.) They have the highest mean family incomes, indeed higher than that of native whites who grew up and still live in New York City.

4. CONCLUSION: HOW RACE, NATIVITY, FAMILY FORM, AND GENDER AFFECT YOUNG PEOPLE IN NEW YORK CITY

Massey (2005) correctly observes that the “segmented assimilation” model should not be portrayed as holding that race by itself will trump ethnicity, family background, gender, and other factors in determining the trajectories of the second generation. Indeed, its central insight is just the reverse—that under the right circumstances, ethnicity and family background can allay the impact of racial discrimination. At the same time, the work of Portes and Rumbaut consistently presents African-Americans as the archetypical group for whom family and ethnic resources have failed to save them from being pushed to the bottom. The data presented here do not support that argument in several respects. First, Table 4 points out that neither African-American nor Afro-Caribbean households have the lowest mean household incomes in New York City—instead, native Hispanic households, largely Puerto Rican, occupy that position—and they do not generally classify themselves as black. (Most native Hispanic heads of households with children in New York City chose “other race” or “white” in the 2000 census; only about 10.8 percent gave their race as “black.”) Similarly, members of Dominican immigrant households also suffer more on many measures than do African-American households, and they too generally do not say they are black (12.8 percent gave “black” as one of their races). Clearly, the fact that African-Americans and West Indians speak English at home, while Puerto Ricans and Dominicans generally speak Spanish at home, gives them one advantage over Hispanics. In any case, these data suggest that, however strong the force of racial discrimination may be in New York, black families appear more capable of negotiating it than Hispanic families.

Portes and Rumbaut’s formulation emphasizes that the selectivity of immigration, the human and social capital of immigrant families and communities, and the varying context of reception will affect group trajectories (2001a, pp. 44-69). Yet they note that the first barrier facing the children of nonwhite immigrants is “the persistent practice of discrimination based on [physical differences], especially against black persons” (pp. 55-6). The authors posit that this interacts with two other closely related factors—the hourglass central-city economy wrought by deindustrialization and suburbanization, and the “emergence of an adversarial outlook and deviant lifestyles in American inner cities”—to keep “second- and third-generation offspring of ‘colored’ minorities bottled up in the inner city while simultaneously preventing them from taking advantage of emerging opportunities in the new postindustrial economy” (pp. 58-9). The result, in their

view, is the “hyperghetto”—veritable human warehouses where the disappearance of work and the everyday reality of marginalization led directly to a web of social pathologies” (pp. 59-60).

From this description, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that because African-Americans often live in poor neighborhoods plagued by joblessness, broken families, and adversarial attitudes and behaviors, they constitute a negative example that the children of immigrants should avoid, if at all possible. In Portes and Rumbaut’s analysis, the dark-skinned, relatively poor immigrant groups at risk of being located in such places should use any family resources and strategies they can to escape. Otherwise, they will be prone to downward assimilation. It is no exaggeration to say that the segmented assimilation model portrays native blacks as having the worst outcomes.

It is therefore theoretically interesting that the data clearly show that African-Americans in New York are *not* at the bottom and that black immigrants, largely from the Anglophone Caribbean, are doing even better than native blacks. If the causal mechanisms underlying the segmented assimilation model are at work, then these groups must have more family and community resources to resist and overcome racial discrimination than that model suggests. This should prompt us to rethink whether black communities do indeed constitute such a negative model. In the ISGMNY, West Indians are getting more education than African-Americans, even after taking their somewhat higher parental levels of education and employment into account. So being phenotypically black and living near African-Americans may not be as much of a barrier as the segmented assimilation model seems to posit. Indeed, the substantial levels of education and income achieved by many African-Americans in New York may provide a positive model, not a negative one.

The data presented here should also lead us to reflect on why Hispanic groups, not black groups, seem the most adversely affected by the mechanisms of racial and economic inequality in New York City. As Massey (2005) notes, Hispanic groups occupy an ambiguous position in America’s black-white hierarchy and come from societies that have different ways of categorizing African ancestry (Itzigsohn 2004; Itzigsohn, Giorguli, and Vazquez 2005). Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, and other Hispanic groups in New York City are clearly not comfortable placing themselves along a black-white axis and choose “other” on the census race question. It is also clear that the Dominican Republic and other sending societies have complicated racial classification systems of their own that differ from that of the United States. Race cannot be dismissed as a factor, but it needs to be understood in light of how African ancestry may interact with growing up in a Spanish-speaking

environment to produce even more challenges than simply being black or simply speaking Spanish. The fact that the census data and the ISGMNY show that Puerto Ricans and Dominicans are experiencing the most difficulties should prompt more analysis of this question.

Second, we need to dissect more minutely why young adult children growing up in South American, Dominican, or West Indian immigrant families are going to somewhat better schools, achieving somewhat more education, and doing better at avoiding arrest and single parenthood than those growing up in very similar native Puerto Rican and African-American families. For example, West Indians growing up in single-parent families are half as likely as African-Americans to have earned a B.A. at age twenty-five or older, while those growing up in two-parent families are twice as likely (Table 8). The children of Chinese immigrants, though nonwhite, have managed to make extraordinary educational progress despite their parents' low level of education. The segmented assimilation model suggests that these patterns reflect the immigrant parents' ability to avoid the poorest, most segregated native minority neighborhoods characterized by street crime and poor schools. But there may also be other factors at work, and we need to specify what they are.

Third, one way forward suggested by this analysis is to focus on what we might call multigenerational strategies for accumulating capital and transferring it across generations. The most successful children come from groups in which families often have two parents—as well as other adults—earning wages and caring for relatively few children. The Chinese excel with respect to the ratio of working adults to children. While it is true that Chinese parents relentlessly expect their children to perform well in school, they also provide them with higher household incomes, live in neighborhoods with better schools, keep them out of the labor force while they study, and find the bureaucratic pathways to the best schools in the New York City public school system. Children growing up in African-American and Puerto Rican families also have parents with relatively low levels of education, but they often live in single-income families that

cannot afford to move out of the poorest neighborhoods with the worst performing schools and the highest exposure to crime and arrest.

Finally, the Russian and Chinese second generation has outdistanced the native white young people who grew up and remain in New York City, especially when parental education and income are taken into account. Russian parents had very high levels of education, but few were able to translate their credentials into professional careers, and many spent time on public assistance. Though some Chinese parents, such as those from Taiwan or Hong Kong, had professional degrees, the great majority had low levels of education and little ability to speak English. The fact that they have done so well should remind us that our native white New Yorkers—often from Irish, Italian, or even Jewish working- and lower-middle-class backgrounds—faced a good number of obstacles growing up as well. Our image of successful young white New Yorkers is shaped by how many of them—a third or more—grew up and were educated elsewhere and came to New York as young adults to make a professional career.

Despite the success of many members of native minority groups, the data here present a distressing picture of outcomes for many Puerto Ricans and African-Americans in New York City. The high levels of poverty and single-parent families among the adults show signs of being reproduced in the next generation. (Given how many African-Americans grew up in single-parent families in segregated settings, their accomplishments are all the more remarkable.) Even when native white New Yorkers grow up in single-parent families or attend poorly performing schools, they have significant advantages over their African-American and Puerto Rican peers. They are far less likely to have neighbors in the same position and far more likely to own their homes or have relatives who can tie them into job opportunities. Because it encapsulates a complex dynamic of scarce family resources, high obstacles to success, and a risky environment, race still counts very much in New York City. Just because some children of immigrant minority parents can avoid its worst effects, that does not lessen the sting on those who cannot.

ENDNOTES

1. This analysis covers own and related children in families composed of householders and their spouses, if any. However, about 8.4 percent of the residents of New York City live in subfamilies, that is, the own or related children of the household head or spouse have children of their own. We do not analyze the experience of these children—the grandchildren of the householder—who make up about 2.6 percent of New York City’s residents. They would also qualify as members of the second generation if their parents—the children of the householder—were foreign born.

2. The data are from the 2000 census 5 Percent PUMS for New York City and include the individual records on household head; spouse, if any; and children in households with one or more own or related children.

3. Although my daughter’s experience with the New York City public schools highlighted the importance of having parents capable of engaging the bureaucracy for me, Philip Kasinitz has emphasized the degree to which noncitizenship poses a problem for the children of

noncitizens. Only half of all immigrant parents become citizens, and they are less likely to vote than are native-born parents.

4. Support for the project was provided by the Russell Sage Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the UJA-Federation, and the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development. Survey data on 4,000 individuals were collected in 1998 and 1999; follow-up in-person, in-depth interviews were conducted with a subsample of 346 individuals in 2000, with 152 reinterviewed in 2002. The Russell Sage Foundation funded a counterpart study that gathered data in 2004: *Immigrant Integration in Metropolitan Los Angeles*, directed by Rubén Rumbaut and Frank Bean of the University of California, Irvine; Min Zhou, of the University of California, Los Angeles; and a number of their colleagues.

5. These racial categories consolidate as a distinct group Hispanics from all races.

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