

NEW YORK AND AMSTERDAM

*Immigration and the New Urban Landscape*

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NEW YORK UNIVERSITY PRESS  
*New York and London*

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When immigrants enter a new society the history and institutions of that society shape the opportunities and obstacles they will encounter. Most comparisons of the integration of immigrants in Europe and the U.S. begin with an acknowledgement of that fact. The United States' long history of immigration is often held up as a resource that provides a model or pathway for current immigrants to follow, one that is lacking in European countries. On the other hand, America's dark history of slavery and racism is seen as a roadblock or barrier to incorporation for today's nonwhite immigrants and their children.

In this chapter I explore the interplay between these two historical patterns and how they manifest themselves in the local history and context of New York City. My argument is that it is important to make a distinction between *racism* and *nativism*. *Racism* can be defined as the belief that "socially significant differences between human groups or communities that differ in visible physical characteristics or putative ancestry are innate and unchangeable" and when "such a sense of deep, unalterable difference [. . . is] accompanied by the notion that 'we' are superior to 'them' and need to be protected from the real or imagined threats to our privileged group position that might arise if 'they' were to gain in resources and rights" (Foner and Fredrickson 2004: 2-3). *Nativism* is defined as an "intense opposition to an internal minority on the ground

of its foreign (i.e. 'un-American') connections" (Higham 1963: 4). In American history blacks have been subject to virulent racism, and European immigrants were subject to virulent nativism. Asians and Hispanics were subject to both, although the degree to which their exclusion and suffering was due to one or the other is a subject of scholarly debate.<sup>1</sup>

New York City is a context in which nativism is present, but not very strong, especially in comparison to other parts of the country. This is primarily because of New York's distinct demography and history. First, New York City's demographic makeup is advantageous. Its immigrant stream is very diverse with no one immigrant group dominating the flow. The diversity of origins of New York's immigrant population means that it is harder to stereotype immigrants in New York as undocumented, unskilled, Latino immigrants. This is the stereotype most often invoked in the American South and Southwest where nativist movements are currently strongest. The city also has fewer undocumented immigrants than many other areas of the country, and it also has both a recent history of white immigration and a current flow of white immigrants. In addition, the city gets both low-skilled and very-high-skilled immigrants (Kasinitz et al. 2008). All of these factors are likely to reduce native fears of immigrants.

Secondly, the successful history of New York as an immigrant receiving city leads to an ideology of inclusion and a tolerance for diversity that is much stronger in the city than elsewhere in the U.S. (Foner 2000, 2007). The vitality of the city as a global crossroads and the diversity of its inhabitants is self-consciously understood as a positive factor, not a negative one, and this ideology affects the politics, policies, and discourse about immigration in the city. Thus nonwhite immigrants enter a city that is very welcoming and hospitable to immigrants *qua* immigrants.

On the other hand, New York's demography and history do not provide immunity to American racism. In fact its demography and its history have entrenched a great deal of racial inequality in the city that is not easily eradicated and that shapes the experiences of both natives and new immigrants. The large African American and native Puerto Rican communities in the city are highly segregated from whites, with substandard schools, high crime rates, high rates of imprisonment, unemployment, and health inequality. This reinforces racial stereotypes associating race with crime, drugs, lack of education, violence,

and hopelessness. Thus nonwhite immigrants enter a city that remains deeply unequal in terms of race, highly segregated, and occasionally hostile.

As if this paradox was not enough, both of these phenomena—nativism and racism—are changing in the wider society. Events since the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s have led to declines in the grip of racial inequality on the life chances of nonwhites and better race relations than the U.S. has ever experienced (although with quite a long way to go). And the rapid growth of Mexican immigration and most especially undocumented immigration since the early 1990s has led to a growth of nativist rhetoric and punitive laws targeting both legal and illegal immigrants and even their children (Massey and Sanchez R. 2010). These American conditions have improved *vis-à-vis* race in the last few decades and deteriorated *vis-à-vis* immigration.

The current wave of immigration to the U.S. began at about the same time as the passage of the Civil Rights Act that finally ended *de jure* segregation and discrimination on the basis of race. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Immigration Act of 1965 were both a result of the Civil Rights Movement, and the rationale for the 1965 act was to finally remove the racial quotas that had been the core of American immigration decisions since the 1920s. Even though the law set out specifically to allow equal access to immigration among all the countries in the world, most of the lawmakers who passed it did not understand that the result of the new system would be to change the racial distribution of immigrants coming to the United States. The immigration to the U.S. since the early 1970s has been predominantly nonwhite and has changed the racial distribution of the entire U.S. population. At the same time the changes in the status of native minorities—mostly African Americans, but also native-born Hispanics, American Indians, and Asians—in the post-Civil Rights era have meant that the nature of race relations is increasingly complicated and contested.

Progress has most definitely occurred for native minorities, at the same time as racism has persisted. The election of Barack Obama was heralded by many as a symbol of this new post-racial society. At the same time national statistics on race show persisting gaps between whites and blacks on every important measure of wealth and well-being (Massey and Denton 1993; Oliver and Shapiro 1995; Conley 1999;

Grodsky and Pager 2001; Wakefield and Uggen 2010). Nonwhite immigrants have entered a society that is still very much stratified by race and yet they are also assimilating into a changing landscape of race relations. This is further complicated by the fact that the very presence of the immigrants and their descendants is a major part of that change.

So, scholars have been debating the implications of immigration for American race relations, and the implications of American race relations for the experiences of immigrants and their children. This national debate centers on a number of key questions. What characterizes post-Civil Rights race relations? Does racism still limit the life chances of people of color? Do we need affirmative action and diversity policies to avoid segregation in work, schools, and universities or is it enough that these institutions can no longer legally discriminate against nonwhites? How much does our system of racial classification and identification, designed to monitor and combat discrimination, serve to perpetuate racial divisions and boundaries that would naturally disappear without the elaborate classification system we have created? Are the experiences of African Americans similar to those of Latinos and Asians? Do immigrants experience discrimination? If they do, is it because of their racial status as nonwhite or their status as immigrants or foreigners? Are immigrants and their children "racialized" and do they face a future as stigmatized minorities or are they assimilating into a diverse mainstream where they will follow a path similar to the successful incorporation of immigrants and their children from Europe who came in the past (Alba and Nee 2003; Telles and Oritz 2008)?

This debate is far from decided as the evidence about the first and second generation of the post-1965 immigration is in the process of being analyzed and reported. In addition, the theoretical models we use to understand both race and immigration are only recently being integrated. Sociological models to understand race and to understand immigration were developed separately and until recently did not intersect (Waters 1999a, 1999b). Race scholarship and immigration scholarship had moved on parallel tracks, each addressing different questions and sometimes seeing different phenomena in the same places. Scholarship on American cities in the 1980s is a prime example. Scholars specializing in the study of African Americans wrote about deindustrialization, declining jobs in cities, rising unemployment, and the desolation of public housing projects and the

lack of stores and other institutions in ghettos. At the same time, scholars of immigration were describing many of the same cities as magnets for new immigrants, sites of investment in neighborhoods, rising home ownership, and the home to small businesses and even manufacturing.

New York City is a site where all of these paradoxes are present. Home to a large and long-standing population of native African Americans and Puerto Ricans, and a gateway city with a very large and diverse immigrant population, New York is a place where race and immigration intersect. Identified as a quintessential immigrant-absorbing city (Glazer and Moynihan 1963; Foner 2007; Kasnitz et al. 2008), it is also one of the most racially segregated cities in the country. New York City has maintained a level of discrimination high enough that it can be considered "hypersegregated" (Massey and Denton 1993; Iceland 2009). Its index of dissimilarity between blacks and whites was 83 in 1980 and just under 84 in 2000, meaning that 84 percent of either whites or blacks would have to move to achieve an even spatial distribution in the city (Rosenbaum and Argeros 2005). (Nationally the index of dissimilarity of blacks from whites was 65.1 in 2000 [Lewis Mumford Center 2001].) New York has recently had a black mayor, and it has a diverse city council and congressional representatives, yet it is also famous throughout the country for some of the most violent and stark racial incidents and riots in the last few decades. While it is home to some of the most diverse residential neighborhoods in the country—Elmhurst in Queens, for example—it is also home to neighborhoods that have become synonyms for white racial violence against blacks—Howard Beach and Bensonhurst.

### Racial Distribution of the Population

From 1971 to 2000, 19.9 million legal immigrants arrived in the United States, along with millions more undocumented, eclipsing the 18.2 million immigrants who came in the 30-year period from 1891 to 1920 (once remembered as the high-water mark in American immigration). Between 2000 and 2010 the foreign-born population grew by about nine million, despite the Great Recession in 2008, which slowed immigration, especially of the undocumented. As a result, the foreign-born population has steadily increased since 1960, rising from 9.7 million in that year to 40 million in 2010. The foreign born of the early twenty-first

century are more numerous than ever before, but at 12.9 percent of the population in 2010, they constitute a smaller proportion of the total population than they did a century ago, when they were 14.7 percent.

Another 10 percent of the U.S. population are the children of immigrants—referred to by scholars as the second generation. So currently at least one in five Americans are first or second generation. Only 12 percent of the foreign born in the United States are from Europe. The largest group (53 percent) are from Latin America (including Central America, South America, and the Caribbean), while 28 percent are from Asia, and 7 percent are from other regions of the world, such as Africa and Oceania. Mexicans are the largest single group of the foreign born and now comprise 30 percent of all foreign born (Grieco et al. 2012). After Mexico, the top ten countries of origin of the foreign born are China, India, the Philippines, El Salvador, Vietnam, Cuba, Korea, the Dominican Republic, and Guatemala.

This immigration has transformed the major ethnic-racial groups in America. In 1970, 88 percent of the U.S. population was white, 11 percent was black, and less than 1 percent consisted of American Indians, Asians, and Hawaiians. Hispanics, who can be of any race, were only 5 percent of the total 1970 U.S. population. By 2010, the effects of immigration were readily apparent in the demographics of the country—64.7 percent of the population was non-Hispanic white, 12.2 percent was non-Hispanic black, 4.5 percent was Asian, and 16 percent was Hispanic. American Indians increased in number over the 30 years (through new people claiming or discovering their Indian heritage) but still were only 1.5 percent of the population (the remainder identified with two or more races) (Kaiser Family Foundation 2010).

In addition to changing the relative numbers of different races and ethnic groups in the United States, immigration has also changed the generational distribution within American race and ethnic categories. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 provide the national statistics. Asians are the most impacted by immigration. In 2010, only 7 percent of Asians were third generation or higher, 66 percent were foreign born, and 27 percent were second generation. The six largest Asian groups include the long-established Chinese at 25 percent of the total Asian population, followed by Filipinos at 19 percent, Asian Indians at 16 percent, and Koreans,

Vietnamese and Japanese, each at 10 percent. As Roberto Suro and Jeffrey Passel (2003: 6) point out, in the mid-twentieth century the Latino population in the U.S. was dominated by the three-plus generation—it was primarily a group distant from immigrants who could be considered a native minority and primarily composed of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans. By 2010 the majority (72 percent) of Latinos were first or second generation—but more than a fourth were third generation or higher. In addition to long-time Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans, the Latino group includes immigrants and their children with origins in the Caribbean and Central and South America. Indeed only whites, blacks, and American Indians in 2010 had a

Table 5.1. *Race and Ethnic Distribution in the United States, 2010*

Race/Ethnicity	Percent
White (non-Hispanic)	64.7
Black (non-Hispanic)	12.2
Hispanic	16.0
Asian (non-Hispanic)	4.5
American Indian	0.8
Two or more races	1.5
N=310.2 million	

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation (2010).

Table 5.2. *Race and Ethnicity by Generation in the United States, 2010*

Generation	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic White	Proportion of total population that is of this generation
1st	8.4	65.7	40.1	4.5	13.6
2d	5.2	27.2	32.0	5.9	11.2
3d	89.5	6.8	27.2	89.5	75.1
Total N (in millions)	37.8	13.9	49.6	200.6	310

Source: Calculated from the 2010 Current Population Survey IPUMS (King et al. 2010).

majority of nonmigrant stock. Even blacks—the group whose experience most racial policies in the United States are designed to address—were 13.6 percent first or second generation, as African Americans have been joined by groups such as Nigerians, Haitians, West Indians, and Cape Verdeans. In their generational distribution they are more similar to non-Hispanic whites, who are about 10 percent first or second generation.

New York City is considerably more diverse than the nation as a whole. Table 5.3 provides the racial distribution of the city according to the pooled 2006–10 American Community Survey. White non-Hispanics were 33.7 percent of the city population, followed by Hispanics at 29.2 percent, black non-Hispanics at 23.2 percent, and Asians at 12.5 percent. Another 1.2 percent of the population provided two or more races in the survey, and American Indians were a negligible 0.2 percent of the city's population. Thirty-six percent of the city's population is foreign born, and the share of each racial group that is first generation also varies a lot. Non-Hispanic whites are the least impacted by immigration, but even so a little over a quarter (27 percent) of them are foreign born. Almost a third (32 percent) of non-Hispanic blacks are foreign born, and a large majority of Asians (72 percent) and about half of Hispanics are foreign born (52 percent).

While whites are a minority in the city, “traditional” native minorities are also a minority. Nancy Foner (2007) points out that in the late 1990s African Americans and Puerto Ricans who were themselves native born with native-born parents were just about 25 percent of the

Table 5.3. *Race and Ethnicity in New York City, 2010*

Race/Ethnicity	N	Percent
White (non-Hispanic)	2,723,853	33.7
Hispanic	2,281,115	29.2
Black (non-Hispanic)	1,874,089	23.2
Asian (non-Hispanic)	1,012,014	12.5
Two or more races	95,280	1.2

Source: American Community Survey 2006–10 pooled estimate. United States Census Bureau. <http://www.census.gov/acs/www>.

city's total population. Although official statistics and everyday discourse describe race relations in New York City in terms of the familiar government-sanctioned ethnorracial categories—white, black, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian—relations among racial and ethnic groups in New York are simultaneously a story of immigrants and their children and their relations with natives and with each other.

### The Changing Contours of Racism and Nativism

Howard Winant (2006: 989) summarizes the contradictory nature of current race relations: “In the post-World War II era, the postcolonial era, it has been possible to claim that race is less salient than before in determining life chances; this is the nonracialist or color blind argument. At the same time social organization continues to function along racial lines; race consciousness operates in the allocation of resources, the dynamics of social control, and the organization of movements for equality and social justice.”

While the right wing of American politics increasingly argues that we have now achieved a race-neutral society and should no longer measure or classify by race, the left is in the ironic position of defending the nation's vast racial statistical system in order to monitor and expose continuing racial inequalities. Many scholars have found similar patterns in the changes in white racial attitudes since the Civil Rights Movement. Overt racism and conscious support for de jure racial discrimination are confined to a small (but dangerous) fringe of the white population. Most whites hold what Douglas Massey (2007: 74) summarizes as “a conscious rejection of principled racism, on the one hand and the persistence of negative sentiments and beliefs about African Americans on the other.” This constellation of racial attitudes has been labeled symbolic racism (Kinder and Sears 1981), modern racism (McConahay 1983), *laissez-faire* racism (Bobo, Kluegel, and Smith 1997), color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva 2003), and aversive racism (Dovidio and Gaertner 2004).

Yet most studies of racism and prejudice have been done under the old race relations paradigm—testing white attitudes toward blacks and much more rarely, blacks' attitudes toward whites. Only very recently has this research begun to include attitudes toward Hispanics and Asians.

Empirically, there is a great deal of evidence that the brightness of the boundary between blacks and whites is much stronger than the boundary separating whites from Asians and Hispanics (Alba 2005). For one thing, because of the ways in which racial statistics are structured in the U.S. a lot of Hispanics consider themselves to be whites, and are considered by whites to be white. Half of Hispanic immigrants report their race to be white in the U.S. census (Foner and Alba 2010: 803). Internarrative with whites is much higher among Asians and Hispanics than blacks (Perlmann and Waters 2004). While residential segregation also exists between Asians and whites and Hispanics and whites, it operates differently between blacks and whites. Levels of segregation for blacks are at the same high level regardless of the socioeconomic status of African Americans. It is not just poor African Americans who are segregated from whites in neighborhoods. For Asians and Hispanics segregation decreases as their socioeconomic status increases, which suggests less resistance on the part of whites. These different experiences have led some scholars to suggest that the color line in the U.S. has shifted from one in which the greatest divide is between whites and nonwhites, to one where the important divide is between blacks and nonblacks, with Asians and Hispanics facing a future in which they will be able to step over the color line to join whites while leaving African Americans behind (Gans 1999; Loewen 1988; Lee and Bean 2010).

The question of how race will affect the integration of nonwhite immigrants and especially the second and later generations in the U.S. has generated disagreement. The theory of segmented assimilation argues that race will have very negative consequences for the children of immigrants, channeling them into segregated neighborhoods, standard schools, and oppositional identities (Portes and Zhou 1993; Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Latinos are especially seen as subject to racial exclusion that results in a lack of intergenerational mobility and stalled progress (Telles and Ortiz 2008; Massey and Sánchez R. 2010). Other scholars see a much more optimistic outcome for Latinos and Asians, with a trajectory more like that of European immigrants in the twentieth century rather than a racialized group like African Americans (Alba and Nee 1999; Alba 2009; Smith 2001; Kasinitz et al. 2008). Massey and Sánchez R. (2010) argue that the hostile context of reception that Latino immigrants are currently experiencing is creating

a reactive ethnicity that is hardening boundaries between Latinos and native whites. Based on interviews with both documented and undocumented first- and second-generation immigrants in the area between New York and Philadelphia, including some interviews in New York City, these authors argue that Latinos are rejecting an American identity: "Most arrive with dreams of social or material advancement and initially perceive the United States as a land of opportunity. Over time they encounter a harsh world of work and experience the indignities of prejudice, discrimination, and blocked opportunities, and most eventually come to see the United States as a place of inequality and racism" (Massey and Sánchez R. 2010: 21).

Massey and Sánchez R. are correct to point out the growing anti-immigrant opinions in the U.S. since the recession of 2008, and the targeting of undocumented immigrants that has been occurring all over the country since the 1990s. Yet I believe they are incorrect in interpreting this as a racial phenomena. The targeting of undocumented immigrants may have the potential to become a racial phenomenon but as of yet it is best characterized as nativism. The difference is that while both racism and nativism targeted toward Latino immigrants leads to discrimination and prejudice, racism is based on differences believed to be permanent and innate, while nativism is based on difference owing to nationality. Traditionally in the United States, immigrants and their children have become Americans. Blacks have always been Americans, but have not been accepted as equal Americans with whites.

In his perceptive study of third- and later-generation Mexican Americans in California and Kansas, Tomás Jiménez (2010) argues that most later-generation Mexican Americans experience discrimination not because they are Mexican American *per se*, but because they are associated with new Mexican immigrants in the eyes of native-born Americans. In other words, Mexicans are not discriminated against in American society because of their culture or beliefs about their racial inferiority, but rather because Americans question their right to be in the country. Jiménez argues that Mexican Americans are experiencing a racialized form of nativism, not due to a legacy of colonialism but rather because of contemporary immigration. He writes that "instances in which race matters in the lives of Mexican Americans are virtually always linked to notions of Mexicans as foreigners, as seen in situations

in which respondents were mistaken for immigrants." Mia Tuan (1998) makes a similar argument about Asian Americans.

This distinction matters a lot for the future integration of nonwhite immigrants and their descendants in the United States. Exclusion based on race is about a permanent or at least very long lasting boundary which will give rise to reactive ethnicity and societal cleavages. Nativism could have the same result, but it does not have to. Anti-immigrant attitudes in the United States are always ambivalent, as the country has an ideology of acceptance of immigrants. Anti-immigrant attitudes tend to follow the unemployment rate, rising in bad times and declining in good times. Because of birthright citizenship and rapid language and cultural assimilation the children of immigrants do not have the same recognizable difference from natives that immigrants themselves do.

#### Evidence from the New York Second-Generation Study

The study of second-generation immigrants in the New York City metropolitan area that I conducted with Philip Kasinitz and John Mollenkopf sheds some light on this issue.<sup>2</sup> The study drew representative samples of young adults (age 18–32) from five ethnic groups: Dominicans, South Americans, West Indians, Chinese, and Jews from the former Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup> We also interviewed samples of African Americans, Puerto Ricans, and whites with native-born parents. Altogether, we completed telephone interviews with 3,415 respondents and did further in-person, in-depth interviews with a subsample of approximately 10 percent (for a more complete overview of the study, see Kasinitz et al. 2008).

We reached three conclusions about the kinds of inclusion and exclusion these young people were experiencing. First we found that their patterns of socioeconomic mobility and educational and occupational achievement in young adulthood were strongly racially patterned. They were entering and experiencing a racially stratified city. The white Russian immigrants and the Chinese were doing the best, followed by the lighter-skinned South Americans, the West Indians, the darker-skinned Dominicans, and then the native Puerto Ricans and African Americans.

Second, we found that race was not experienced the same way by all of the "nonwhite" respondents. African Americans, and those who "look like" or could be confused with African Americans (such as

West Indians and dark-skinned Latinos), have more negative experiences than other nonwhite groups. They face more systematic and "brighter" racial boundaries than do Asians and light-skinned Latinos (Alba 2005). This, we argue, creates more formidable obstacles for those defined as black, as opposed to those who are just "nonwhite," to full incorporation into American society (see also Hattam 2007).

Yet, even for those who are defined as black, race is far from the monolithic barrier it was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While racial prejudice is alive and well in twenty-first-century New York, there are many spheres of life in which it has lost its potent punch. Most previous works on the second generation have seen being a racial minority as a distinct disadvantage in the U.S., and those in the second generation often do face serious racial barriers. At the same time, at least some of them, precisely because they have been defined as "nonwhite," have also benefited from the institutions, political strategies, and notions of rights developed in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement. Ironically, affirmative action and other policies designed to redress long-standing American racial inequities turn out to work better for immigrants and their children than they do for the native minorities for whom they were designed (Skrentny 2001; Graham 2001).

Finally, we found that the children of immigrants in New York were not experiencing exclusion based on the fact that they were the children of immigrants. They did not feel like they needed to choose between their parents' cultures and American culture. Unlike stories of earlier European second-generation young people who had to change their names to less ethnic ones to get jobs or go to college, or who were ashamed of their parents' language, our respondents saw no conflict between their ethnic and American identities. Indeed many of them thought their bilingualism and combination of cultures were advantages rather than disadvantages. On balance, the majority of second-generation respondents did not perceive either America or being American as something racial. Even those who had experienced a great deal of discrimination tended to see themselves as American and to see America as a place that accepted their culture and their identity.

We speculated that this is very much tied to their coming of age in New York. Multiculturalism is relatively easy for New Yorkers. The history of the city's incorporation of immigrants, the sheer diversity of its



population, and the relative openness of its institutions to a wide variety of groups create a kind of on-the-ground diversity that is perceived as particularly welcoming and inclusive.

Indeed, when we asked young people about cultural inclusion we got generally positive stories. They did not find it hard to keep the music or food or religion of their parents. The exclusion that they experienced was based on the color of their skin, not their cultural difference. We asked a series of questions about discrimination that made that clear.

We asked respondents about their own experiences with discrimination: "Within the past year, did you feel like someone was showing prejudice toward you or discriminating against you?" (For native whites, we added the phrase "because of your ethnicity?") This question is inclusive of experiencing both negative actions (discrimination) and negative attitudes (prejudice). We then asked whether the respondent had experienced this prejudice or discrimination at work, when buying something in a store or waiting for a table at a restaurant, by the police, at school or when looking for work. The pattern of responses is presented in table 5.4.

The general pattern is that native-born blacks and West Indians report the most prejudice and discrimination, followed by the Hispanic groups, then the Chinese, and then the whites and Russian Jews. Clearly

Table 5.4. Experience of Prejudice by Group

	Percentage experiencing prejudice				
	At Work	Shops/ Restaurants	From Police	At School	Looking for Work
South Americans	20	41	22	17	17
Dominican	19	37	25	14	20
Puerto Rican	26	40	22	15	22
West Indian	30	57	35	17	26
Black	35	55	34	15	33
Chinese	14	41	13	25	12
Russian Jew	8	12	8	11	9
White	14	15	6	9	6

Note: South Americans includes people whose parents are from Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru.

Source: New York Second-Generation Study (Kasinitz et al. 2008).

this suggests a predictable hierarchy based on skin color. Groups clearly of African descent (and most likely to be seen as "like" African Americans) experience the most discrimination, followed by Latinos, then Asians, with whites reporting the least discrimination.

Dominican males are much more likely than South American and Puerto Rican males to report problems with the police (in all groups, problems with the police were far more common for men than for women). Indeed, the Dominican males are closer to the African American and the West Indian males in their perceived levels of prejudice from the police. It is worth noting that among native white males the number that report having experienced "prejudice or discrimination by the police" is actually far lower than the number that have actually been arrested. We also asked a question about whether respondents thought that the police favor whites in New York City. Most respondents in every group agreed with that statement although West Indians and native blacks were most likely to agree. There were no significant gender differences in any group except for the Dominicans, where more males than females thought the police favored whites (79 percent vs. 61 percent).

The locations where respondents are most likely to have encountered discrimination also vary by group, as indicated in table 5.4. Shopping and dining out are the places where every group most commonly experiences discrimination, ranging from 12 percent of Russian Jews who report such problems to 57 percent of West Indians. But among the Chinese, discrimination while shopping was followed by discrimination in school (25 percent), which is striking given that the group was generally the most successful in educational attainment. The Chinese report much lower levels of discrimination while looking for work or from the police—around 13 percent. For West Indians, being "hassled" by the police was the next most likely arena (35 percent), followed by work (30 percent), looking for work (26 percent), and in school (17 percent).

Respondents clarified these survey patterns in our in-depth interviews. Often different ethnic groups are referring to different phenomena when they answer the questions on discrimination and prejudice. When the Chinese discuss discrimination at school, it turned out they were discussing discrimination from peers, primarily black and

Hispanic students in their schools who teased or bullied them. They also experienced what might be seen as "positive discrimination": fellow students who tried to copy from their papers in school because they were assumed to be very smart, or teachers who put them in the hardest math class just because they were Chinese.

The "discrimination" that the Hispanic and black respondents were thinking of was much more likely to come from white teachers or administrators who assumed that they were not smart. They described being put in bilingual education classes when they did not need them and being criticized for not speaking English correctly. They described sometimes blatant racism from white teachers as well as guidance counselors who steered kids into non-college-track courses. Those who went on to college described discrimination from white peers at college—one Dominican woman told us that when she was moving into her freshman dorm room her roommate insisted on being present so that she would not steal anything. They also complained about white professors who had low expectations of their nonwhite students.

Negative experiences with the police were very common among black and Hispanic young men. They described being stopped if they were "driving while black," or stopped on the street or on the subway because they "fit the description." Most young men were very angry about their experiences with the police and most had been advised by parents or teachers or friends to just "take it" and not to talk back because that could lead to far greater trouble. So most of the young men ended up "swallowing" a lot of anger.

Encounters with the police seem to have a particularly deep and long-lasting effect on young people, particularly young men. Part of this may be because, no matter how unfairly one is treated, it is generally imprudent, or actually dangerous, to argue back. This inability to respond leaves one with a bitter sense of frustration. Further, it is hard to dismiss a police officer who treats one badly as simply "ignorant" or a lout, as one could with a peer. The police are armed representatives of the state. Negative treatment by them, in some way, represents negative treatment by the larger society. And if a group, such as African Americans, already has ample reason to feel excluded and stigmatized, repeated negative encounters with the police can reinforce this perception in ways they may not for whites.

Finally, anonymous encounters with shopkeepers, security guards, and particularly with the police in public spaces are powerful because they are so purely "racial." In such confrontations class differences do not count—as the frequent, bitter complaints of middle-class African Americans make clear (Feagin 1991). Nor do ethnic differences. Many of the victims of some of New York's most notorious police brutality cases have been black immigrants. A police officer rarely has a basis for knowing if a young man on a public street is African American or West Indian, middle class or poor. If the police officer discriminates, it is on the basis of race alone.

By contrast, many respondents from many groups reported hearing racial slurs on the street or on subways. Unlike encounters with the police, these incidents were described as hurtful but not overly dramatic, perhaps because the victim had more power to respond. Indeed, some young men responded to slurs by threatening or actually engaging in physical violence. These incidents contributed to a sense that other people were identifying them racially and ethnically and that they had to stand up for themselves. But most people remembered them as a regrettable aspect of dealing with other "ignorant kids," and in contrast to encounters with the police, these incidents generally did not leave lasting scars or deep anger.

The model presented in figure 5.1 captures the differences in the experiences and consequences of different types of discrimination across the groups in our study. Not all "nonwhites" are alike. The "closer" you are perceived to be to African Americans the more serious the discrimination. Groups differ in the degree and kind of discrimination they experience. So after African Americans, West Indians face the most discrimination, followed by Dominicans and Puerto Ricans. South Americans experience much less. Chinese experience discrimination even less and Russians—as whites—the least.

A first set of racial incidents in public spaces (experienced by Dominicans, West Indians, Puerto Ricans, and African Americans especially on the streets, in stores, and from the police) do not leave much control to the nonwhite victim and thus lead to discouragement and confrontation with whites. The respondents try to avoid racial discrimination by avoiding white neighborhoods so they will not be targeted or try to dress nicely so that cabs will stop for them or restaurants will give them

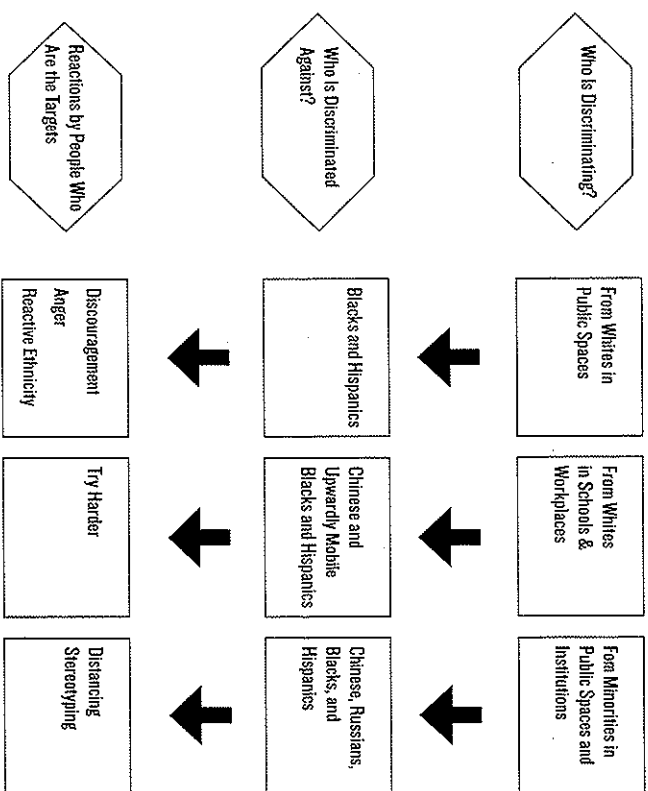


Figure 3.1. Different Types of Racial Discrimination Experienced by the Second Generation

good service. They may try to signal their middle-class status to differentiate themselves from the “ghetto poor,” or, in the case of Dominicans, West Indians, and Puerto Ricans, also try to signal their ethnic difference from African Americans. But in impersonal encounters on the street or in job applications, often the only thing whites know about them is their race and such techniques cannot always prevent racist treatment.

A second set of racially discriminatory incidents in schools and workplaces (more common among Chinese, Russians, South Americans, upwardly mobile blacks, Dominicans, and Puerto Ricans) lead less to discouragement and more to increased efforts to overcome racial stereotypes. When discrimination by whites occurs in an institutional setting where the nonwhite victim perceives some degree of control over it, such discrimination is experienced as a challenge—there is a felt need to try harder to succeed. So workplace discrimination is often

interpreted not as a reason to give up, but as a reason to show how good one can be, to show that one is better than all the other workers so that individual characteristics can end up trumping racial stereotypes.

Respondents defined as black experience these kinds of incidents but they require integrated settings—schools, workplaces, churches—to even be exposed to whites’ discriminatory practices up close. As a result poor African Americans, West Indians, and Dominicans don’t usually experience as much of this sort of discrimination because they spend so much time in segregated neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces. Ironically, it is better-off blacks and Hispanics, who are more likely to be in integrated settings, who thus have the “opportunity” to be the victim of this sort of discrimination (see also Hochschild 1996; Vickerman 1999).

Finally the third set of racially discriminatory encounters—intergroup tensions—is quite common in multiethnic New York. The different ethnic and racial groups compete for resources at work, in schools, and in neighborhoods. The immense diversity in New York City means that there is a great deal of complexity in who is discriminating against whom. Often in-group favoritism—such as black supervisors wanting to hire black workers—is perceived as racism by other nonwhite employees who are vying for the same jobs. This sort of ethnic rivalry accounts for a great deal of the reported discrimination among all groups and it certainly makes young people highly conscious of ethnic differences. Yet the vast number of crosscutting rivalries also means that while there may be clear ethnic hierarchies among nonwhites, they are less associated with any permanent or systemic sense of inferiority or superiority than are rivalries between whites and nonwhites.

The use of similar racial talk to describe many different types of phenomena can also mask social progress. The more integrated a person’s life, the more likely he or she is to experience discrimination in a number of spheres. Chinese, the most successful second-generation group in our study, are also the group most likely to be in integrated schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods where they are in the minority among other groups. In contrast, black and Latino respondents are more likely to be in segregated schools and neighborhoods, especially during their earliest years of education where they tend to comprise part of the majority group. For those of them who are upwardly mobile, it is

often not until college and the workplace that they finally have enough contact with other groups and particularly with whites to have much opportunity to be discriminated against.

### Understanding Discrimination

Our study shows that the term "discrimination" is being used to describe all kinds of perceived unfairness. African Americans' experiences, however, are the benchmark against which we can compare the experiences of all the groups. African Americans are most likely to report discrimination when looking for work and being at work. They, along with West Indians, report the highest levels of discrimination while shopping and from the police. And the discrimination they experience while shopping is very different than what is reported by other groups—it is not due to social class. Better-educated African Americans are *more* likely than the less well educated to report discrimination—the opposite of what occurs among native whites. Indeed, upward mobility in terms of class status may actually expose African Americans to more rather than less discrimination in their everyday lives. Such situations are often understood as an indication that "race," an ascribed and immutable characteristic, is trumping class, which most Americans see as an achieved characteristic. Needless to say, this is the sort of discrimination that is the most frustrating for its victims, since there is so little that an individual can do about it.

Indeed, our data show that different types of discrimination produce different reactions. When it is possible to demonstrate one's individuality in school or at work, respondents in our study tended to react by trying to "outshine" those who doubt them. It is in impersonal instances, such as when a police officer or store keeper who knows nothing about someone except his or her race treats that person poorly, that discrimination wreaks its most debilitating and anger-inducing effects. This, we argue, is the specific kind of racism that could lead to what Alejandro Portes and Rubén Rumbaut (2001) call "reactive ethnicity." While Chinese, South Americans, and Russian Jews are also sometimes treated unfairly because of their race or ethnicity, their experiences are qualitatively and quantitatively different from the experiences of people with dark skin.

Thus the fact that children of immigrants have come to be categorized as members of native "minority groups" does not mean their experience has been the same as that of the native minorities. They clearly do suffer much of the same prejudice and discrimination, but they do not inherit the scars and handicaps of a long history of racial exclusion. Nor, for them, are everyday incidents of discrimination likely to be seen as connected to deep and pervasive power asymmetries. These incidents are not trivial, but they can be challenged and they do not engender hopelessness.

Finally, even if the children of immigrants are coming to be seen (and to see themselves) as members of a "minority," we must ask if, at this historical juncture, that is always a bad thing. Too often social scientists have assumed that being "racialized" as "black" or "Latino" can only have negative consequences for the children of immigrants, a view they often share with immigrant parents. They are partially right. Pervasive racism can indeed be soul crushing, and the nihilism of the American ghetto can lead young people down many a self-destructive path. However, African American communities have always been more complex than this view implies, maintaining their own institutions and paths of upward mobility (Neckerman, Carter, and Lee 1999). In post-Civil Rights America, the heritage of the African American struggle for racial justice has given young people new strategies, vocabularies, and resources for upward mobility (see Massey et al. 2007).

This may partially explain the pervasiveness of the notion of "discrimination" among the current generation of second-generation and native white young adults. If the African American experience of discrimination has been more harsh than that of other groups, the African American civil rights struggle has also provided a heroic model for opposing discrimination. Today's children of immigrants are quick to take up this model even when, ironically, they are better positioned to make use of it than are African Americans. While their immigrant parents are often willing to quietly accept unfair treatment, the second-generation children are far more willing to challenge discrimination whenever they see it. In the post-Civil Rights era, this is one of the ways in which they are becoming American.

They have the advantage of becoming American in New York where they feel very much included as Americans even if they experience

discrimination as nonwhite Americans. Their experiences might be very different in other parts of the country where they might be more likely to experience both the sting of nativism and racism.

Areas of the country that are coping with large numbers of immigrants without a history of absorbing immigrants in the past are more likely to have sharper divisions between immigrants and natives (Waters and Jiménez 2005). These new destinations are also places where the majority of immigrants are Latino and in many cases undocumented, stoking nativist concerns (Massey 2008). In the southern and midwestern United States, the combination of rapid in-migration to areas that have had no recent experience with immigration, and sometimes no history of immigration at all, along with a preponderance of unskilled undocumented immigrants, have created a potent stew of anti-immigrant feeling and behavior. Daniel Hopkins (2010) finds that a combination of national anti-immigrant rhetoric (mostly from the Republican Party and right-leaning media) with a sudden growth in immigration leads to local anti-immigrant policies. With the failure of comprehensive immigration reform at the federal level, many states and local towns and counties have passed laws directed toward immigrants. Restrictive local laws against immigrants sanction landlords who rent to undocumented people, target day laborers gathering in public places, authorize police to inquire about legal status and share that information with federal authorities, and restrict undocumented immigrants from any local aid or services. In 2010 state legislatures considered 1,400 legislative bills targeting immigration, and passed 208 laws (Johnston and Morse 2011).<sup>4</sup> Immigrants and their children in New York City are not directly affected by these anti-immigrant developments. It is almost impossible to imagine such negative legislation being enacted in New York or other gateway cities where the majority of immigrants continue to live. This is especially true now that many decades of immigration have created a large population of citizen first- and second-generation Latinos who wield strong voting power in states like New York, California, Texas, and Florida.

Yet this does not mean that the rising tide of nativism might not affect intergroup attitudes in these gateway cities. Scholars such as Douglas Massey (2011) have argued that anti-immigrant attitudes are racializing Latinos, and that what began as nativist fears may crystallize into racialized discrimination that will consign Mexican immigrants

and their children into a permanent underclass. Whether the tolerance and acceptance immigrants and their children experience in New York City will spread to the rest of the country, or the intolerance and exclusion that characterizes other parts of the country will spread to New York, is an open question. Meanwhile, the race to fix ongoing racial inequality is even more pressing, as immigration increases the numbers of people facing ongoing racial inequality.

#### NOTES

1. There is also a large literature about European immigrants during the period after 1880 being defined as "nonwhite" and as races separate from whites (Jacobson 1998). While some historians and sociologists would argue that these immigrants were racialized in a way similar to blacks, none would argue that what they experienced was as virulent as what blacks experienced. The best empirical investigation of this difference remains Stanley Lieberson's 1980 book, *A Piece of the Pie*.
2. The sample included the four boroughs of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx but excluded Staten Island, because it had a much lower concentration of immigrants and their children. It also included the close suburbs of Long Island, Westchester, New Jersey and Connecticut. See Kasinitz et al. (2008) for more details.
3. We interviewed about 400 from each background and oversampled Chinese to learn both about those whose parents came from the mainland and those from Taiwan or Hong Kong. Our Russian sample was restricted to about 300.
4. It is important to note that even in new destinations some local governments are passing pro-immigrant legislation, "welcoming" immigrants to their areas, or declaring themselves "sanctuaries" where police are prohibited from enforcing immigration laws (Ramakrishnan and Wong 2010).

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