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THE INCIDENCE OF POVERTY ACROSS THREE GENERATIONS OF BLACK AND WHITE IMMIGRANTS IN THE POST-CIVIL RIGHTS ERA: ASSESSING THE IMPACTS OF RACE AND ANCESTRY

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ABSTRACT:
Recent debates on immigration have led to speculation regarding the socioeconomic advancement of immigrants and their children with some prominent scholars arguing that recent immigrants are of "low quality" and will have difficulty matching the accomplishments of immigrants of the early twentieth century. Others have suggested that immigrant progress will be hindered in the Post-Civil Rights Era, but not by the immigrants own shortcomings. Rather, their opportunities will be limited by deindustrialization and racism. This study examines patterns of poverty across three generations of recent immigrants from Africa, the Americas, and the Caribbean using U.S. Census data from 1980 and 2000. The findings here contradict the expectation that recent immigrants would not experience significant upward mobility. There is a nearly universal intergenerational decline in poverty among immigrants groups from throughout the western hemisphere—regardless of their racial or national origins. However, a significant Black disadvantage emerges in the "new second" and "new third" that leaves Black immigrants more likely than all others to experience poverty in the U.S. It is a disadvantage that cannot be explained by national origins, city of residence, age, education, employment, or marital status. All of this suggests that the success and failure of immigrants in the U.S. may have more to do with their placement in our most crude racial schemas than with their human capital.

THE INCIDENCE OF POVERTY ACROSS THREE GENERATIONS OF BLACK AND WHITE IMMIGRANTS IN THE POST-CIVIL RIGHTS ERA: ASSESSING THE IMPACTS OF RACE AND ANCESTRY[1]

The Civil Rights upheaval of the 1960's changed forever the character of American life and American democracy. Legislative changes of the time left American minorities with rights and recourse that were unprecedented; the country had taken one more step toward color-blind meritocracy. It was a new day. This story is rehashed often, but seldom do we hear that as much as Civil Rights reforms of the 1960's ushered in a new day, so too did they usher in millions of new Americans and a new American diversity (Lee and Bean 2004; Bean and Stevens 2003; Portes and Rumbaut 1996). The Immigration (Hart-Cellar) Act of 1965 lifted quota restrictions on immigration and set into motion massive flows of immigration from Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the first-ever voluntary flows from Africa. Since that time concern over what this might mean for the future of American society has grown.

A central question in debates regarding immigration has been the extent to which recent immigrants may experience a timely ascent into the mainstream of American economic life. A spate of immigration scholars have leveled supply-side arguments against immigration, insisting that the relative lack of human and cultural capital among recent immigrants make meaningful socioeconomic assimilation unlikely for them. Books by Peter Brimelow (1995) and, more recently, George Borjas (1999) have helped to popularize this position in academic and policy circles as well as in the general public. But they are not the only ones arguing that recent immigrants may not fare as well as their predecessors. Herbert Gans (1992) argued in a widely cited article published a few years earlier that recent arrivals would not experience the rapid upward mobility that earlier immigrants had because 1) they were entering a society that was

[1] "Ancestry" and "National Origins" are used synonymously in the paper. National origins is more often used when discussing the foreign-born and ancestry when discussing the children and grandchildren of immigrants.

rapidly deindustrializing and exporting many of the jobs that allowed earlier immigrants to get a "foot in the door" of the American economy, and 2) most recent immigrants were of non-European descent and would be subject to the disadvantages of being the members of the racial minority in the U.S. The logical conclusions regarding immigrant futures in the U.S. are the same, but the latter argument is different in that it points to shortcomings of the receiving society rather than to shortcomings of immigrants.

Each of these arguments is compelling in its own right. Millions of unskilled and low skilled workers have entered the U.S. in the last four decades—a time in which it became increasingly difficult to survive without professional and technical skills. Often, they arrive with little education and little familiarity with or affinity for "American culture." Add to this the fact that they are not White people who can slip unnoticed into the host society's most coveted positions. They may, instead, slip unnoticed into a pattern of poverty. It is little wonder that so many scholars are pessimistic about immigrant futures in the U.S.

This paper asks whether this pessimism is warranted and whether it is equally warranted for all immigrant groups. Gans (1992) suggests that contemporary patterns of racial discrimination will hinder the progress of Post-Civil Rights Era immigrants and their children. The effects of race are unmistakable for Black and White Americans—with significant deficits accruing to Black victims and substantial profits accruing to White beneficiaries. Might the same be true among immigrants and their progeny? Might immigrant success depend on our most crude racial distinctions—distinctions that many of us believed would fade to obsolescence in the face of the new American diversity? These questions are answered here using the incidence of poverty as the measure of socioeconomic assimilation or the lack thereof.

A BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW: REFINING THE QUESTION AND OFFERING SOME HYPOTHESES

It has been suggested that "we are on the brink of fundamental changes in the social fabric of America's urban immigrant regions, approaching a point at which inner-city black poverty may be replicated by a new pattern of foreign-born poverty" (Clark 2001:183). To date, however, much of the demographic research on these questions has produced results that challenge such dire predictions. While immigrants are disproportionately impoverished in the years immediately following their arrival, they move out of poverty rapidly. So as much as their arrivals contribute to poverty in the U.S., so too do their advancements contribute to poverty declines in the U.S. (Chapman and Bernstein 2003), and their American born children seem to build on those advances even further.

Farley and Alba (2002) find that the children of immigrants outperform their parents and, in many cases, their peers of American-parentage on educational and occupational measures. This pattern of intergenerational mobility is universal and unmistakable in the Current Population Survey data employed in the study. Such advancements should diminish poverty in the second generation and beyond. But what might the results look like were the data organized by race rather than national or regional origins?

There is a limited body of literature on this question since most studies treat national origins as the primary stratifier among recent immigrants. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) note a Haitian disadvantage, for instance, in their study of high school student achievement, and they identify it as such. It is not treated explicitly as reflective of Black disadvantage even though the overwhelming majority of Haitians are of primarily Black/African descent. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) link immigrant success and failure to how immigrants are received into their new

societies and acknowledge that race bears on that receptivity, but they do not include race in either bivariate or multivariate analyses. This study does.

Where race is acknowledged results are mixed and often obscured by the lack of a proper comparison group. Dodoo (1996) and Kalmijn (1997) both demonstrate the socioeconomic superiority of Black Immigrant groups over Black Americans, but that is not necessarily the best comparison to make. After all, Black Americans are generally more impoverished than immigrants (Clark 2001). For Black Immigrants to outperform Black Americans should not be a big surprise since most immigrant groups are doing so. Black immigrants should be compared to Other immigrants at least as much as Other Blacks (see Bashi and McDaniel 1997). This is a central motivation for this paper.

A number of studies show that when race is included in analyses of immigrant achievement, a clear Black disadvantage emerges (Bean and Stevens 2003). The most poignant example of this may be Dodoo and Takyi's 2002 study of wage differentials among White and Black immigrants from Africa. With place of origin (Africa) held constant, a racial wage gap among otherwise similar immigrants becomes clear. Waldinger (2001) suggests that "for all practical purposes black immigrant and black American New Yorkers experience strikingly similar [labor market] outcomes" (p.106). Locational attainment of Black immigrants is compromised by a pattern of "White flight" that seems to ensue when upwardly mobile Black immigrants move into middle- and working-class neighborhoods (Waters 1999). A number of prominent scholars have catalogued the deleterious effects of the hypersegregation that results from such "flight" (Massey and Denton 1993; Massey, Condron and Denton 1987; Wilson 1987; Wilson 1996). All of this undermines Black immigrant efforts to advance and may influence the long-term prospects of their American-born children. Further, once the Black immigrant loses

his accent(s), he is, in the eyes of many, a Black male and nothing more. The American-born children of Black immigrants may be subject to all the disadvantages and indignities borne by slave-descended Black Americans (Waters 1999; Lopez 2004; Stepick et al. 2001), the economic and psychic costs of which are well documented (Pager 2003; Pager and Quillian 2005; Kirschenman and Neckerman 1992; Feagin 1992). Additionally, the American-born children of Black immigrants are left to face these challenges without the third-world point of reference that served to consol their parents when the going got rough for them in the U.S. (Kao and Tienda 1995; Ogbu 1991; Waters 1999).

In this study, the poverty rates of three immigrant generations from Africa and the African Diaspora (Central and South America and the Caribbean) are examined to assess the salience of race. The immigrants included here are comprised mainly of individuals who identify as White or "Other" on the U.S. Census race question. Blacks are in the minority, but their numbers are sufficient for the analyses to follow. In this population, I expect to find 1) substantial intergenerational advancement out of poverty but also 2) a significant race effect whereby Blacks are more likely to experience poverty even when relevant background characteristics are controlled—national origins, in particular. Despite all the attention paid to national origins in the immigrant adaptation literature, Black immigrants and their children may be more likely to experience poverty than others irrespective of where they (or their parents) came from. Finally, I expect to find that 3) the race effect grows with the passing of generations while national origins/ancestry fades in importance. In addressing these hypotheses we will come to a better sense of what (else) matters in shaping the likelihood of poverty once the race of an immigrant is known.

DATA AND METHODS

Data from the 1980 and 2000 U.S. Censuses (5% PUMS) are employed here to answer questions regarding the effects of race and nationality across generations. The use of these data is not without drawbacks. The U.S. Census samples are the only data sets large enough to generate sufficient samples for very small (yet salient) groups and provide an abundance of information on them, but they do not include all the information we need to precisely identify second generation populations.

Identifying the "New Second Generation" in U.S. Census Data

Like classic studies of intergenerational mobility (Blau and Duncan 1967; Featherman and Hauser 1976; Hout 1988) this paper is interested in determining the influence of one's socioeconomic "origins" on his socioeconomic "destination." One does not reach his destination until he has finished his schooling and perhaps established his own household. We are charged with the identification of adult populations comprised the children of immigrants who, by the year 2000, had reached their own "destinations." For the purposes of this study "adults" will include individuals at least 25 years of age. Identifying "new second generation" cohorts within the adult population is more complicated.

Scholars of immigration have been severely handicapped by the removal of questions regarding parents' place of birth from the U.S. Census questionnaire after 1970. Without this information the *direct* identification of adult (independent) children of immigrants is impossible. However, Hirschman (1994) points out that there are a number of emergent ancestry groups—groups not present in the U.S. in significant number until very recently—for whom second

generation membership can be inferred (*indirectly*). The most obvious cases may be Vietnamese and Cambodians; neither group was represented in significant number in the U.S. before the 1980 Census. This means that they are mostly foreign-born and those who are American-born must be of the second generation, no more and no less. Put another way, the American-born in these groups must be the children of immigrants and COULD NOT be the grandchildren of immigrants.

I apply this logic to identify African, Caribbean, Central and South American groups in which the American-born are predominantly second-generation. I examine 1980 census data to do this since all members of the adult second generation in the year 2000 would have been born before 1980. We may find a large number of ancestry groups whose American-born members have very low median ages, but if significant numbers in these groups are American-born *and* have American-born children of their own, then the generational status (second versus third or higher) of the American-born in the year 2000 is less certain.

Table 1 lists the nineteen groups which I treat here as "new second generation." They are all characterized by very youthful population distributions with median ages of 10 years or less in 1980—compared that year's U.S. median of 29 years. This means that most of them are too young to have American-born children of their own. However, age distributions for all nineteen groups are positively skewed with substantially higher means than medians. While the populations are very young there may be a non-trivial number of older group members pulling the mean upward and presenting the possibility of "new third generation" presence in their midst (since older American-born persons are likely to have American-born children of their own). I take completed fertility into account in order gauge this presence.

Table 1. about here

In 1980 the Census asked women to record the number of children they had ever born. From this number I subtract the number of pre-school-age children they had living with them at the time (since those children could not reach adulthood to contaminate the adult second generation samples by the year 2000) and come to a modified measure of completed fertility. Every respondent is assigned a value on this measure—men and children all receive values of zero since neither can have born children—and the mean value is calculated for each ancestry group. These values are displayed in the third column of Table 1 (Modified CFR) and can be interpreted as minimum proportional estimate[2] of third generation presence in the American born population. A modified CFR of .15 would mean that the average respondent of the given group had .15 children older than 4 years of age at the time of the 1980 Census and that 15% of the American-born population of that ancestry could, by 2000, constitute an adult "new third generation." They would likely slip, undetected, into adult "second generation" samples. I adopt .10 or 10% as the upper limit for this study. That is, groups in which I estimate more than 10% of the American-born population is of the third generation are not included in this study. On these bases, I include the nineteen groups listed in Table 1.

Generational Delineations

Now that American-born groups susceptible to "third generation contamination" have been identified and removed, first, second, and third generation groups can be delineated with reasonable confidence. Table 1 lists nineteen groups from throughout Africa and its diaspora

[2] They are "minimum" estimates in that the children of men in these groups who partner with women outside these groups are not counted.

among whom the American-born are most likely members of the second generation. Within these ancestry groups immigrant generations are defined as follows:

- The *first generation* is comprised of all foreign born members of the nineteen groups listed in Table 1 who were 25 years old by 1980 and had immigrated in 1975 or earlier. That is, those old enough and who have been in the country long enough to have adult American-born children by the year 2000.
- The *second generation* is captured at two points in time.
    - Second generation *children* are all children claimed by members of the first generation (defined above) in 1980.
    - Second generation *adults* are all American-born members of the nineteen ancestry groups listed in Table 1 who are 25 years of age and older in 2000.
- The *third generation* is comprised of all children claimed by adult members of the second generation (defined above) in 2000.

Table 2 displays generational counts for all nineteen ancestry groups and aggregates by regional origins, linguistic origins, and race. It is important to note that both child populations are weighted counts of adults with children. Rather than sifting through the data looking for children of these ancestries, I look for adults of these ancestries who have children of their own living with them. The "Total" rows in Table 2 indicate that, in 1980, there were 7,222 respondents who met the criteria above for inclusion in the first generation; they had 6,882 co-residing children between them who constitute the "Second Generation Children" category. The same relationship exists between the "Second Generation Adult" sample (n=8,302) and the

"Third Generation Children" (n=6,813). Child populations will be examined by way of weighted analyses of parental data.

Table 2 about here

The diversity in the sample is evident in Table 2. Dominicans, Ecuadorians, and Haitians comprise nearly half (45%) the sample, but a dozen other groups contribute significantly to the sample's ancestral mix. In the second and third panels of Table 2 data are aggregated by regional and linguistic origins to demonstrate that the small African minority (2%) is overwhelmed by those hailing from South America (37%), the Caribbean (33%) and Central America (28%). Spanish-speaking ancestries dominate in the sample (80%), but English (5%) and Other (15%) linguistic origins are not trivial. Both of these measures are constructed on the basis of ancestry so they are bound to provide us with different but not more information regarding the likelihood of poverty among immigrants, their children and their grandchildren. Race, on the Other hand, has no direct relationship to ancestry. Therefore it may provide us with more and different information regarding poverty among immigrants and their progeny. The racial diversity in the sample is clear. Whites constitute less than half (46%) of the sample, with "Others" (37%), Blacks (16%), and Asians (1%) making up the balance.

Analytical Strategy

The central question of this paper is whether, and how much, other attributes matter in predicting poverty once we know the race of an immigrant. Given that I have delineated four distinct generational groups, we may be tempted to examine the incidence of poverty across

these groups in an orderly fashion from first generation adults, to second generation children, to second generation adults, to third generation children. However, there is little to be gained in comparing parents and children sharing households since poverty is a familial measure and, therefore, cannot vary between parents and co-resident children. Any difference we do observe in the incidence of poverty between first generation adults and second generation children, for instance, will be reflective of nothing more than differential fertility rates of the poor and non-poor in the first generation.

Figure 1 about here

Therefore, comparisons made here are limited to: *first generation adults (1980) versus second generation adults (2000)* and *second generation children (1980) versus third generation children (2000)* as is depicted in Figure 1. These are the only proper intergenerational comparisons possible as they are the only ones that capture different generations at the same point(s) in the life course.

The dependent variable throughout the analysis will be a dichotomous measure of poverty based on the federally determined poverty threshold which, itself, depends on family size and composition. The threshold values are so low that we can be certain any family falling at or below it is struggling irrespective of regional cost of living differences. In the bivariate analyses to follow, poverty rates are presented by generation, race, ancestry, regional origins, and linguistic origins. While there is a great deal to be taken from this analysis, the question, "once we know an immigrants race, does anything else matter?" requires multivariate logistic regression techniques.

RESULTS

Table 3 provides poverty rates by each of four key attributes. Only those ancestries with 100 or more in each generational grouping are included in the analyses to follow as numbers smaller than that may not provide trustworthy estimates of poverty in the populations under study. There are too many numbers in this table to discuss them all, but one pattern is evident right away—a dramatic and nearly universal intergenerational decline in poverty.

Table 3 about here

When we look at rates of poverty in ancestry groups with sufficient numbers, intergenerational advancement is a rule without exception. Dominican children of the "new third generation" (18.5%) are less than half as likely to experience poverty as "new second children" twenty years earlier (40%). Note also that for the majority of ancestry groups listed in Table 3, poverty is more prevalent among first generation adults and their second generation children than it is in the U.S. population as a whole (10% for U.S. adults and 12.4% for U.S. children); but by the year 2000, most ancestry groups were characterized by poverty rates that were lower than those of the general U.S. population. The ancestry patterns are summarized very nicely by the regional origins measure which categorizes all nineteen ancestral homelands (national origins) into 9 regions of the world according to a United Nations classification scheme. Figure 2 provides graphic evidence of the intergenerational decline in poverty with one curious exception—Africa. The adult children of African immigrants appear more likely to have been poor in 2000 than members of their parents generation was twenty years earlier. However, every

other intergenerational comparison leads to the same conclusion—poverty is less likely with the passing of immigrant generations. In fact, second generation adults and their children of Central (9.1% and 7.3%) and South American (6.4% and 5.6%) stock have much lower poverty rates than the native-stock U.S. population (11.6% and 12.2%).

Figure 2 about here

Interestingly, linguistic origins groupings help us very little in predicting poverty. Figure 3 evidences surprisingly little variation in poverty rates by linguistic origins even in the first generation. In the later generations, those effects disappear completely. Immigrants from English speaking countries seem to fair worse early on but their disadvantage is short-lived. The children and grandchildren of non-English-speaking immigrants in this study are no more likely to experience poverty than their peers of U.S. stock.

Figure 3 about here

As we move to the fourth panel of Table 3 we can easily make out the pattern of intergenerational improvement but it is not clear that the pattern applies equally across racial groups. Figure 4 brings the answer to this question into focus, revealing four important findings: 1) there is a significant intergenerational decline in poverty for all three racial categories; 2) the decline is most pronounced for those in the "Other" category and least pronounced those in the Black category; 3) there is a racial crossover whereby "Others" are most likely to experience poverty in the early generations and Blacks are most likely to experience poverty in the latter

generations; 4) there is a significant White advantage that shows no sign of weakening with the passing of generations. Support for these statements is found in both panels of Figure 4.

Figure 4 about here

Starting with the panel at the left of the figure we see declining levels of poverty between the first and second generation. However, the decline is notably flatter for Black immigrants than for White and especially "Other" immigrants. The observed gap between White and Black immigrants grows from 4.3 percentage points in the first generation adult sample to 7.5 percentage points in the second generation adult sample. Conversely, the gap between Whites and "Others" is cut in half—from over 9 percentage points in the first generation to 4.4 in the second. A cross-over occurs such that Black immigrants who were less likely than "Others" to be impoverished in 1980 yielded a new Black second generation that is more likely than "Others" to experience poverty in 2000. Moving to the right hand side of Figure 4 we fix our attention on the reduction in exposure to poverty between the children and grandchildren of immigrants. This reduction is particularly dramatic for those in the "Other" category. In 1980, 31.6% of the children residing with immigrant parents in this racial category found themselves in poverty; in 2000, only 13.2% of "Other" children residing with second generation parents found themselves in poverty. The 5 point drop in the poverty rate among Blacks of immigrant stock (from 19.4% to 14.4%) is more than tripled by the by "Others" who, themselves, experienced an 18 point reduction in poverty. All of this points to the intergenerational emergence of a Black disadvantage among immigrants against a backdrop of persistent White advantage and dramatic improvement among the "Others."

The Problem with Assessing Race Effects across Generations

The fluid nature of race and racial identity has been underscored by a large research literature on the topic (Harris and Sim 2002; Landale and Oropesa 2002). It is clear that one's "race" may change from time to time and from place to place (Snipp 2003; Omi and Winant 1994). In this sense race can be seen as a dependent variable—a fact that undermines our ability to assess its effects. We may find that Black people disproportionately impoverished without being able to answer the question, are they poor because they are Black or Black because they are poor? It is a distinct possibility that the changing race effects noted above reflect changes in the respective ancestral compositions of groups who identify as White, Black and Other.

Table 4. about here

Table 4 provides the ancestral composition of each racial category and reveals some interesting intergenerational changes which may corrupt our assessments of race effects. In the "Black" category, for instance, there is a notable decline in the percent Guyanese and a substantial increase in the percent Dominican with the passing of generations. The exodus of the Guyanese, who constitute a very low-poverty group in these data, from the Black category may by itself drive poverty among latter-generation Black immigrants upward. This effect is further aggravated if they are replaced by high-poverty ancestry groups like the Dominicans. Such compositional changes are less evident in the "Other" population. Regardless, ancestral changes in all three groups warrant a multivariate examination that assesses the effects of race *net of*

nationality and related socio-demographic factors. Whatever racial disparities are uncovered here, it is important to point out that most of the "Whites" in this study are Hispanic.

The Multivariate Findings

As was outlined earlier, a main goal of this paper is to gauge the relative importance of race and ancestry in shaping patterns of poverty. It is clear in the bivariate analysis that both attributes bear on the likelihood of poverty. But once we know a person's "race" do national origins really matter? This is an empirical question that can be answered in a number of ways. Here, dummy variables indicating race (White, Black or Other) are entered into a logisitic regression equation estimating the probability of experiencing poverty. By examining fit (pseudo R^2) statistics for this baseline model for each of the four generational groupings, we can come to more definitive conclusions about the net explanatory power of race and position ourselves to assess the explanatory power of ancestry. In a second model a set of (12) dummy variables is introduced for ancestries large enough to generate meaningful coefficients. In a third and final model an additional set of independent variables is added to see whether race and nationality effects can be explained by compositional differences between races and/or ancestry groups.

Table 5 about here

Table 6 about here

Tables 5 and 6 display results from this analysis. There are only two (race) coefficients in the first model which, in combination with the constant, replicates the bivariate findings on

race and poverty, but additionally yields a baseline measure of model fit as seen at the bottom of Table 5. While statistically significant, race makes a small (1.3%) contribution to the explanation of poverty among first generation adults.[3] In all four generational groupings it is clear that Black and "Other" immigrants and their progeny are significantly more likely to be impoverished than respondents in the White referent category. Interestingly, this "White advantage" is most pronounced among "new third generation" children (column 4 in Table 6).

Twelve regression equations were estimated in constructing Tables 5 and 6, and in *all* models the variables added had statistically significant impacts on the likelihood of poverty. Model 2 introduces a set of twelve dummy variables for ancestry groups of sufficient size (greater than or equal to 100). The results from Model 2 are central to this paper providing evidence that ancestry does, after all, figure significantly into explanations of poverty even after we know the "race" of each individual in the sample. In fact, the addition of these (ancestry) variables more than doubles the explanatory power of the model. It is at least as important to point out that the race effects yielded by the first model remain large even after the effects of ancestry are netted out. Simply put, Black immigrants are not at a disadvantage by virtue of where they come from, but by virtue of their Black identification. Note that among adult members of the first generation (Table 5), the Black effect actually grows larger when ancestry is added to the model.

The third and final model(s) introduce a collection of control variables including place of residence (city), age, education (high school graduate=1), employment (employed=1), and a set of interactions terms meant to simultaneously capture the effects of sex and marital status. It is

[3] McFadden's pseudo R^2 is employed here. It treats the sum of the baseline model -2 log likelihood and χ^2 statistics as the total unexplained variance; it treats the model χ^2 the variance explained. By dividing the former sum by the latter we get a proportion which is presented here as a percentage—an estimate of the percentage of the variance explained by the variables in the model.

reasonable to expect that any combination of these factors might reduce racial and/or ancestry differences to statistical insignificance, but they do not. In fact, when we examine the Model 3 results for first generation adults (Table 5), we see that controlling for these attributes actually increases the gap between Black and White immigrants suggesting differential "returns" to social and demographic characteristics that further disadvantage Black immigrants.

There are a few notable findings regarding the influence of socio-demographic factors of the incidence of poverty. Residence in a large immigrant gateway city heightened the likelihood that children of the second generation would experience poverty, but the same is not true in third generation. Conversely, age seems only to matter in the "new third generation" in which children of older parents were significantly less likely to experience poverty. High school education, employment, and marriage all act as expected to avert poverty for immigrants and their children. The introduction of these variables reduces unexplained variance dramatically, but even when they are controlled non-White immigrants from throughout Africa, the Caribbean and Central and South America are more susceptible to poverty than White immigrants from those areas.

In short, there is a White advantage evident here that is robust to all manner of statistical control and impervious to nativity. It is also important to mention the changing relationship between Black and "Other" immigrants. Tables 5 and 6 both demonstrate that with the passing of generations, "Others" have pulled themselves closer to the very low poverty rates of Whites in the sample. Once relevant controls are applied, the difference between White and "Other" children of the third generation ($Exp[\beta]=1.27$, see Table 6) is only marginally significant while Blacks of the third generation ($Exp[\beta]=1.65$) remain further removed from the experiences of

their White counterparts. More striking is the crossover evident in Table 6 whereby Blacks become less similar, and "Others" more similar, to Whites with the passing of generations.

Figure 5 about here

This crossover is even more pronounced in Figure 5 which depicts intergenerational changes in the correlations between poverty and each of three race dummy variables. Rather, than asking how much difference does race make, I ask, in turn, how much difference does being White (as opposed to being anything else) make? How much difference does being Black make? And how much difference does being "Other" make? Pearson correlation coefficients indicate that the answer to all of these questions is "not very much," but there are a number of statistically significant and important findings reflected in the figure nonetheless. First, the impacts of both White and "Other" identities on the likelihood of poverty seem to being heading toward zero—albeit slowly in the case of Whites. We might predict from this an eventual convergence between the three racial groups. The Black lines in both panels are the only ones on an upward trajectory—suggesting that, as expected, Blackness has become *more* important in shaping patterns of poverty in the later generations.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Popular thought regarding immigration has been heavily influenced by the perception that "with immigration comes poverty." To the extent that this is true, it may be outweighed by the fact that immigrants quickly move themselves out of poverty and their American-born children appear to build on those advances. For a number of good reasons, scholars have

predicted that Post-Civil Rights Era immigrants would not advance at a pace or to a degree comparable to European immigrants of the early twentieth. But evidence presented here suggests that poverty is not particularly pronounced in the immigrant second generation. In fact, of twelve ancestry groups included in the analyses above, ten have poverty rates equal to or lower than that of the U.S.-born population by the second generation. I find no evidence to support the idea that we are "approaching a point at which inner-city black poverty may be replicated by a new pattern of foreign-born poverty" (Clark 2001:183). *Immigrants* appear to transcend their initial poverty; inner-city *Blacks* tend not to (Wilson 1987).

Bivariate and multivariate analyses presented here, demonstrate substantial White advantage and Black disadvantage—both of which remain significant even when education, employment, and marital status are held constant. Black immigrants do evidence an intergenerational advancement out of poverty, but it is much slower than that experienced by the racially ambiguous "Other" category, and it leaves Black immigrants more than twice as likely as White immigrants to experience poverty in the second and third generations.

Interestingly, there is relatively little Black disadvantage vis-à-vis Whites in the first generation and none of that disadvantage is explained by their place of origin, place of residence or their socioeconomic characteristics—in fact, holding these things constant heightens the racial difference between Black and White immigrant poverty rates. As we move into the second and third generation groups Black disadvantage becomes more pronounced. In Other words, Blackness becomes a better predictor of poverty with the passing of generations.

There is much to be taken from these findings to inform theory and policy. Supply-side arguments—which predict a retarded adaptation among recent immigrants that is attributable to the declining quality of immigrants themselves (Borjas 1999)—find no support here. We

observe high poverty, low human capital immigrant cohorts yielding second generation and third generation groups characterized by higher educational and occupational achievements and much lower levels of poverty. Whatever disadvantages there are associated with third-world origins they vanish in the course of a single generation (with respects to the likelihood of experiencing poverty). The persistent racial differences observed here, however, lend credence to demand-side arguments which have predicted that deindustrialization and racism would hinder immigrant progress in the Post-Civil Rights Era.

Among immigrants from Central and South America and the Caribbean, race—particularly, membership in the Black category—is a significant predictor of poverty even after national origins are known, and the Black disadvantage has grown larger with the passing generations. These racially differentiated patterns of immigrant advancement suggest that Portes and Rumbaut's (2001) concept of societal receptivity plays a central role in immigrant adaptation. Societal receptivity of national origins groups may vary little compared to the societal receptivity of racial groups. It is not clear that immigrants have to deal with prejudices held by Americans regarding their specific national origins as much as those held generally about immigrants, or Asians, or Latinos, or Blacks. Ancestry may have little or nothing to do with how members of the second generation are received by the larger society, but race (still) bears heavily on their social interactions. Early accounts of Black immigrant success (see Sowell 1981, 1978) seem to ignore the possibility that "racial stratification is a very important factor shaping the lives of *all* persons deemed Black in the United States, and immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean are not exempt" (Bashi and McDaniel 1997:679), but findings presented here support this position.

To the extent that an immigrant underclass is emerging, it appears to be a Black immigrant phenomenon—highlighting the fact that, for them, life chances are shaped as much (or more) by the fact that they are Black as by the fact they are immigrants. White advantage and Black disadvantage, with respect to poverty, are impervious to nativity. All of this leads me to conclude that any immigrant poverty that does persist into the second generation is less a reflection of the third-world origins of recent immigrants and more a reflection of the inability of American people and American institutions to live up to the meritocratic ideals and laws that are meant to define the Post-Civil Right Era.

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FIGURES

Figure 1. Intergenerational Comparisons

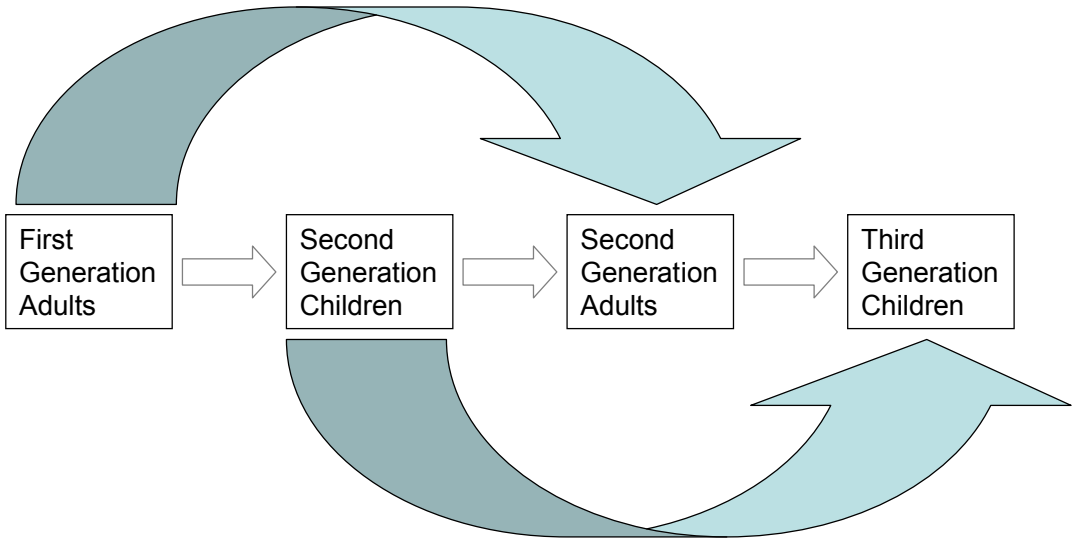
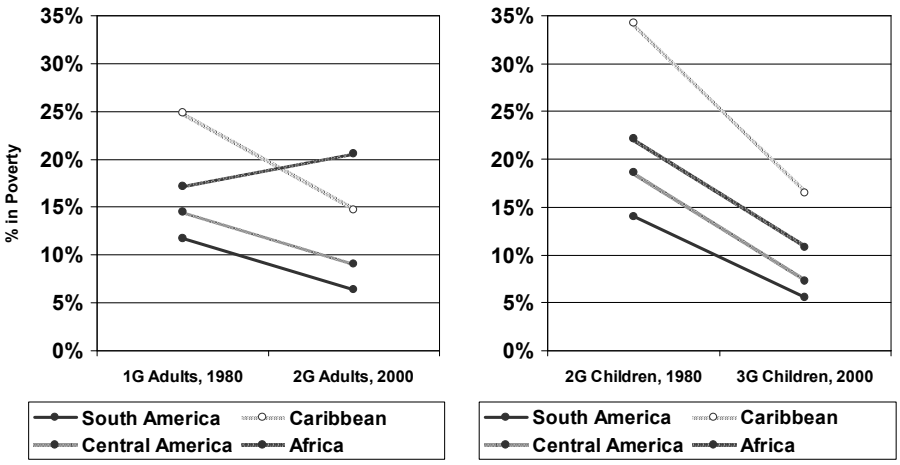
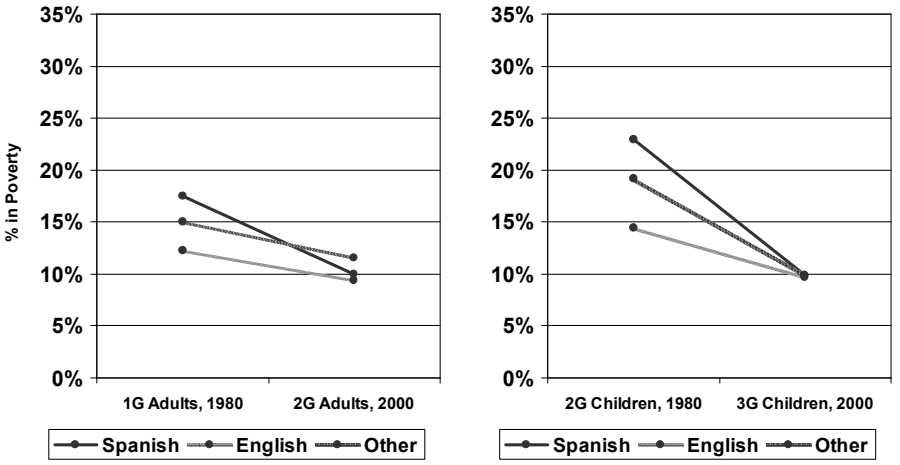


Figure 2. The Incidence of Poverty by Regional Origins across Generations



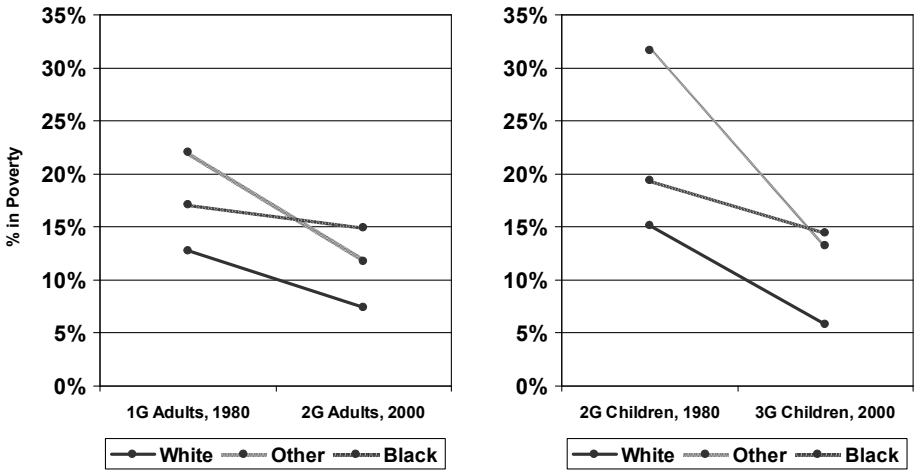
Data Source: 1980 and 2000 U.S. Census 5% Samples courtesy of IPUMS (Ruggles and Sobek 2006).

Figure 3. The Incidence of Poverty by Linguistic Origins across Generations



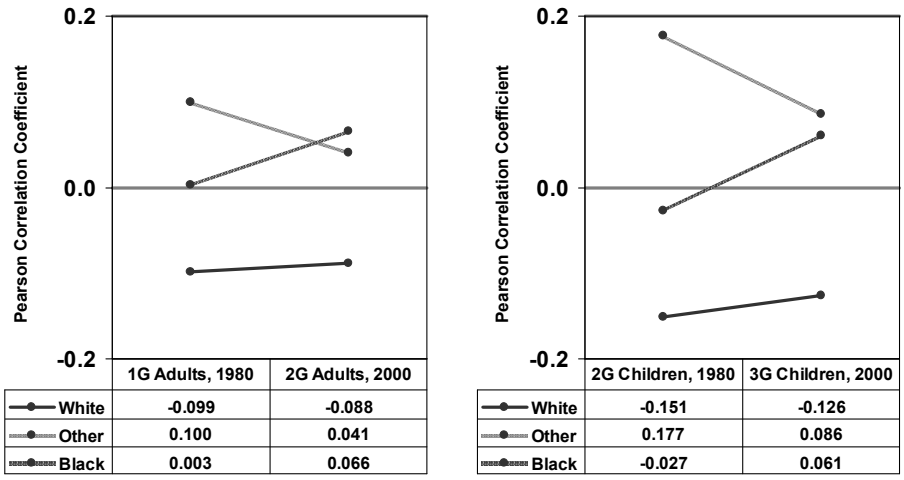
Data Source: 1980 and 2000 U.S. Census 5% Samples courtesy of IPUMS (Ruggles and Sobek 2006).

Figure 4. The Incidence of Poverty by Race across Generations



Data Source: 1980 and 2000 U.S. Census 5% Samples courtesy of IPUMS (Ruggles and Sobek 2006).

Figure 5. Correlations between Poverty and Race across Immigrant Generations



	1G Adults, 1980	2G Adults, 2000
White	-0.099	-0.088
Other	0.100	0.041
Black	0.003	0.066

	2G Children, 1980	3G Children, 2000
White	-0.151	-0.126
Other	0.177	0.086
Black	-0.027	0.061

Data Source: 1980 and 2000 U.S. Census 5% Samples courtesy of IPUMS (Ruggles and Sobek 2006).

TABLES

Table 1. Age and Fertility among the American-born of Select Ancestry Groups, 1980

ANCESTRY	*Median Age*	*Mean Age*	*Modified CFR**	N
Argentinean	9.0	12.6	0.10	493
Belizean	6.0	11.6	0.07	59
Brazilian	10.0	14.1	0.09	310
Chilean	8.0	13.3	0.09	359
Costa Rican	9.0	11.0	0.08	306
Dominican	6.0	8.5	0.04	1,902
Ecuadorian	7.0	8.5	0.01	947
Ghanian	4.0	7.3	0.04	56
Guatemalan	6.0	10.1	0.07	603
Guyanese/British Guiana	7.0	9.9	0.07	232
Haitian	6.0	9.7	0.10	1,088
Kenyan	5.0	6.5	0.00	15
Nicaraguan	10.0	13.6	0.08	459
Peruvian	8.0	11.0	0.05	720
Salvadoran	5.0	9.5	0.06	699
Sierra Leonean	7.5	13.1	0.00	18
Somalian	10.0	15.6	0.00	9
Sudanese	5.0	15.6	0.09	11
Uruguayan	5.0	8.6	0.01	93
Sample Totals	7.0	10.2	0.06	8,379
U.S.-born Totals	29.0	32.9	0.66	10,531,610

Data Source: 1980 U.S. Census 5% Sample courtesy of IPUMS (Ruggles and Sobek 2006)
*The modified completed fertility rate (CFR) is the average number of school-age (or older) members of each ancestry has or has ever had.

Table 2. U.S. Census Counts by Ancestry and Nativity

Ancestry	*First Generation Adults, 1980*[1]	*Second Generation Children, 1980*[2]	*Second Generation Adults, 2000*[3]	*Third Generation Children, 2000*[4]	Total	%
Dominican	1,520	1,551	1,901	1,672	6,644	23%
Ecuadorian	998	1,025	806	618	3,447	12%
Haitian	761	655	987	630	3,033	10%
Peruvian	582	539	791	627	2,539	9%
Salvadoran	810	672	666	517	2,665	9%
Guatemalan	674	629	545	535	2,383	8%
Nicaraguan	281	298	513	533	1,625	6%
Argentinean	260	240	486	344	1,330	5%
Brazilian	186	163	469	357	1,175	4%
Costa Rican	268	286	357	321	1,232	4%
Chilean	271	246	357	298	1,172	4%
Guyanese	310	349	147	112	918	3%
Belizean	66	53	91	102	312	1%
Uruguayan	84	95	48	36	263	1%
Ghanian	101	52	38	18	209	1%
Sudanese	3	4	49	38	94	0%
Kenyan	11	5	21	21	58	0%
Sierra Leonean	32	14	13	15	74	0%
Somalian	4	6	17	19	46	0%
Total	7,222	6,882	8,302	6,813	29,219	100%
Regional Origins						
South America	2,690	2,657	3,084	2,377	10,808	37%
Caribbean	2,281	2,206	2,911	2,322	9,720	33%
Central America	2,100	1,938	2,171	2,003	8,212	28%
Africa	151	81	136	111	479	2%
Total	7,222	6,882	8,302	6,813	29,219	100%
Linguistic Origins						
Spanish	5,747	5,581	6,465	5,498	23,291	80%
Other	955	828	1,528	1,047	4,358	15%
English	520	473	309	268	1,570	5%
Total	7,222	6,882	8,302	6,813	29,219	100%
Race						
White	3,285	3,155	3,854	3,200	13,494	46%
Other	2,504	2,470	3,057	2,675	10,706	37%
Black	1,378	1,171	1,338	903	4,790	16%
Asian	55	86	53	35	229	1%
Total	7,222	6,882	8,302	6,813	29,219	100%

[1]Foreign-born adults (25 to 39) of any of the ancestries listed above who immigrated prior to 1976.
[2]All children claimed by members of the immigrant first generation as defined above in 1980.
[3]American-born adults (25 to 39) of any of the ancestries above in 2000.
[4]All children claimed by members of the immigrant second generation as defined above in 2000.

Table 3. Incidence of Poverty[a] by Ancestry, Regional Origins, Linguistic Origins, and Race across Three Immigrant Generations

	% below the poverty line			
ANCESTRY[b]	*First Generation Adults, 1980*	*Second Generation Adults, 2000*	*Second Generation Children, 1980*	*Third Generation Children, 2000*
Dominican	29.1%	15.9%	40.0%	18.5%
Ecuadorian	13.7%	6.2%	17.0%	5.2%
Haitian	16.5%	12.5%	20.6%	11.4%
Peruvian	12.0%	6.3%	13.7%	5.7%
Salvadoran	14.7%	11.6%	19.9%	12.4%
Guatemalan	15.9%	8.1%	19.6%	5.4%
Nicaraguan	14.5%	8.8%	17.5%	5.1%
Argentinean	13.9%	5.8%	18.8%	2.9%
Brazilian	8.1%	7.5%	11.0%	5.6%
Costa Rican	11.9%	6.7%	12.2%	4.1%
Chilean	7.4%	5.6%	7.7%	7.4%
Guyanese	11.0%	7.5%	11.2%	9.8%
REGIONAL ORIGINS[c]	*1Ga*	*2Ga*	*2Gc*	*3Gc*
South America	11.7%	6.4%	14.0%	5.6%
Caribbean	24.9%	14.7%	34.2%	16.5%
Central America	14.5%	9.1%	18.6%	7.3%
Africa	17.2%	20.6%	22.2%	10.8%
LINGUISTIC ORIGINS[d]	*1Ga*	*2Ga*	*2Gc*	*3Gc*
Spanish	17.5%	10.0%	22.9%	9.9%
English	12.3%	9.4%	14.4%	9.7%
Other	15.0%	11.6%	19.2%	9.8%
RACE	*1Ga*	*2Ga*	*2Gc*	*3Gc*
White	12.8%	7.4%	15.1%	5.8%
Other	22.0%	11.8%	31.6%	13.2%
Black	17.1%	14.9%	19.4%	14.4%
U.S.-BORN TOTAL (Age Specific)	10.0%	11.6%	12.4%	12.2%

Data Source: 1980 and 2000 U.S. Census 5% Samples courtesy of IPUMS (Ruggles and Sobek 2006).

[a]Poverty is measured dichotomously where all respodents living in families whose combined income is less than the federally established poverty thresholds based on family size and composition.

[b]Based on first and second responses to the ancestry question. The following ancestries are excluded here due to insufficient samples (<100 for any one generational grouping): Belizean, Ghanian, Kenyan, Sierra Leonean, Somalian, Sudanese, Uruguay.

[c]Based on U.N. Regional Classification scheme.

[b]Based not on language or langauge proficiencey of individuals but on the basis of the official language of sending countries/ancestral homelands.

Table 4. Ancestral Composition of Racial Groups across the Generations

White

First Generation Adults, 1980[1]		*Second Generation Adults, 2000*[3]		*Second Generation Children, 1980*[2]		*Third Generation Children, 2000*[4]	
Ecuadorian	19.3	Dominican	17.5	Ecuadorian	20.0	Dominican	17.8
Dominican	15.1	Peruvian	12.6	Dominican	15.4	Peruvian	12.6
Salvadoran	12.6	Ecuadorian	11.7	Peruvian	11.6	Ecuadorian	10.7
Guatemalan	11.5	Argentinean	10.7	Guatemalan	11.1	Nicaraguan	9.8
Peruvian	11.1	Brazilian	9.3	Salvadoran	10.6	Argentinean	9.1
Chilean	6.7	Salvadoran	7.8	Chilean	6.7	Brazilian	8.8
Argentinean	6.6	Nicaraguan	7.5	Argentinean	6.4	Guatemalan	7.6
Nicaraguan	4.8	Chilean	7.0	Nicaraguan	5.7	Chilean	7.0
Costa Rican	4.7	Guatemalan	6.5	Costa Rican	5.6	Salvadoran	6.6
Brazilian	4.6	Costa Rican	5.8	Brazilian	4.1	Costa Rican	6.3

Black

First Generation Adults, 1980[1]		*Second Generation Adults, 2000*[3]		*Second Generation Children, 1980*[2]		*Third Generation Children, 2000*[4]	
Haitian	52.4	Haitian	59.0	Haitian	53.9	Haitian	52.3
Guyanese	19.2	Dominican	16.5	Guyanese	23.9	Dominican	18.5
Dominican	9.2	Guyanese	6.4	Dominican	8.6	Guyanese	6.8
Ghanian	6.9	Belizean	3.1	Ghanian	4.4	Belizean	4.9
Belizean	3.8	Sudanese	2.8	Belizean	3.3	Costa Rican	2.4
Sierra Leonean	2.2	Ghanian	2.4	Costa Rican	1.3	Sudanese	2.3
Costa Rican	2.2	Costa Rican	1.9	Sierra Leonean	1.2	Guatemalan	2.1
Guatemalan	0.8	Brazilian	1.5	Salvadoran	1.1	Ghanian	1.8
Salvadoran	0.7	Kenyan	1.1	Peruvian	0.4	Brazilian	1.4
Kenyan	0.7	Guatemalan	0.9	Guatemalan	0.4	Kenyan	1.4

Other

First Generation Adults, 1980[1]		*Second Generation Adults, 2000*[3]		*Second Generation Children, 1980*[2]		*Third Generation Children, 2000*[4]	
Dominican	35.6	Dominican	32.7	Dominican	38.9	Dominican	34.6
Salvadoran	15.4	Salvadoran	11.5	Ecuadorian	15.8	Salvadoran	11.1
Ecuadorian	14.1	Ecuadorian	11.3	Salvadoran	13.2	Ecuadorian	10.1
Guatemalan	11.0	Peruvian	9.8	Guatemalan	10.4	Guatemalan	9.9
Peruvian	8.4	Guatemalan	8.9	Peruvian	6.8	Peruvian	8.0
Nicaraguan	4.7	Nicaraguan	6.8	Nicaraguan	4.7	Nicaraguan	7.9
Costa Rican	3.4	Haitian	4.5	Costa Rican	3.8	Haitian	4.3
Chilean	2.0	Costa Rican	3.4	Argentinean	1.5	Costa Rican	3.6
Argentinean	1.7	Brazilian	2.9	Chilean	1.4	Chilean	2.7
Brazilian	1.3	Chilean	2.8	Brazilian	1.3	Brazilian	2.2

Data Source: 1980 and 2000 U.S. Census 5% Samples courtesy of IPUMS (Ruggles and Sobek 2006).

[1]Foreign-born adults (25 to 39) of any of the ancestries listed above who immigrated prior to 1976.

[2]All children claimed by members of the immigrant first generation as defined above in 1980.

[3]American-born adults (25 to 39) of any of the ancestries above in 2000.

[4]All children claimed by members of the immigrant second generation as defined above in 2000.

Table 5. Logistic Regression Results Predicting the Incidence of Poverty[a] and Adult Immigrants and Adult Children of Immigrants

	First Generation Adults, 1980			*Second Generation Adults, 2000*		
RACE	*Model 1 Exp (β)*	*Model 2 Exp (β)*	*Model 3 Exp (β)*	*Model 1 Exp (β)*	*Model 2 Exp (β)*	*Model 3 Exp (β)*
White	[b]	[b]	[b]	[b]	[b]	[b]
Black	1.41 ***	1.88 ***	1.98 ***	2.17 ***	1.99 ***	1.52 **
Other	1.91 ***	1.56 ***	1.38 ***	1.68 ***	1.46 ***	1.25 *
ANCESTRY						
Dominican		3.56 ***	2.30 ***		1.20	1.21
Ecuadorian		1.59 *	1.61 *		0.47 ***	0.60 *
Haitian		1.28	1.17		0.65 *	0.61 *
Peruvian		1.37	1.52		0.49 ***	0.67
Salvadorian		1.63 *	1.34		0.91	0.76
Guatemalan		1.83 **	1.51		0.59 *	0.62 *
Nicaraguan		1.62	1.37		0.69	0.86
Argentinean		1.77 *	1.86 *		0.53 **	0.67
Brazilian		0.95	1.08		0.62 *	0.72
Costa Rican		1.27	1.08		0.56 *	0.62
Chilean		0.86	1.00		0.46 **	0.54 *
Guyanese		0.81	0.90		0.39 **	0.46 *
Other		[b]	[b]		[b]	[b]
CITY OF RESIDENCE						
New York			1.18			0.78 *
Los Angeles			1.45 **			0.83
Miami			1.43 *			0.57 *
Other			[b]			[b]
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC						
Age			1.01			0.99
High School Graduate			0.57 ***			0.31 ***
Not a HS Graduate			[b]			[b]
Employed			0.20 ***			0.20 ***
Unemployed or Non-LFP			[b]			[b]
Married Man			0.34 ***			0.21 ***
Unmarried Man			0.39 ***			0.82 *
Married Woman			0.18 ***			0.18 ***
Unmarried Woman			[b]			[b]
Constant	0.15	0.08	0.69	0.08	0.12	2.04
McFadden's Pseudo R^2	1.3%	4.0%	18.1%	1.3%	3.1%	19.9%
N	7,222	7,222	7,222	8,302	8,302	8,302

Data Source: 1980 and 2000 U.S. Census 5% Samples courtesy of IPUMS (Ruggles and Sobek 2006).

[a]Poverty is measured dichotomously where all respodents living in families whose combined income is less than the federally established poverty thresholds based on family size and composition.

[b]Reference category.

Table 6. Logistic Regression Results Predicting Exposure to Poverty[a] among Children of Immigrant Stock

	"New Second Generation" Children, 1980			*"New Third Generation" Children, 2000*		
RACE	*Model 1 Exp (β)*	*Model 2 Exp (β)*	*Model 3 Exp (β)*	*Model 1 Exp (β)*	*Model 2 Exp (β)*	*Model 3 Exp (β)*
White	[b]	[b]	[b]	[b]	[b]	[b]
Black	1.35 **	1.54 **	1.53 *	2.71 ***	2.37 ***	1.65 **
Other	2.58 ***	2.03 ***	1.77 ***	2.40 ***	1.90 ***	1.27 *
ANCESTRY						
Dominican		2.80 ***	1.21		1.94 ***	1.49
Ecuadorian		1.02	0.78		0.54 *	0.67
Haitian		1.13	0.92		0.82	0.81
Peruvian		0.83	0.84		0.65	1.01
Salvadorian		1.14	0.86		1.33	1.17
Guatemalan		1.16	0.78		0.52 *	0.51 *
Nicaraguan		1.04	0.63		0.53 *	0.93
Argentinean		1.37	1.36		0.50 *	0.77
Brazilian		0.70	0.87		0.68	0.84
Costa Rican		0.71	0.46 **		0.43 *	0.49 *
Chilean		0.50 *	0.55		0.87	1.18
Guyanese		0.53 **	0.43 **		0.75	0.94
Other		[b]	[b]		[b]	[b]
CITY OF RESIDENCE						
New York			1.97 ***			1.24
Los Angeles			2.13 ***			1.03
Miami			2.06 ***			0.53 *
Other			[b]			[b]
PARENT'S SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC						
Age			1.01			0.97 ***
High School Graduate			0.49 ***			0.23 ***
Not a HS Graduate			[b]			[b]
Employed			0.29 ***			0.26 ***
Unemployed or Non-LFP			[b]			[b]
Unmarried Mother			5.96 ***			6.87 ***
Unmarried Father			1.87			3.43 ***
Parents Married			[b]			[b]
Constant	0.18	0.15	0.17	0.15	0.14	1.00
McFadden's Pseudo R^2	3.1%	7.0%	23.4%	2.6%	6.4%	26.3%
Weighted N	6,882	6,882	6,882	6,813	6,813	6,813

Data Source: 1980 and 2000 U.S. Census 5% Samples courtesy of IPUMS (Ruggles and Sobek 2006).
[a]Poverty is measured dichotomously where all respodents living in families whose combined income is less than the federally established poverty thresholds based on family size and composition.
[b]Reference category.