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RACE, ORIGINS, AND POVERTY ACROSS IMMIGRANT GENERATIONS IN THE U.S.

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ABSTRACT:

The humble origins of many recent immigrants combined with sharp declines in manufacturing jobs and persistent patterns of racial discrimination have led scholars to take pessimistic stances on the future of immigrants in the US. This paper uses 1980 and 2000 US Census data to track the incidence of poverty across two generations of Post-Civil Rights era immigrants and determine whether this pessimism is warranted. Results indicate that the incidence of poverty is high in the first generation but very low in the second. The humble origins of immigrant parents seem not to inhibit the movement of their children out of poverty. However, intergenerational advancement out of poverty is most pronounced for white immigrants and least pronounced for black immigrants leaving black adults of the new second generation more likely than white and other immigrants to experience poverty. Implications of these findings are discussed.

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The story of the poor immigrant permeates the American history and identity. Humble origins and rampant nativism were not enough to dampen the entrepreneurial spirit and uncompromising work ethic of European immigrants of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, so the story goes. Poor immigrants birthed children and grandchildren whose achievements outstripped those of 'old stock' Americans. Lieberson (1980) and others have made clear that this narrative fits fairly well for early twentieth century south, central, and eastern European immigrants and their American-born descendents, but not at all for black migrants who began to move northward during that period—their children and grandchildren have remained disproportionately poor. Would things be different in the Post-Civil Rights era?

By 1970, it was clear that social, political and macroeconomic forces had converged to usher in a new era of immigration (Massey 1995). Legislative changes of the 1960s left American minorities with rights and recourse that were unprecedented. The country had taken a significant step toward color-blind meritocracy—an ideology reflected in the Immigration (Hart-Cellar) Act of 1965 which lifted racist quota restrictions on immigration allowing for massive flows of immigration from Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the first-ever voluntary flows from Africa. Those newcomers arrived an aspiring 'Great Society' engaged in a 'War on Poverty.'

In 1968, the new immigration law was enacted. It placed the greatest emphases on family-reunification and occupational skills as criteria for legal entry. Since Asian and African immigration had been effectively outlawed by the National Origins Quota system adopted in the 1920s, early immigrants from those continents were

disproportionately highly educated and skilled workers. As time past and new ethnic communities were established in the US, migration flows gained momentum and became less selective. More immigrants gained admittance on the basis of family-reunification; resettlement difficulties had been smoothed substantially by the work of coethnic pioneers who had arrived in the US in prior years. These developments might lead us to be optimistic about immigrant mobility in the Post-Civil Rights era.

Still, poverty among immigrants continues to occupy the thoughts of scholars, leaders and citizens in the 'more developed' world. Clark (2001) suggests that rising poverty among immigrants between 1970 and 1990 may signal the emergence of an *immigrant underclass*—pointing to unemployment and low wages among immigrants in US cities. Supply- and demand-side arguments have been leveled to explain these easily observable labor force shortfalls. Borjas (1999) and others have argued that unemployment and low wages reflect the 'declining quality' of immigrants to the US. Lacking in human capital, it is expected that many of them will languish in the ranks of the poor and pass their disadvantaged status on to their (often American-born) children. Gans (1992) and others have argued that the struggles of recent immigrants may be less reflective of their own (human capital) shortcomings and more reflective of 1) the deindustrialization of the US economy which has led to declines in manufacturing jobs—a traditional mainstay of new immigrants—and 2) persistent patterns of racial exclusion that work against the mostly non-European immigrants of the Post-Civil Rights era. Through either of these lenses, the immigrant future appears grim.

This paper asks whether pessimism is warranted in the case of Post-Civil Rights immigrants and whether it is equally warranted for all immigrant groups. The effects of

race are unmistakable for black and white Americans of American-born parentage—with significant deficits accruing to black people and substantial profits accruing to white beneficiaries (Cancio, Evans, and Maume 1996). Might the same be true among Post-Civil Rights era 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 incidence of poverty as a measure of intergenerational socioeconomic assimilation or lack thereof.

A BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW: REFINING THE QUESTION

Adult poverty is the confluence of structural constraint and individual action. There are innumerable factors that lead one into it and for this reason much of social science research concerns itself with the direct and indirect determinants of poverty rather than addressing poverty itself as the outcome of interest. However, adult poverty, irrespective of its causes, is a worthy focus in itself. Adults, parents in particular, are conduits of intergenerational affluence and poverty. Therefore, it is important that we be able answer the question, have poor immigrants of the early Post-Civil Rights era passed their poverty on to their US-born children? If so, there may be cause to worry about the permanence of poverty among the descendents of recent immigrants. If not, there may be cause to believe that their descendents will be ready replacements in US labor and consumer markets as the mammoth cohorts of the Baby Boom retire and move on (Myers 2007).

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, p. 183). To date, however, much of the demographic research on these questions has produced results that challenge this dire prediction. The foreign-born are certainly more likely than others to be poor, but their poverty may be short lived.

Recent immigrants tend to be overrepresented among the poor, but they are also overrepresented among those who move out of poverty each year (Chapman and Bernstein 2003), and their American-born children seem to build on those advances. 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 vast majority of Haitians are of primarily black/African descent. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) link immigrant success and failure to how they 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.

Where race is acknowledged, results are mixed and often obscured by the lack of a proper comparison group. Dodoo (1997) and Kalmijn (1996) both demonstrate the socioeconomic superiority of black Immigrant groups over black Americans, but that is not necessarily the best comparison to make. 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 (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 et al 1987; Wilson 1987; 1996; Massey and Denton 1993). All of this undermines black immigrant efforts to advance and may influence the long-term prospects of their American-born children. Moreover, once a black immigrant loses his/her accent(s), he/she is, in the eyes of many, black 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; Stepick et al. 2001; Lopez 2003), the economic and psychic costs of which are well documented (Feagin 1991; Kirschenman and Neckerman 1991; Pager 2003). Additionally, the American-born children of black immigrants are left to face these challenges without the third-world point of reference that consoled their parents when the going got rough for them in the US (Ogbu 1991; Kao and Tienda 1995; Waters 1999). That is, immigrants may endure discrimination in the US by comparing their opportunities not with those of US whites but with those of the compatriots they left in their home countries against which their own positions may look good. Their American-born children, however, may gauge their experiences against those of other American-born young people and come to more negative assessment of their own situations.

In this study, the poverty rates of two 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 US Census race question. (Those who checked more than one box on the 2000 Census race questions are treated as 'other' for the purposes of this study). Blacks are in the minority, but their numbers are sufficient for the analyses to follow. 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—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. ('National origins' and 'ancestry' 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). 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 US Censuses (5 per cent 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 US Census samples are the only data sets large enough to generate sufficient samples for very small (yet theoretically important) ancestry 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. This has been a formidable obstacle to the study of the 'new second generation'— the generation comprised of American-born children of post-1965 immigrants to the U.S—one that must be addressed before we can proceed.

Identifying the 'New Second Generation' in US Census Data

Like a number of classic studies of intergenerational mobility (Blau and Duncan 1967; Featherman and Hauser 1978; Hout 1988) this paper is interested in determining the influence of one's socioeconomic 'origins' on her socioeconomic 'destination.' According to conventions in social stratification research, *origins* are defined by the socioeconomic status of one's parents when she was a child, and *destinations* are defined by one's own socioeconomic status as an adult. One does not reach her destination until she has finished her schooling and perhaps established her own household. Therefore, the first step must be to identify adult populations comprised of 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 US 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 US in significant number until very recently—for whom second generation membership can be inferred (*indirectly*). The most obvious cases may be those of the Vietnamese and Cambodians; neither group was represented in significant number in the US 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 are *very* unlikely to 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. Table 1 lists the nineteen groups which I treat here as 'new second generation.' They are all characterized by very youthful American-born population distributions with median ages of 10 years or less in 1980. This means that most of them were 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. Since older American-born persons are likely to have American-born children, their presence in the selected ancestry groups may introduce 'third+ generation'[1] cohorts into our otherwise pure 'new second generation.' They would probably be members of the 'new third generation.' If, in 1980, 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. I take completed fertility into account in order to rectify this problem.

Table 1. about here

[1] 'Third+' is used here since respondents who are American-born and have American-born parents are at least third generation but could easily fourth, fifth, or sixth generation (which is especially likely in the case of Black Americans).

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 US-born respondent is assigned a value on this measure—men and children all receive values of zero since neither can bear 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 proportional estimate of third generation presence in the American born population. The fact that the children of men who marry outside their ancestry are not counted, downwardly biases the estimate but only slightly. A modified CFR of .15 is taken here to mean that the average US-born respondent (irrespective of age or sex) of the given group had .15 children 5 years of age or older at the time of the 1980 Census and that 15 per cent of the American-born population of that ancestry could, by 2000, constitute an adult 'third+ generation.' I adopt .10 or 10 per cent as the upper limit for this study. That is, groups in which I estimate that more than 10 per cent of the American-born population is of the third or higher generation in the year 2000 are not included in this study. On this basis, I include only the nineteen groups listed in Table 1. Note the absence of Jamaicans from this list; their relatively long history of immigration to the US (see Reid 1939) precipitated substantial third+ generation presence by the year 2000 leading to their exclusion from this study.

Generational Delineations

Now that American-born groups susceptible to 'third generation contamination' have been identified and removed, first and second generation groups can be delineated with reasonable confidence. Table 1 lists nineteen groups from throughout Africa and its diaspora among which the American-born are most likely members of the new 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 to 39 years old in 1980 and had immigrated in 1975 or earlier. That is, those old enough and who had been in the country long enough to have had adult American-born children by the year 2000.
- The *second generation* is comprised of all American-born members of the nineteen ancestry groups listed in Table 1 who are 25 to 39 years of age in 2000.

Table 2 about here

Table 2 displays generational counts for all nineteen ancestry groups and re-aggregates the sample by regional origins, linguistic origins, and race; the diversity in the sample is evident. Dominicans, Ecuadorians, and Haitians comprise nearly half (46 per cent) the sample, but a dozen other groups contribute significantly to the 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 per cent) is overwhelmed by those hailing from South America (37 per cent), the Caribbean (33 per

cent) and Central America (27 per cent). Spanish-speaking ancestries dominate in the sample (79 per cent), but English (6 per cent) and other (15 per cent) 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 and their children. 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 (44 per cent) of the sample, with 'others' (37 per cent), blacks (18 per cent), and Asians (1 per cent) making up the balance.

At this point it is important to acknowledge some of the problems associated with racial identification in the data employed here. Race has been self-identified in the US Census since 1980—meaning that respondents are asked which of a number of racial categories best describes them. We trust that their answers reflect, to varying degrees, their racial (phenotypic) characteristics; however, we know that responses to these questions are situation-dependent (Harris and Sim 2002) and that there is considerable phenotypic variation in many of the racial categories commonly treated as homogenous. This is particularly true of immigrants from Central and South America and the Caribbean (Rodriguez 2000).

A defining difference between systems of racial stratification in the US and these sending regions is the very inclusive nature of the black category (Davis 1994; Omi and Winant 1994) in the US and the very exclusive nature of the black category in much of the Western hemisphere (Landale and Oropesa 2002). I use the terms inclusive

and exclusive for lack of better ones. US notions of blackness have been inclusive in the sense that persons of any amount of African ancestry are likely to see themselves as black and be seen by others as such (Davis 1994), 'while in the Caribbean any degree of non-African ancestry means that a person is not black' (Winn 1992, p. 277). When confronted with the crude and rigid categories such as those listed on the Census survey, immigrants from the Americas and the Caribbean most often choose 'other' or 'white' with a small minority choosing 'black.' This may have less to do with their traceable ancestry and more to do with the inadequacy of such categories for capturing their internalized racial identities. It also partly reflects a historical pattern of immigrants putting as much social distance between themselves and black Americans as possible so as to avoid the stigma and exclusion that has been a central feature of black American life (Lieberson 1980; Kasinitz et al 2001).

What this probably means is that few besides those of unambiguously African ancestry identify as 'black.' Meanwhile, the 'white' and 'other' categories are comprised of individuals of numerous different phenotypes and backgrounds—including a sizable number of individuals who might be considered 'black' by most Americans. Fortunately, the statistical implications of this do not seriously undermine the comparisons to be made in this paper. While it is impossible to know for sure, the presence of persons of considerable non-European ancestry in the white immigrant group likely produces a conservative estimate of the difference between white and non-white immigrants.

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 immigrant's race, does anything else matter?' requires multivariate logistic regression techniques that allow us to gauge the effects of race net of regional and linguistic origins, city of residence, educational attainment, employment, sex and marital status.

RESULTS

Table 3 displays poverty rates by each of four key attributes. Only those ancestries with 100 or more in each generational grouping are explicitly addressed in the analyses to follow as numbers smaller than that may not provide trustworthy estimates. 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. It would be reasonable to predict that the very favorable economic conditions in the year 2000 relative to 1980 would bias results here. However, note that the US population between the ages of 25 and 39 exhibited a poverty rate of 10.0 per cent in 1980 while in the year 2000, 11.7 per cent of 25 to 39 year olds were impoverished. Therefore, any intergenerational declines in poverty observed here are not reflective of a downward trend in poverty over the period.

Table 3 about here

When we look at rates of poverty in ancestry groups with sufficient numbers, group-level intergenerational advancement is a rule without exception. Dominicans of the 'new second generation' (15.6 per cent) are little more than half as likely to experience poverty as those of the first generation twenty years earlier (29.1 per cent). Note also that for the majority of ancestry groups listed in Table 3, poverty is considerably more prevalent among immigrant adults than for US born adults in 1980 but is often less prevalent among members of the new second generation than it is among their age-mates of American stock in the year 2000.

These ancestry patterns are summarized very nicely by the regional origins measure which categorizes all nineteen ancestral homelands (national origins) listed in Table 2 into 4 regions of the world according to the United Nations classification scheme. Figure 1 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 twenty years earlier. Every other intergenerational comparison leads to the opposite conclusion—poverty is less likely with the passing of immigrant generations. In fact, second generation adults of Central (8.8 per cent) and South American (6.4 per cent) stock have much lower poverty rates than the native-stock US population (11.7 per cent). While the incidence of poverty declines dramatically among those of Caribbean descent it is important to note that they evidence high poverty rates across the generations. Dominicans and Haitians constitute the Caribbean population in this study. Exploratory analyses were performed to determine whether the inclusion of the

Guyanese as Caribbean rather than as South American would alter conclusions regarding the 'Caribbean effect.' No significant differences were found. Might the Caribbean and African disadvantages reflect developmental shortcomings of sending countries in those regions? Or, might they simply be manifestations of black disadvantage in the US that is impervious to nativity?

Figure 1 about here

Interestingly, linguistic origins groupings help us less in predicting poverty. Figure 2 evidences surprisingly little variation in poverty rates by linguistic origins even in the first generation. In the later generations, those effects vanish almost completely. Immigrants from non-English speaking countries seem to fair worse early on but their disadvantage is short-lived. The children of non-English-speaking immigrants in this study are only slightly more likely to experience poverty in adulthood than the adult children of English-speaking immigrants.

Figure 2 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 3 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 for 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 later generations; 4) there is a significant white advantage that shows no sign of weakening with the passing of generations.

Figure 3 about here

The observed gap between white and black immigrants grows from 3.4 percentage points in the first generation adult sample to 5.6 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 percentage points 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 more likely than 'others' to experience poverty in 2000. 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.'

Figure 4 about here

These patterns are corroborated in Figure 4 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. 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 disappearance of race effects. The black line is the only one on an upward trajectory—suggesting that, to the detriment of black immigrants, blackness has become *more* predictive of poverty with the passing of generations.

Multivariate Analyses of the Effects of Race on the Incidence of Poverty

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 bear on the likelihood of poverty. But once we know a person's 'race' do '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. Second and third models introduce dummy variables indicating membership in the two broad categories of 'disadvantaged' individuals—those of Spanish-speaking origins and those of Caribbean origins—on the basis of results presented in Table 3. By introducing these variables we can begin to answer the question, once we know a respondent's race, is information about their ancestry important in predicting poverty? Successive models

thereafter test for the effects of contextual and socioeconomic characteristics to see whether race and ancestry effects can be explained by compositional differences between races and/or ancestry groups.

Table 4 about here

Table 4 displays exponentiated beta coefficients from logistic regression models predicting poverty among adult immigrants of parental age in 1980. Results from Model 1 bolster the bivariate results presented in Table 3 exposing a statistically significant white advantage over all others. Interestingly, the presence of a control for Caribbean origins in Model 2 nullifies the black disadvantage—suggesting that the non-Caribbeans are not much worse off than other non-Caribbeans. With the addition of more statistical controls in later models, however, the black disadvantage reappears and intensifies.

Regional and linguistic origins seem to have had dramatic effects on the incidence of poverty among immigrants in 1980. Specifically, Caribbean and Spanish-speaking home countries were associated with higher susceptibility to poverty. When these two factors are taken into account (as in Model 3) the difference between black and 'other race' is erased while the advantage of white immigrants over both remains substantial.

Where one lives is also associated with the incidence of poverty. The primary gateway cities for immigrants from throughout the African diaspora are New York, Los Angeles, and Miami—New York having been, by far, the most popular city of entry and

settlement for black immigrants. Residence in any of these cities was associated with greater propensity to poverty net of origins. As we might guess, high school graduation and employment greatly reduce the likelihood of poverty for their beholders. Model 6 displays coefficients which suggest that the poverty is less than half (.466) as likely for high school graduates as it is for non-graduates and less than a quarter (.241) as likely for the employed compared to the not-employed. It is noteworthy that the inclusion of these variables has a counterintuitive effect on the race coefficients—with their inclusion the 'other race' coefficient decreases, but the black coefficient grows. This reflects particularly low returns to education and employment for black immigrants. Such low returns to these attributes may be a function of difficulties experienced by black high school graduates in securing employment, as well as difficulties experienced by black employees in securing full-time employment that pays greater than the federally mandated minimum wage—difficulties that have plagued black people of American stock for as long as they have been paid for their labor.

Finally, there is the matter of sex and marital status. Model 7 introduces a set of interaction terms meant to simultaneously capture the effects of both. Results suggest that men are better off than women, and unmarried women are worse off than every one else (with regards to poverty). In any case, race remains statistically significant when sex and marital status are taken into account. On close inspection one can see that the addition of control variables explains away the difference between white immigrants and 'other' immigrants but increases the differences between black immigrants and white immigrants. We are thus left with a story that is at once similar to and different from that told in the bivariate analysis; all else being equal, white immigrants are less

likely than all others to experience poverty and black immigrants are more likely than all others to experience poverty.

Table 5 about here

Table 5 displays results from logistic regression models predicting poverty among adult members of the new second generation in 2000. Does the white advantage observed among immigrant parents persist into the second generation? Is it unchanged, diminished, or has it grown? What of the black disadvantage?

As was evident among members of the first generation, there is a clear white advantage evident among second generation adults. However, unlike results in the first model displayed in Table 4, Table 5 indicates a gross black disadvantage that is robust to the inclusion of numerous relevant control variables. Disadvantages associated with Caribbean and Spanish-speaking countries of origin persist into the second generation but do not overpower the race effects noted above (see Model 3).

Interestingly, while residence in the three primary gateway cities is associated with high incidences of poverty in the first generation the opposite is true in the second. All 'city of residence' coefficients in Table 5 are less than 1, meaning that residents there are less susceptible to poverty than those who reside elsewhere. This is particularly true of Miami whose second generation residents are less than three-fifths as likely to be impoverished as the adult children of immigrants residing elsewhere. This may reflect the fact that like other upwardly mobile American young people, members of the new second generation are compelled to reside in these cities not

because they are 'stuck' in them but because many of the best social and economic opportunities are located there (Franklin 2003). Such opportunities were not as accessible to their foreign-born, foreign-educated parents. These two groups—immigrant parents and their adult American-born children—may have very different reasons for living in gateway cities.

There are few surprises in the remaining models (5 thru 7); high school graduation and employment have the expected effects on the incidence of poverty, but are unable to explain away race effects noted above. There are two novel findings in Model 7. First, you may recall a distinct male advantage that was impervious to marital status among first generation immigrants. Among second generation adults, there is a clear advantage to married people irrespective of gender. Note the similarity of coefficients between married men and women (.27 and .16, respectively) and between unmarried men and women (.76 and 1.00, respectively). Second, net of all of this, the white advantage and the black disadvantage remain statistically significant. Model 6 may be the best specification since the direction of causation is unclear between marital status and poverty status. The reduction of racial differences in poverty between models six and seven could be taken to mean that black and 'other' people are more often poor because they are less often married. However, it would be no less accurate to say they are less often married because they are more often poor.

In short, the multivariate analyses of adult populations of first and second generation immigrants reveal persistent racial differences that cannot be explained by compositional variation. White immigrants less often find themselves in poverty than other immigrants all else being equal. It is important to point out that these are non-

European self-identified whites. Black and 'other' immigrants seem to switch places so that by the second generation blacks are more likely than all others to experience poverty even when relevant background characteristics are held constant.

Race and Poverty among Dominicans: A Bivariate Test of the Black Disadvantage

The multivariate analysis above might have benefited from the inclusion of dummy variables indicating specific national origins, but to do so would have undermined any attempts to accurately assess race effects. This is because most national origins groups included here lack members of one or another of the three racial categories. So we could, for example, end up with a black effect that theoretically applies to all people but that is estimated on the basis of black people from only a handful of the nineteen countries in the study. This problem is avoided in the regression analysis above by including dummy variables for regional and linguistic origins rather than national origins. A simpler way to avoid this problem is to look at the effects of race one national origins group at a time. The Dominican group is the only one large enough and diverse enough to do this—few other groups in this study have substantial numbers in each racial group in each generation.

Table 6 about here

Table 6 controls for national, regional and linguistic origins by including only Dominicans. As noted earlier, Dominicans experienced a dramatic intergenerational decline in poverty, but Table 6 demonstrates that the level and pace of decline in

poverty across generations of Dominican immigrants is related to racial identity. There is a clear white advantage in both generations. Dominican immigrants classifying themselves as 'other' were more prone to experience poverty than any other racial group (of Dominicans), but the passing of a single generation left 'other' Dominicans half as likely as their parents to have been in poverty. Further, this progress left them ahead of black Dominicans—a claim first generation 'others' could not make. Note that between first generation adults (1980) and second generation adults (2000) the black decline in poverty was the least pronounced of the three racial groups—from 27.6 per cent down to 22.2 per cent—a 5.4 percentage point decrease while declines were 2 and 3 times that large among whites and 'others' respectively. Despite the rather discouraging numbers yielded when Dominicans are examined as a whole, when only 'white Dominicans' are considered the result is encouraging; in the second generation, they were slightly less likely to be in poverty than the total US-born population in 2000.

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 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 century. Evidence presented here suggests that poverty is not particularly pronounced in the immigrant second generation. In fact, poverty is less common

among members of the 'new second generation' than it is among their American-bred cohorts. Of twelve ancestry groups included in the analyses above, eleven have poverty rates equal to or lower than that of the US-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, p. 183). *Immigrants* appear to transcend their initial poverty; inner-city *black Americans* tend not to (Wilson 1987).

This study began with the question, once we know an immigrant's racial identity does anything else matter in predicting the incidence of poverty? The short answer is yes, lots of other characteristics matter (i.e., Caribbean origins, high school graduation, and employment). However, these attributes fail to explain racial disparities in the incidence of poverty among immigrants. Bivariate and multivariate analyses presented here demonstrate substantial white advantage that is a prominent feature of first and second generation experiences. 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. Among second generation adults, the black disadvantage is unambiguous—evident in the bivariate case as well in the most completely specified multivariate model. In other words, blackness became a better predictor of poverty with the passing of the first immigrant generation.

At this point it is important that the following qualification be made: all the results in this study are subject to unmeasured biases due to the fluidity and volatility of

racial self-identification (Harris and Sim 2002). The phenotypic compositions of the three racial groups examined here are not known and may vary across generations. It may be, for instance, that there are non-trivial numbers of white immigrants whose children came to see themselves as 'other' (not white or black). It is also likely, for example, that there are significant numbers of phenotypically black Africans who identity as 'other' to reify their own non-black-American identities. This is fertile ground for further inquiry. Some comfort may be taken in the fact that these potential biases probably drive measured racial disparities in poverty downward yielding conservative estimates of racial difference.

In any case, there is much to be taken from these estimates to inform theory and policy. Supply-side arguments which predict a retarded adaptation among recent immigrants attributable to the declining quality of immigrants themselves (Borjas 1999) find no support here. We observe high poverty immigrant groups yielding second generation groups characterized by much lower levels of poverty—lower, even, than that of the US born population as a whole. Whatever disadvantages there are associated with third-world origins they seem to vanish in the course of a single generation (with respect to the likelihood of experiencing poverty). The persistent racial differences observed here, however, lend credence to demand-side arguments which have predicted that 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, and the black disadvantage has grown 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 with respect to national origins groups may vary little compared to the societal receptivity of racial groups. It is not clear that immigrants, and especially the American-born children of 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 to do with how members of the second generation are received by the larger society, but race bears heavily on their social interactions (Waters 1999; Bonilla-Silva 2001). Early accounts of black immigrant success (see Sowell 1981) seem to downplay 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, p. 679). Findings presented here support the latter position.

Finally, it is important here to mention a substantial Caribbean disadvantage that emerged in this analysis. The Caribbean group is comprised only of Haitians and Dominicans who hail from countries that share a single island in the Caribbean and single origin as Hispaniola whose early economy was driven by indigenous (Taino) and, later, African slave labor. For Haitian and Dominican immigrants, lack of proficiency in English combined with the relatively low levels of economic development in their sending countries may explain the disadvantages the first generation faced in translating limited human capital into American livelihoods, but it would not explain the inability of American-born Caribbean descendents to do so. Nonetheless, the Caribbean disadvantage remains significant into the second generation. African ancestry

predominates in present day Haiti and is prominent in the Dominican Republic. However, black racial identity is not particularly salient in either country. Confronted with American notions of race, many Haitians and Dominicans of considerable African ancestry choose to identify as something other than black, but may still be subject to a black exclusion in the United States. In this sense, the Caribbean disadvantage may itself be another manifestation of black disadvantage.

To the extent that an immigrant underclass is emerging, it appears to be a non-white immigrant phenomenon—highlighting the fact that, for them, life chances are shaped as much (or more) by the fact that they are non-white as by the fact they are immigrants. 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 failure of US society to live up to the color-blind meritocratic ideals that are meant to define the Post-Civil Right Era.

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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 US Census 5 per cent sample (Ruggles et al 2004)
*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 adults, 2000* [2]	total	%
Dominican	1,520	1,529	3,049	22%
Ecuadorian	998	716	1,714	13%
Haitian	761	760	1,521	11%
Peruvian	582	650	1,232	9%
Salvadoran	810	502	1,312	10%
Guatemalan	674	449	1,123	8%
Nicaraguan	281	358	639	5%
Argentinean	260	393	653	5%
Brazilian	186	302	488	4%
Costa Rican	268	262	530	4%
Chilean	271	243	514	4%
Guyanese	310	120	430	3%
Belizean	66	65	131	1%
Uruguayan	84	45	129	1%
Ghanian	101	27	128	1%
Sudanese	3	33	36	0%
Kenyan	11	14	25	0%
Sierra Leonean	32	10	42	0%
Somalian	4	9	13	0%
total	7,222	6,487	13,709	100%
regional origins				
South America	2,690	2,450	5,140	37%
Caribbean	2,281	2,311	4,592	33%
Central America	2,100	1,635	3,735	27%
Africa	151	92	243	2%
total	7,222	6,488	13,710	100%
linguistic origins				
Spanish	5,747	5,143	10,890	79%
Other	955	1,109	2,064	15%
English	520	236	756	6%
total	7,222	6,488	13,710	100%
race				
White	3,285	2,786	6,071	44%
Other	2,504	2,614	5,118	37%
Black	1,378	1,048	2,426	18%
Asian	55	40	95	1%
total	7,222	6,488	13,710	100%

Data source: 1980 and 2000 US Census 5 per cent sample (Ruggles et al 2004)

[1]The first generation is comprised of foreign-born individuals of any of the ancestires listed above who immigrated to the U.S. prior to 1976 and who were between 25 and 39 years of age in 1980.

[2]Second generation adult group are American-born individuals of any of the ancestries listed above who were between 25 and 39 years of age 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*
Dominican	29.1%	15.6%
Ecuadorian	13.7%	6.4%
Haitian	16.5%	11.1%
Peruvian	12.0%	6.3%
Salvadoran	14.7%	10.4%
Guatemalan	15.9%	7.8%
Nicaraguan	14.5%	8.9%
Argentinean	13.9%	5.1%
Brazilian	8.1%	7.3%
Costa Rican	11.9%	7.6%
Chilean	7.4%	5.8%
Guyanese	11.0%	8.3%
regional origins[c]	*first gen.*	*second gen.*
South America	11.7%	6.4%
Caribbean	24.9%	14.0%
Central America	14.5%	8.8%
Africa	17.2%	19.6%
linguistic origins[d]	*first gen.*	*second gen.*
Spanish	17.5%	9.8%
English	12.3%	8.5%
Other	15.0%	10.7%
race	*first gen.*	*second gen.*
White	12.8%	7.2%
Other	22.0%	11.2%
Black	17.1%	13.7%
US-born total (25 to 39yrs of age)	10.0%	11.7%

Data source: 1980 and 2000 US Census 5 per cent sample (Ruggles et al. 2004)

[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 except in the case of the first generation for whom only the first response is taken into consideration. The following groups are not included here due to insufficient sample sizes: Belizeans, Uruguayans, Ghanians, Sudanese, Kenyans, Sierra Leoneans, and Somalis.

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

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

Table 4. Logistic regression models predicting poverty among first generations adult immigrants from throughout the African Diaspora, 1980

	model 1	*model 2*	*model 3*	*model 4*	*model 5*	*model 6*	*model 7*
race	exp (β)	exp (β)	exp (β)	exp (β)	exp (β)	exp (β)	exp (β)
White	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black	1.406 ***	0.973	1.688 ***	1.608 **	1.687 ***	1.990 ***	1.711 ***
Other	1.912 ***	1.623 ***	1.619 ***	1.572 ***	1.515 ***	1.476 ***	1.376 ***
regional origins							
Caribbean		2.160 ***	2.133 ***	1.987 ***	1.764 ***	1.640 ***	1.503 ***
Other		0	0	0	0	0	0
linguistic origins							
Spanish			1.989 ***	1.876 ***	1.569 **	1.575 **	1.510 **
Other			0	0	0	0	0
city of residence							
New York				1.569 ***	1.441 ***	1.332 **	1.219 *
Los Angeles				1.646 ***	1.446 ***	1.496 ***	1.417 **
Miami				1.500 *	1.427 *	1.494 *	1.404
Other				0	0	0	0
education							
High school graduate					0.457 ***	0.466 ***	0.548 ***
Non-graduate					0	0	0
employment							
Employed						0.241 ***	0.203 ***
Not employed						0	0
sex & marital status							
Married man							0.371 ***
Unmarried man							0.389 ***
Married woman							0.195 ***
Unmarried woman							0
constant	0.146	0.126	0.065	0.052	0.111	0.267	0.813
n=	7,222	7,222	7,222	7,222	7,222	7,222	7,222
McFaddens pseudo R^2	0.013	0.032	0.036	0.042	0.062	0.129	0.180

Data source: 1980 US Census 5 per cent sample (Ruggles et al 2004)

[0]Omitted/referent category.

Table 5. Logistic regression models predicting poverty among the adult children of immigrants from throughout the African Diaspora, 2000

	model 1	*model 2*	*model 3*	*model 4*	*model 5*	*model 6*	*model 7*
race	exp (β)	exp (β)	exp (β)	exp (β)	exp (β)	exp (β)	exp (β)
White	[0]	[0]	[0]	[0]	[0]	[0]	[0]
Black	2.060 ***	1.491 **	1.923 ***	1.918 ***	1.873 ***	1.740 ***	1.416 *
Other	1.629 ***	1.449 ***	1.449 ***	1.420 ***	1.359 **	1.329 **	1.247 *
regional origins							
Caribbean		1.757 ***	1.758 ***	1.823 ***	1.777 ***	1.682 ***	1.609 ***
Other		[0]	[0]	[0]	[0]	[0]	[0]
linguistic origins							
Spanish			1.457 **	1.467 **	1.435 *	1.451 **	1.494 **
Other			[0]	[0]	[0]	[0]	[0]
city of residence							
New York				0.916	0.895	0.823	0.704 **
Los Angeles				0.973	0.904	0.885	0.756
Miami				0.566 *	0.565 *	0.527 **	0.512 **
Other				[0]	[0]	[0]	[0]
education							
High school graduate					0.164 ***	0.226 ***	0.298 ***
Non-graduate					[0]	[0]	[0]
employment							
Employed						0.209 ***	0.193 ***
Not employed						[0]	[0]
sex & marital status							
Married man							0.266 ***
Unmarried man							0.760 **
Married woman							0.156 ***
Unmarried woman							[0]
constant	0.077	0.068	0.048	0.050	0.272	0.582	0.917555
n=	6,488	6,488	6,488	6,488	6,488	6,488	6,488
McFaddens pseudo R^2	0.011	0.020	0.022	0.023	0.067	0.139	0.187

Data source: 2000 US Census 5 per cent sample (Ruggles et al. 2004)

[0]Omitted/referent category.

Table 6. Incidence of poverty[a] by race across two generations of Dominican immigrants

		% below the poverty line		
race		*first generation adults, 1980*	*second generation adults, 2000*	*poverty decline*
White		21.4%	11.3%	10.1%
	n=	496	479	
Other		33.6%	16.7%	16.9%
	n=	893	880	
Black		27.6%	22.2%	5.4%
	n=	127	167	
US-born total (25 to 39 yrs of age)		10.0%	11.7%	-1.6%

Data source: 1980 and 2000 US Census 5 per cent sample (Ruggles et al. 2004)
[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.

LIST OF FIGURES