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Beyond Black and White

Latinos and Social Science Research on
Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in America

Research on immigrants and the eventual outcomes of immigration processes was at the very foundation of American sociology. But with the exception of a couple of studies on the Mexicans in the United States, such as Paul Taylor's (1932, 1934) monumental work on the life story of Mexican immigrant laborers in the Chicago and Calumet region during the late 1920s and early 1930s, Manuel Gamio's (1971 [1930], 1971 [1931]) anthropological studies of Mexican immigrants in the United States, and Edith Abbott's *The Tenements*

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of *Chicago, 1908–1935* (1936), Latinos were remarkably absent from such studies. Instead, these studies focused on the European immigrant experience and the experience of black Americans as newcomers to America's cities. Scholarship on Latinos (much less *by* Latinos) simply did not put down roots as early as scholarship on Afro-Americans. Perhaps this was partly due to the smaller size of the population back then, coupled with its being largely immigrant—composed of people who thought they would one day return to where they came from. But it was also partly due to the greater level of segregation experienced by African Americans, for whom Jim Crow laws produced what Booker T. Washington (1969) once called “a nation within a nation.” That segregation also gave rise to the historically black colleges that issued a black intelligentsia whose work, both of sociology and social thought, to this day is very much worth reading (e.g., the works of W. E. B. Du Bois, E. Franklin Frazier, and Booker T. Washington).

While early social scientists emphasized immigration as a social process involving many of the fundamental questions in social science, they paid heed mainly to immigrants from Europe and the rural South; immigrants from Latin America remained largely invisible. In sociology, the pattern of immigration research is quite clear. At the turn of the last century, Chicago—“hog butcher of the world,” as Carl Sandburg called her—received vast numbers of Southern and Eastern European immigrants (particularly Poles, Jews, and Italians) who had crossed the Atlantic Ocean, as well as those who crossed only land within the United States, moving from the South and West to the North and Midwest (particularly blacks and Mexicans). Thus, among the first generation of sociologists in the “Chicago school,” immigrants and racial and ethnic minorities were the focus of vivid studies, such as Robert Park's (1950) famous theory of the race relations cycle that would result from the encounter of different groups, and W. I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki's *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1928), which analyzed the social psychological impact of immigration on the immigrants themselves. At the turn of the century, then, sociologists were concerned with what the experience of immigration had done to the immigrants' lives and with the outcomes of the process of integrating those who arrived at its shores. These outcomes were usually conceptualized as acculturation and assimilation—as becoming *like* the dominant population, which at the turn of the century clearly meant conforming to Anglo-Saxon ways.

However, as Alejandro Portes (1978a) pointed out, the emphasis on immigration began to wane, until in the 1960s it all but disappeared. Several different trends promoted its disappearance. First, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1924 cut the massive waves of European immigration to the United States. Second, under the pressures of Anglo conformity, the children of those European immigrants went on to assimilate in American society at a time when the price of success was often one's sense of ethnic identity. Third, the research focus on immigrants and immigration was also lost as a result of the racial demands and militancy of the civil rights movement, which shifted the analytical focus to racial and ethnic relations. And in the process, what is really distinctive about immigrants was lost: that they have experienced a separate life in another country or another culture, which they bring with them, while they will live out a whole new set of choices and experiences in the new society to which they migrated. Immigrants bring with them a whole host of social resources (their social class, education, occupations, culture, motivation, values) from another society, and their outcomes in American society will be a function of three types of factors: (1) these initial social resources of class, culture, education, and values that they bring with them; (2) the nature of their migration (e.g., whether they were political or economic immigrants, victims of genocide, or "brain drain" professional immigrants); and (3) the social context that greeted them—the varying amount of opportunity available to them in the new society (in the jobs that they could find in sunrise or sunset industries, in the particular cities in which they settled, in the amount of discrimination they would face).

In effect, it was the large and growing impact of the contemporary wave of immigration, which has already so clearly transformed the demographic composition of American society, that brought immigration back to the intellectual agenda of the social sciences. This same mass immigration is what has now made the "Hispanic" or "Latino" population the nation's second largest minority group (and forecasted to become the first in the middle of the twenty-first century). But long before other social scientists realized the impact of immigration, two Mexican social scientists—Julian Samora and Ernesto Galarza—focused their research on it, producing the two books that to my mind gave birth to Latino studies in the social sciences: *Los Mojados: The Wetback Story* (1971), by Samora, and *Merchants of Labor: The Mexican Bracero Story* (1964), by Galarza. These two classics began the new tradi-

tion of Latino studies, which I define as studies *about* Latinos, by themselves and by others—that is, by both insiders and outsiders. This new tradition is now developing alongside all of our own work. The purpose of this essay is to assess the significant contributions Latino studies has made to immigration research in the social sciences by bringing in selected works of research on Latino studies for illustrative purposes. I hope to show how those who were once invisible to social science are now making substantial contributions to the field's development.

A Nation of Immigrants

With the exception of the Native American, every American is an immigrant—though not all migrated voluntarily. Some were the result of forced migrations (such as those of slavery), or conquest and annexation (such as that of the southwestern states from what was originally Mexican territory). Immigration defines American history but is also central to the definition of an American identity as a nation of immigrants. Oscar Handlin, who wrote the first classic of European immigrant history, *The Uprooted* (1973), began his book by noting in the preface, “Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America. Then I discovered that the immigrants *were* American history.” Indeed, it is that identity between American history and American immigration that renders the experience of the United States rather singular among the world's other multiracial and multicultural societies: for example, until the middle of this century England or The Netherlands were rather homogeneous societies at home, while they were colonizers amid other peoples and cultures overseas. In contrast, America has always been a nation of immigrants.

Immigration to America can be broadly understood as consisting of four major waves (cf. Muller and Espenshade 1985; Pedraza and Rumbaut 1996). The first wave consisted of Northwest Europeans (from England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Norway, Sweden) who came up to the mid–nineteenth century, when the society was colonial and agricultural; the second consisted of Southern and Eastern Europeans (from Russia, Poland, Hungary, Italy, Greece) at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth, when the society was becoming industrial and capitalist; the third consisted of the internal movement from the South to the North and Midwest of black

Americans, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Native Americans, precipitated by two world wars; and the fourth, from 1965 to the present, has consisted of immigrants from Latin America and Asia, when the society has become post-industrial and service-oriented. As a result of this fourth wave, which is still under way, sociology refocused its research on immigrants as a social category distinct from racial and ethnic minorities and on immigration as an international process that reshuffles persons and cultures across nations, rendering them multiracial and multicultural.

Agricultural Origins

Without a doubt, Latino scholarship has made major contributions to the writing of the history of those very groups that Carey McWilliams (1968) used to call “the Spanish-speaking peoples of the United States,” who were an integral part of this society yet did not have a written history. Those who had to go *Al Norte*, as Dennis Valdés (1991) titled his book on Mexican workers who came to labor in the fields and industries of the Midwest, did so searching for a solution to the economic and political problems of their lives. Too often, however, they found themselves laboring in what amounted to what McWilliams (1939) rightly dubbed “factories in the fields.” This reality has never ceased for those who, as Leo Chavez (1992) underscored, continue to lead “shadowed lives” that are lived outside the imagined legal and moral community that others belong to.

Moreover, as it has rewritten many regional histories, that same scholarship has contributed substantially to the writing of the history of the United States. For example, David Montejano’s 1987 study, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836–1986*, succeeded in writing two histories. The first history was that of the Mexicans who remained in Texas: after they lost possession of the land, what had been a highly stratified Mexican people—with an aristocratic elite who lived in haciendas as well as the poor Mexican farm laborers and vaqueros who labored for them—progressively became an unstratified people that remained overwhelmingly poor. The second history was that of Texas as a rather feudal, rural society that became incorporated into the rest of the country by becoming a part of the commercial ranch society ruled by a merchant class that “grew” cattle, especially longhorns, as a cash crop for profit (rather than sugar, cotton, or coffee), as in other plantation soci-

eties in the Third World, where agriculture also became commercialized in its service to industrial capitalism.

Cattle and cotton were the mainstays of much of central Texas. Given that Texas had become the nation's leading cotton-producing state in the nineteenth century, Neil Foley's analysis in *The White Scourge* (1997) of the role Mexicans, blacks, and poor whites played in Texas's cotton culture is also a substantial contribution to the development of Texas history as not only western but also southern history. Foley's research on the cotton industry in Texas showed how the state's large Mexican population—both native-born and immigrant—increasingly came to displace Anglos and blacks as sharecroppers and tenants on the cotton farms in central Texas in the twentieth century. Central Texas was indeed southern, not only because of its cotton culture but also because it maintained Jim Crow segregation among Anglos, blacks, and Mexicans; but Mexicans came to play an in-between role, along both class and racial lines. In American agriculture, from the Civil War to the New Deal, the notion of a career ladder—that a young man who worked as a farm hand could climb, rung by rung, through the stages of hired hand, sharecropper, and tenant farmer, to farm owner—was a fundamental tenet of American agriculture. These sharp class differences in property and labor were overlaid with sharp status differences among the three groups, resulting in conflicts that were about both race and class (as well as gender, since farming was the work of families). Foley argues that the transformation of a nearly all-white landowning class to a predominantly white tenant class took place gradually during the 50 years between 1880 and 1930. While initially hired as temporary laborers rather than as sharecroppers, Mexicans gradually displaced white and black tenants; this displacement was “symptomatic of the transformation that was taking place in Texas agriculture,” as many small, family-sized farms were being consolidated into larger, plantation-style farms run by managers who exercised close supervision over tenants and sharecroppers (Foley 1997: 37). As Foley pointed out, many landowners began to justify their preference for Mexican labor by ascribing to white tenants the indolence and improvidence they had previously associated with blacks and Mexicans. Thus, distinctions came to be drawn between white owners and landless whites, who remained as tenants, while Mexicans suddenly became the solution to the growing demand for a cheap and docile labor force. From 1900 to 1940, with the rise of industrial agriculture and corporate farming, the ethnic and racial composition of the local population changed from white

family farmers to a highly mobile rural proletariat of mostly nonwhite farmworkers, and poor whites lost their place in the hierarchy of farm labor as well as the status and privileges that whiteness conferred, until they came to be seen as the white scourge.

Regional Histories

California was also the site for a number of studies that focused on the Mexican American experience, such as George Sánchez's *Becoming Mexican American* (1993), which traced the development of an immigrant community in Los Angeles in the early part of the century into an ethnic American community from World War II on. Sanchez shows that while following their own interests, both the U.S. and Mexican governments sought to Americanize and Mexicanize the Mexican immigrant. Yet ultimately the immigrants were able to forestall both drives. In the United States, the drive to Americanize the parents was abandoned as futile, particularly since it was assumed that the immigrants would only go on to fill menial, working-class jobs; the drive to Americanize children in the schools only presented them with idealized versions of American life and values, while in reality what was offered was a vocational training that amounted to second-class citizenship. In Mexico, the drive to Mexicanize the immigrants was led by Mexican consulate officials, who were preoccupied with Mexicans' return migration. Hence, they tried to organize the city's cultural life so as to encourage continued loyalty to mother Mexico. It likewise failed. The Mexicanization efforts were mostly directed at the children of immigrants, by establishing schools for the study of Spanish and Mexican history and culture. Despite revolutionary rhetoric, however, in reality the version of Mexican culture presented was one that portrayed the culture of the Indian in Mexico as backward and extolled the virtues of European civilization. Because their goal was to reincorporate the Mexicans who would one day return to Mexico as vital elements in the new revolutionary nation, the Mexican officials supported the massive repatriation drives brought about by the Depression of the 1930s. Ironically, the massive exit of Mexicans from the city ushered in a new leadership of the community in Los Angeles, leadership that came from American-born Chicano leaders more affiliated with their working-class communities and organized labor backgrounds. By the end of World War II, the transition from a Mexico-centered leadership to one focused on political and social advancement in

American society had been accomplished (see also García 1981, 1989). As Sánchez underscored, ultimately, both the Americanization and Mexicanization drives partially succeeded, helping to create a new American ethnic identity fueled by strong nationalistic sentiments.

Focusing on women, who for too long have been relegated to the shadows of history, Vicky Ruíz (1998) sought to bring Mexican women in the Southwest “out of the shadows,” noting that for immigrant women and poor women of color the distinction between public and private may be false. Beginning in the nineteenth century, as Mexicans journeyed north to the borderlands of the Southwest only to find themselves relegated to low-paying jobs, Ruíz brings to the fore the many roles that Mexican women played over time in the twentieth century, as they confronted America, until the Chicano movement called for the development of a new woman: the Chicana. A woman of multiple identities, the Chicana is committed to feminism and to the social justice aims of the movement but also has a consciousness of culture that has its roots in Mexico and its indigenous past.

California’s history is also the subject of Tomás Almaguer’s study of the origins of white supremacy in California in the nineteenth century, *Racial Fault Lines* (1994). By assessing the struggles for the control of resources, status, and political legitimacy between the European Americans and the Native Americans, Mexicans, blacks, Chinese, and Japanese in California, Almaguer not only contributed to our understanding of the process of racialization of all of these groups but also to the writing of the state’s history. Likewise, Ramón Gutiérrez’s *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away* (1991) is an epic study of the Spanish colonization of the indigenous peoples of New Mexico from 1500 to 1846, a process that was virtually the same in New Mexico as in the rest of Latin America, whose history it shares.

Florida is the backdrop to Gerald Poyo’s 1989 “*With All and for the Good of All*” (a phrase that came from José Martí, a major leader of Cuba’s independence movement). Poyo explains the plight of the Cuban tobacco workers in Tampa and Key West in the second half of the nineteenth century. Using their newsletters, Poyo showed that the tobacco workers enthusiastically contributed to the Cuban exiles’ nationalist movement, which increasingly exerted a great deal of influence on the course of the struggle for independence in Cuba. However, their contribution was often at the expense of themselves as immigrants and as workers, particularly for black Cubans. Poyo’s work pointed the way to the approach that has now taken hold that sees some im-

migrants as involved in transnational communities. It also served to bring Latin American history *into* the United States, thus helping to write the history of Florida—a place that, to this day, is partly situated in Latin America, as can be seen in both David Rieff's *The Exile: Cuba in the Heart of Miami* (1993) and Maria Cristina Garcia's *Havana, USA* (1996), which analyzed the first three waves of the Cuban exodus as exiles, not immigrants. Her work on Cuba's exiles focused on the evolution of Cuban exile politics in Miami.

Older Conceptual Models

Assimilation

Latino scholarship, then, has recently been making quite substantial contributions not only to the history of the peoples that for so long remained invisible and without a written history but also to the regional histories of this nation of which they were a vital part.

In addition, Latino scholarship figured quite centrally in the development of the two main conceptual models that for a long time guided research on race and ethnic relations in America: the assimilation and internal colonialism models. Best expressed in the work of Milton Gordon (1964) and Nathan Glazer (1971), the assimilation model predicted that a natural, evolutionary process would in due time make immigrants and minorities *like* the dominant majority Americans. In essence, the model held out the expectation that as immigrants and ethnics became acculturated—took on the values, customs, language, manner, and dress of the majority whites—entry into the major institutions and mainstream of the society would be achieved. Hence, the assimilation model held out the expectation that cultural assimilation would lead to structural assimilation. However, as E. Franklin Frazier (1957a, 1957b) pointed out, at least in the case of black Americans this had never come true.

Internal Colonialism

The major challenge to assimilation theory came from the proponents of the internal colonialism model, the effort to delineate the ways in which the experiences of the racial minorities (blacks, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Native Americans—some of its oldest immigrants and most indigenous native sons

and daughters) differed significantly from the experiences and eventual assimilation of the white European immigrants at the turn of the century. Following its earliest expression in the work of Robert Blauner (1969), Latino scholarship contributed very centrally to the development of the internal colonialism model to explain the inequality Chicanos faced, with works such as Rodolfo Acuña's *Occupied America* (1972), Mario Barrera's *Race and Class in the Southwest* (1979), and Joan Moore's (1970) refinement of the notion of internal colonialism into three different types in Texas, California, and New Mexico. They underscored that the experience of these groups was different in that they had suffered a process of internal colonization due to their place and role in the system of production—a place and role they came to occupy because of their color, their race. Even more, as Rodolfo Alvarez's (1973) analysis of the different generations that had developed in the course of Mexican American history argued, the immigration of Mexicans to the United States departed significantly from the immigration of Europeans, even when the same “push” and “pull” factors operated (such as poverty, lack of land, the difference in wages). For among Mexicans in the United States, the “migrant generation” arrived *after* the racial prejudice, discrimination, and violence that attended the war with Mexico and the annexation of the Southwest that greeted the “creation generation” had relegated the Mexican to a caste-like racial subordination.

Incorporation

The internal colonialism model was an important corrective to the assimilation model. However, it suffered from stretching the colonial analogy too far, not recognizing the essential differences between the domestic situation of race relations in the United States and what happened in the colonization of Africa and Asia. Social scientists sought to overcome the shortcomings of both the assimilation and internal colonialism models by replacing the notion of assimilation with one of incorporation, emphasizing the various ways in which different groups of immigrants and ethnics have become a part of American society. As Joe Feagin (1978) underscored, we need to pay attention to the initial and continuing placement and access of various groups to the economic, political, and educational institutions of the society over the course of American history. Feagin's emphasis on the varying patterns

of incorporation of different groups was at the root of the comparison in Silvia Pedraza-Bailey's *Political and Economic Migrants in America: Cubans and Mexicans* (1985), as well as Alejandro Portes and Robert L. Bach's *Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the United States* (1985).

Systems of Migration

The shift to the notion of incorporation went hand in hand with the shift from the traditional, individual micro approach to the macro, structural-level approach entailed in a systems perspective. In sociology, the traditional, individual micro approach was best developed by Everett Lee's (1966:50) theory of migration, which made explicit the "push" and "pull" factors that "hold and attract or repel people," as well as the intervening obstacles that proved more of an impediment to some than to others.

Thereafter, another approach to the study of immigration focused on structural-level variables. The link between migration and world patterns of unequal development increasingly became evident, not only in North America—the magnet that continues to attract the world's poor—but also in Western Europe, where the periphery countries of Spain, Italy, Greece, and Turkey became suppliers of labor to the industrialized core countries of France, Germany, and Switzerland. Thus, a new set of structural, macro perspectives emerged. This type of migration theory stressed the increased significance of immigrant workers in developed capitalist societies.

To counteract the traditional perspective that focused on the migrants' reasons for migration and its personal consequences, the structural perspective argued that a system of economic migration had developed from the flow of labor between developed nations and the underdeveloped nations that performed important functions for them. Michael Burawoy (1976) compared the role migrant labor played in advanced capitalist societies by comparing Mexican labor in agriculture in the United States with African labor in the gold mines of South Africa during apartheid, and Alejandro Portes (1978b) studied Mexican labor in the United States. They both agreed that migrant labor—as immigrant and as labor—had structural causes and performed important functions for the society that received it. Burawoy defined migrant labor institutionally as a system that separates the functions of renewal and maintenance of the labor force, physically and institutionally, so that only the

function of renewal takes place in the less developed society (such as Mexico or Turkey), while only the function of maintenance takes place in the developed world (such as the United States or France). Arthur Corwin (1978) also underscored in his many analyses of the role the Mexican migration played in the United States that labor migration provides developed countries (such as the United States or France) with a dependable source of cheap labor; it also provides underdeveloped countries (such as Mexico or Turkey) with a “safety valve,” for emigration has become the solution to their incapacity to satisfy the needs of their poor and lower-middle classes. As Jorge Bustamante and Geronimo Martínez (1979) also stressed in their analysis of undocumented illegal migration from Mexico, that migration took place “beyond borders but within systems.”

Working within this framework, Silvia Pedraza-Bailey (1985) compared Cubans and Mexicans and argued that not only was it possible to develop a system of economic migration between sending and receiving countries (such as Mexico and the United States) but that it was also possible to develop a system of political migration between sending and receiving countries (such as Cuba and the United States) that resulted from the political functions the emigration and immigration played for them. The loss of large numbers of the educated, skilled, professional middle classes indeed proved erosive to the Cuban revolution, but it also served as a safety valve in externalizing the dissent of those who could no longer side with the revolution. At the same time, in the United States the arrival of so many refugees who succeeded in the flight to freedom also served to legitimize foreign policy actions during the tense years of the Cold War.

Newer Conceptual Models

Thereafter, several theorists (e.g., Feagin 1978; Portes 1981; Pedraza-Bailey 1985) sought to transcend the shortcomings of both the assimilation and internal colonialism models by focusing on the varying ways in which different ethnic groups were incorporated and became a part of the society by paying attention to the initial and continuing placement and access of various groups within the society’s economic, political, and educational institutions.

Still, as a central concept that guided research, incorporation, like its predecessor, assimilation, assumed a one-way process, failing to take into account that immigrants not only become incorporated into a new society but

also transform it. Immigrants did not just become incorporated into American society; they made and remade America and are fashioning her still.

As a result of the fourth wave of American immigration, the one through which we are still living, sociology refocused its research on immigrants as a social category distinct from racial and ethnic minorities and on immigration as an international process that reshuffles persons and cultures across nations, until we now find ourselves amid a veritable explosion of immigration research as well as a search for new concepts with which to describe the new realities — concepts like transnationalism, diaspora, and diasporic citizenship.

Immigrant Types

It is well to remember that despite its Third World origins, this last wave of migration is characterized by enormous social heterogeneity, perhaps greater than ever before. Alejandro Portes and Rubén Rumbaut, in *Immigrant America* (1990), argued that such diversity can best be delineated by thinking of the immigrants as belonging to four major types: labor migrants (e.g., from Mexico, Puerto Rico, the West Indies); professional immigrants, aptly characterized as “brain drain” (e.g., from the Philippines, India, Taiwan, China, Columbia, Argentina); entrepreneurial immigrants (e.g., Koreans); and refugees (e.g., Cubans, Haitians, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Guatemalans, Salvadorans). Of these types, the best-studied case, both in general and for Latinos in particular, is the case of labor migrants, which the Mexican migration exemplifies best.

The phrase *brain drain* describes the immigration of educated, middle-class professionals (doctors, scientists, accountants, nurses) from Third World countries to the First World. Brain drain is an increasingly large component of the contemporary wave of migration, defining most of the Asian immigration and a large part of the Latin American immigration (e.g., from Columbia, Argentina, Chile, and now even Puerto Rico). Curiously, it remains little studied.

Entrepreneurial immigrants do not seem to me to be a distinct social type, since they overlap with the others. That is to say, immigrants who initially were refugees or brain drain immigrants, or even labor migrants, may in due time become entrepreneurial immigrants.

By contrast, refugees and exiles — as distinct from economic immigrants — pose distinct issues. For example, the Cuban exodus to the United States

has now lasted over 40 years, as a result of which the United States has now inherited around 12 percent of the Cuban population. Such an exodus harbors distinct waves of immigrants, alike only in their final rejection of Cuba. In contrast to economic immigrants, refugees are more “pushed” by the social and political processes in the society they leave than “pulled” by the attractiveness of the new (Lee 1966; Rose 1981, 1993). Each of the major waves of the Cuban migration has been characterized by a very different social composition with respect to social class, race, education, family composition, and values—differences that resulted from the changing phases of the Cuban revolution (Pedraza 1996). Hence, the Cuban community in the United States today is extremely heterogeneous, not only in the dramatic contrasts in their social characteristics but also in their processes of political disaffection—the loss of faith in government and cause. One way to capture this is by utilizing E. F. Kunz’s (1973: 137) concept of “vintages,” “refugee groups that are distinct in character, background, and avowed political faith.” The study of Cuba’s exiles, as distinct “vintages” and political generations, is helping to develop the rather underdeveloped study of refugees as social types.

Transnationalism

Under the impact of changes in the nature of modern communications at this century’s end, the immigrants’ experience—their lived experience—has changed. Many immigrants now fail to shed their old identities, to totally assimilate; instead they develop new bicultural identities, living their lives and being quite involved in more than one nation, more than one world—in effect making the home and adopted countries both one lived social world (see Goldring 1996). In his study of Mexican working-class immigrants living in Redwood City, California, Roger Rouse (1992: 45) found that “while they lived in Redwood City, they were also living deep in western Mexico” and were obliged to balance two quite different ways of life, which resulted in “cultural bifocality,” as Rouse expressed it. To my mind, such a bicultural identity is not unlike Park’s notion of the “marginal man” at the turn of the century: more creative, sharper in sensibility.

As Nancy Foner (1997) pointed out, however, transnationalism—the process by which immigrants “forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (Basch et al. 1994: 7)—is not new, though much of the literature makes it sound as if it

is. Comparing immigrants at the turn of the century with contemporary immigrants to New York, the quintessential immigrant city, Foner shows that many transnational patterns actually have a long history, while much is also distinctive about transnationalism today. At the turn of the last century, many immigrants were involved in what is now called transnationalism. For example, Italian and Russian immigrants also kept ties of sentiment and family alive with those back home by living in what today are called “transnational households,” with members scattered across households, and by sending home remittances that included political contributions for particular causes, such as the Irish support for the nationalist cause. Moreover, with the exception of Russian Jews, who fled from political and religious persecution, the return rates for many immigrant groups, like the Italians, were extremely high, around one-third, even higher than today’s. But at the turn of this century, much is distinctive about our current transnationalism. In today’s global economy, changes in the technologies of transportation and communication (jet air travel, faxes, electronic mail, videos) have enabled immigrants to maintain closer and more frequent contact with their home country and to participate both actually and vicariously in its life, so that they “take actions, make decisions, and develop subjectivities and identities embedded in networks of relationships that connect them simultaneously to two or more nations” (Basch et al. 1994: 7).

Sending Communities

Transnational communities also have an impact on the sending communities back in the underdeveloped world. Wayne Cornelius (1976) analyzed the impact of remittances from Mexican immigrants in the United States on their villages back in Mexico with respect to whether the remittances became channeled into consumption or were productively invested. Recently, Sergio Díaz-Briquets and Jorge Pérez-López (1997) also analyzed refugee remittances when the factors that determine them are not only economic, to help the family and friends left behind, but also political, as part of the Cuban community exerts strong social pressure to prevent the remittances from bolstering Cuba’s failing economy and the Castro regime.

In *Return to Aztlan: The Social Process of International Migration from Western Mexico* (1987), Douglas Massey, Rafael Alarcón, Jorge Durand, and Humberto González also underscored the fact that the impact of migration

on sending communities depends on when in the family's life cycle it takes place. For example, in the beginning years of family building and child raising, all must indeed go to consumption, while later on savings can be productively invested. Moreover, the impact of migration also depends on when in the community's life cycle it takes place, whether or not the community has a history of emigration. Indeed, there are communities that have long histories of migration to particular cities in the United States, such as the one that Roger Rouse (1991) studied, a circular flow of migration from Aguililla, Mexico, to Redwood City, California. Rouse argued that the process is so long-standing and intertwined, and the flows of capital and labor so regular, that the very image of a community from which people depart or go to is compromised. Instead, Rouse proposed that we should conceptualize it as a transnational migrant "circuit." This conceptualization, however, was challenged by Luin Goldring (1996), who emphasized the existence of a transnational migrant "community": of people who do live their emotional, familial commitments across nations (for example, by coming to work in the United States and returning to the village back in Mexico to bury their relatives).

Diaspora

The immigrants' return migration, their involvement with life in the countries they left, was due not only to their bonds of love and loyalty for the family and nation left behind but, Nancy Foner (1997) underlines, was also due to their lack of acceptance in America. In his analysis of Haitian immigrants in the United States, Michel Laguerre (1998) notes that the same is true for Haitian immigrants in the United States today. Using the broader concept of diasporic citizenship—"a set of practices that a person is engaged in, and a set of rights acquired or appropriated, that cross nation-state boundaries and that indicate membership in at least two nation states"—Laguerre (1998: 190, 192) posits that Haitian immigrants thereby "escape complete minoritization since the link with the homeland allows one to enjoy the majority status one cannot exercise in the adopted country."

Moreover, the social practice of diasporic citizenship has outrun its legal expression and, Laguerre argues, is helping to develop a new conception of citizenship that is dual not just in the sense it has been for many immigrants—that while they are in the home country (Italy, Haiti) they are its citizens,

and when they are in the United States they are Americans. The new diasporic citizenship is also dual in the sense that the diaspora—those who are, as the etymology of the word indicates, scattered asunder—can participate fully in the social and political life of both countries, exerting a significant influence on the course of the political life in the home country. Foner (1997) provides a telling example. In the last Dominican presidential election, many Dominicans residing in New York quickly flew to the island to vote. In future elections, the trip will be unnecessary because electoral reforms ensure that it will be possible to vote while remaining in New York. This gives the diaspora (whether Haitian, Dominican, or Mexican) a role in homeland politics that is much larger than ever before. As David Hollinger (1995: 153) underscored, the new immigration, like the old, “displays a variety of degrees of engagement with the United States and with prior homelands, and it yields some strong assimilationist impulses along vivid expressions of diasporic consciousness.” Curiously, while many Latin American nations live in true diaspora fashion (cf. Cohen 1997), scattered asunder like seeds, and refer to themselves as diasporas, to date the concept of diaspora itself has not served to guide social science research on Latinos in the United States.

Work and Industry

Immigrants and ethnics are overwhelmingly concentrated in only some industrial sectors. Hence, the study of Latinos has mostly served to develop the study of the patterns of work and industry in which they have historically been concentrated: agriculture, organized labor, the garment industry, domestic service, and ethnic enterprise, as well as the topics of poverty and residential segregation.

Organized Labor

Zaragoza Vargas’s (1993) *Proletarians of the North* documented the migration of Mexicans from the agricultural Southwest to the industrial heartland of the Midwest, internal migration that was initially “pulled” up by the job opportunities created by World War I. At a time in American history when industries such as the steel, meatpacking, and auto industries were at their peak, Mexican migrants came north and went on to supply part of their labor, often

taking on the most difficult and dangerous jobs left over by the more skilled black and white labor forces. Hector Delgado's *New Immigrants, Old Unions* (1993) also specified the difficulties attendant on organizing workers when so many of the new workers are undocumented. In a research field where women are so often neglected, Vicky Ruíz's (1987) study brought to the fore the women who worked in the cannery industry, leading what she calls "cannery lives," and their contribution to the unionization of the industry in California from 1930 to 1950. Lourdes Gouveia and Donald Stull (1995) analyzed the many changes that have taken place in the meatpacking industry in the cattle country of the Plains states. They showed that the industry first relied on Eastern European immigrant labor, then switched to black American and Mexican labor, and now relies on Central American immigrant labor, and that this shift went hand in hand with the complete reorganization of the industry—greater mechanization of the labor process, a decline in unionization, and lower wages for the employee.

Garment Industry

Because most studies have concentrated on labor migration, for a long time the implicit model was that of the male pauper. Yet in every year since 1930, women consistently outnumbered men among migrants to the United States, with the exception of the few years following the passage of IRCA (the Immigration Reform and Control Act) in 1986 that granted amnesty to illegal immigrants, among whom, given the risks, men predominate. This fact pointed our way to begin studying how migration is different for a woman than a man (see Pedraza 1991). Immigrant women, for example, enter a much narrower range of occupations, salient among which—yesterday as well as today—are the garment industry and domestic service. Women became incorporated in the garment industry, above all, because it relied on a traditional skill that throughout much of the world defined womanhood—the ability to sew—and also because it relied on homework and subcontracting, allowing women to stay at home and care for their children. This advantage led women to accept low wages and exploitative conditions, as it continues to do today. At the turn of the century New York's garment industry mostly hired Jewish and Italian women; later it moved on to Puerto Rican women, as documented in Virginia Sánchez-Korrol's 1984 study of the old Puerto Rican community in

New York City in the early part of the century, *From Colonia to Community*. Today immigrant women newly arrived from Latin America and Asia continue to supply the labor for the garment industry.

Yet such similarities can mask profound differences. In a recent study, María Patricia Fernández-Kelly and Anna García (1991) compared Mexican and Cuban women who worked in the Los Angeles and Miami garment industries, respectively, and argued that two very different social processes were at stake. Mexican immigration to the United States was the sustained migration of unskilled and semiskilled replacement labor, while Cuban migration to the United States was the migration of skilled Cuban political refugees. Thus, Mexican women immigrants worked in the garment industry due to the long-term financial need generated by their husbands' inadequate earnings, or the total loss of male support due to illness, death, or abandonment. For them, work in the garment industry was the imperative posed by survival. By contrast, Cuban women immigrants worked in the garment industry as a transitory experience aimed at recovering the family's lost middle-class level of living by helping their husbands become self-employed in business, the economic foundation of what Portes and Bach (1985) called the "ethnic enclave" in Miami—a distinct form of immigrant spatial incorporation in the labor force.

Domestic Service

Women immigrants also often ended up working as domestic servants, which often allowed the women enough savings to finance their own upward mobility as well as that of their families (cf. Diner 1983 on Irish women, Glenn 1986 on Japanese women). Thus, focusing on Latinas in domestic service has also been a worthwhile research focus, as in Mary Romero's *Maid in the U.S.A.* (1992), as well as Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo's (1994) work.

Comparing the experience of migration for women and men, studies have repeatedly found that difficult as the experience of immigration was, it was often far more positive for women than for men. The migration allowed women to break with traditional roles and patterns of dependence and assert a newfound (if meager) freedom. Yolanda Prieto's (1986) study of Cuban women working in factories in Union City, New Jersey, argued that these immigrant women took on the burden of working outside the home as an ex-

tension of the traditional notion of a woman's role. Thus, while the woman's place was no longer in the home, it was still centered around her husband and children's welfare, thus implying no real change in values and family roles. Lisandro Pérez's (1986, 1988) work argued that the higher family incomes of Cubans, among Hispanics in the United States, were quite dependent on the earnings brought home regularly by Cuban women, who participated in the labor force at a higher rate than other Hispanic women.

Ethnic Enterprise

Intuitively, we all know that the epitome of ethnic enterprise—the concentration in petit bourgeois small business enterprises—are the Jews, throughout Europe for centuries and thereafter in the immigrant generation in the United States and Latin America. Precisely because at other times and other places other immigrant groups have occupied a similar place in the social structure, the people among whom they lived often recognized the parallel. Thus, the Chinese in Southeast Asia were often called “the Jews of the East,” Asians in East Africa were dubbed “the Jews of Africa,” and most recently Cubans have been called “the Jews of the Caribbean.” Historically, ethnic enterprise was often a refuge for groups that, due to discrimination, faced occupational closure. In the United States, early in this century, ethnic enterprise was an important avenue of immigrant social mobility for first-generation Jews, Italians, Greeks, Chinese, and Japanese who, as a result, were able to escape urban poverty. At present, this “middleman minority” role, as Edna Bonacich (1973) called it, is being played by Koreans, Asian Indians, Arabs, Cubans (especially in Puerto Rico), and Colombians, all of whom have quite directly replaced the old Jewish, Italian, Greek, and Chinese merchants, often by literally taking over their old businesses. José Cobas and Jorge Duany (1997) have used Bonacich's concept in examining the case of Cubans in Puerto Rico: initially a “middleman minority,” Cubans in Puerto Rico may now be disappearing through intermarriage, due to their similarity to their Puerto Rican hosts (in language, culture, phenotype), which sets them apart from other middleman minorities.

Immigrants in ethnic enterprise have historically also borne the brunt of much ethnic conflict, such as that which has often erupted between blacks and Jews, despite their also being allies in the struggle for greater civil rights

in America. At present, that conflict between blacks and Cubans surfaced in Miami in the mid-1980s—the subject of Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick’s 1993 book on Miami, *City on the Edge*—and most recently in Los Angeles between blacks and Koreans.

Poverty

Research on Latino poverty in the United States does not have the same long pedigree as research on blacks because until recently most of the large data sources publicly available did not incorporate Latinos in sufficient detail to permit it. Nonetheless, in the 1990s it has finally become part of the intellectual agenda, and the search for the most adequate theoretical model to conceptualize it has begun. A central concern of Joan Moore and Rachel Pinderhughes in their recent *Latinos and the Underclass Debate* (1993) has been whether the underclass model that has grown popular following the work of William J. Wilson (1985, 1987, 1994) on black urban poverty is conceptually suitable to describe and understand poverty among Latinos in the United States. Douglas Massey (1993) argued that Hispanics and blacks differ in such fundamental ways that theories of the underclass, with their standard methods, are inappropriate for studying Latino poverty. Black Americans, he stressed, share a distinct history in this country, thus a common historical memory. Latinos represent many variegated experiences both because they come from different countries, for very different reasons at varying points in time, and because their historical processes of incorporation into American society have been vastly different.

Even more, theories of Latino poverty cannot ignore the impact of immigration, a central dynamic that increases the incidence of poverty both because of the selectivity of the migration and because new immigrants may compete with other poor Hispanic Americans and displace them from their jobs (Meléndez 1993). By contrast, immigration plays a small part in the development of black poverty.

An exception, however, may be the Puerto Rican case (cf. Tienda 1989), over which there is clear disagreement. Edwin Meléndez (1993) argued that the Puerto Rican case resembles that of black Americans, given its high levels of welfare dependency and families headed by single women; their concentration in areas, such as New York, that have experienced profound economic

restructuring; the steep decline of industries, such as the garment industry, in which they were overwhelmingly concentrated; and the impact of race and discrimination on their life chances. But even in the case of Puerto Ricans, the selectivity of migration also plays a role. Douglas Gurak and Luis Falcón's (1990) research on poverty among Puerto Rican families has argued that the women most likely to migrate from Puerto Rico to the U.S. mainland are those who have less labor force experience, less education, and more children and whose unions are more unstable; in contrast, those most likely to return from the mainland to Puerto Rico are the ones whose unions are more stable and who have fewer children and more education. This "double selectivity," as they called it, clearly contributes to the development of poverty among Puerto Ricans in New York.

Residential Segregation

The problem of poverty issues from the problem of racial segregation in America, but comparisons between the segregation of blacks and Latinos yield quite different results. Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton (1989, 1993) underscored that for Latinos in the United States, segregation is more of a variable—one that depends on their level of acculturation, their socioeconomic status in the community, the region of the country, the rate of immigration, and their skin color or phenotype. For black Americans, by contrast, segregation is more of a constant, since it has not declined over time. That constancy indicates that race itself—prejudice, discrimination—is playing a major role in that segregation. Again, the case of Puerto Ricans is the exception among Hispanics in that their pattern of segregation resembles blacks', for whom color clearly matters. The difference that phenotype—shades of color and variation in features—makes in social outcomes within the very variegated Latino population has been the subject of the work of Carlos Arce, Edward Murguía, and Parker Frisbie (1987) for Mexican Americans, and Clara Rodríguez (1991) for Puerto Ricans.

Massey and Denton (1989, 1993) came to understand segregation as composed of several different measures—evenness, exposure, clustering, centralization, and concentration—and used separate indices to capture each so as to compare the patterns of segregation among blacks and Hispanics. They found that blacks were highly segregated under most of these measures in many of

the largest cities of the United States, such as Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Newark, and St. Louis. They used the term *hypersegregation* to denote the conditions under which a very substantial part of the black population still lives. By contrast, Latinos showed low to moderate levels of segregation, even in cities with large Hispanic populations, such as Los Angeles, San Antonio, Miami, New York, and Chicago.

Micro-Macro Linkages

Because migration is a network-driven social process and social scientists recently focused much of their research on the difference gender makes, studies have begun to better link the micro and macro levels of analysis. The recent macro approach was an important corrective to the traditional micro approach, which failed to take into account the fact that since the advent of the Industrial Revolution all individual decisions to move have cumulated into migration flows that moved in only one direction. The danger of the structural emphasis, however, lies in its tendency to obliterate people, to lose sight of the individual migrants who do make decisions. The theoretical and empirical challenge now facing immigration research lies in its capacity to capture both individuals and structure. We need to consider the plight of individuals, their propensity to move, and the nature of the decisions they make. We also need to consider the larger social structures within which that plight exists and those decisions are made.

Such a link between micro and macro levels of analysis is provided by Massey, Alarcón, Durand, and González's *Return to Aztlan* (1987). In this study of the Mexican migration to the United States, they showed that international migration originates historically in transformations of social and economic structures in both the sending and receiving societies, but once migrants' social networks have begun, they grow and develop. These networks support and channel migration on a continuously widening scale. Thus, the migration that was initially propelled by an external, structural dynamic (such as poverty or lack of land) and logic increasingly acquires an internal dynamic and logic of its own (such as family reunification). In this way, migration comes to fuel itself: this process has taken place in all migrations that have been sustained for a long time, such as that of Mexicans and Cubans.

Sherri Grasmuck and Patricia Pessar's analysis of Dominican migration

to New York City, *Between Two Islands* (1991), focused on social networks and households as the link between micro and macro levels of analysis and demonstrated that gender is central to household decision making—to the decision to migrate as a family strategy to meet the challenges that accompanied underdevelopment and economic and political transformation in the Third World. As Grasmuck and Pessar emphasized, the household is the social unit that makes decisions as to whether migration will take place, who in the family will migrate, what resources will be allocated to the migration, what remittances or household members can be expected to return, and whether the migration will be temporary or permanent. As Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) showed, however, all of these decisions are guided by the norms that surround kinship and gender roles, as well as by the hierarchy of power within the household. In her participant observation study of Mexican undocumented women, Hondagneu-Sotelo also found that while the decision to migrate may constitute a joint family strategy, the actual process of decision making and the staggered departures of family members betrayed enormous interpersonal conflict.

Grasmuck and Pessar (1991) went on to show that gender was at the center of not only the decision to emigrate from the Dominican Republic to New York but also the reluctance to return to the island. Women struggled to maintain the gains that migration and employment had brought them. Men were eager to return, as expressed in their frugal, austere living to accumulate savings, but women tended to postpone return (by buying large items, such as sofas or refrigerators, that served to ground the family in New York) because they realized that returning would entail their retirement from work and the loss of their newfound freedoms. As a result, a struggle developed over finances and the possibility of return that revolved around the traditional definitions of gender roles and privileges, definitions that the migration itself had changed and that many men sought to restore by returning back home.

Conclusion

Much remains to be done, yet already we can see that research on Latinos in the United States is an important part of the research we need to do on all the issues that pertain to immigration, race, and ethnicity in the United States. As new immigrants are being incorporated into American society, America is

being transformed once again. So is the nature of its social science research, which now needs to go beyond the models and concepts that served us well when America could still be analyzed as a predominantly black and white nation. The study of Latinos in the United States is now making rather central and solid contributions to our understanding of the social processes they have experienced as immigrants, minorities, ethnics. Work on Latinos combines the research traditions of studies on immigration and assimilation and studies on ethnicity and identity, helping to push both fields forward. Latino scholarship has figured centrally in the development of the main concepts that guide that research, such as assimilation, internal colonialism, incorporation, systems of migration, and now transnationalism, while also helping us bridge the micro-macro impasse. It has also made substantial contributions to the development of particular topic areas (especially those related to patterns of industrial work and organization) and to particular immigrant types (especially labor migrants and refugees) without neglecting the difference that gender makes. Even more, by studying Latinos, collectively we are also helping to write a more accurate history of the American and Latin American regions and nations of which they were a vital part and which they helped to forge.

Note

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