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## *Immigration and U.S. Schools*

The United States is in the midst of a wave of immigration. Immigration has been one of the most critical demographic factors in this country in the past three decades, with no sign that it will slow down in the near future. Since 2000, immigration to the United States has reached the highest level ever. More than 7 million people entered this country in the first five years of the 21st century, surpassing the peak decade of immigration in 1910–1919, when 8.9 million immigrants entered the country. More than 1 million arrivals per year have been estimated since the late 1980s, of both legal and undocumented immigrants. Because of these high immigration rates, approximately half of the 35.2 million foreign-born population in the United States arrived between 1990 and 2005. Forty-seven million U.S. residents older than age 5 currently speak a language other than English at home, an increase of 15 million (and up 47%) from 1990.

Although all countries have experienced immigration, no country in the world has maintained such a high immigration rate over such a long period of time as has the United States. From 1820, when the U.S. government started to keep records of immigration, 78 million newcomers have settled in this country. Except for Native Americans and those compelled by enslavement or annexation, everyone today in the United States is either an immigrant or the descendant of immigrants. In 2005, about one in four Americans was either an immigrant or a child of immigrants, and about eight in ten Americans identified themselves with either single or

multiple migrant ancestries. Immigration currently accounts for more than 40% of population growth in the nation.

Immigration has had a profound impact on the U.S. economy and society. The successful adaptations of each wave of immigrants and their children depend on the society's response to newcomers, and especially on the effectiveness of the U.S. educational system. Educating immigrant students in the United States has always been a contested issue (Tyack, 1974), and the social and political changes in the nation in the past 40 years have complicated matters. A rapidly swelling immigrant population with vast economic, social, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversities only increases these challenges. Recent globalization also provides a new context for immigration that, in many ways, differs from the contexts in the past. Contemporary transportation and communication technologies allow people to move between countries and continents with unprecedented frequency and speed, and permit them to maintain economic, social, and political ties in two or more societies. Human mobility in this globalization context not only calls into question how permanently immigrants may be leaving their society of birth behind, but also transforms how they build new economic, social, and cultural lives in the societies in which they choose to settle (Ray, 2002). Educational reform in the United States, including changes in thinking about and attitudes toward educating immigrant children, must also consider the impact of globalization as well as transnational migration (M. Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

In this chapter, we provide a sketch of the immigration movement in the United States and a brief historical review of policy on the education of immigrant children. Throughout U.S. history, fluctuations and changes in patterns of immigration have occurred. A review of these changes fosters comparative awareness and understanding of the waves of immigration, provides a historical perspective on contemporary trends, and sheds light on U.S. schools' adaptability to such changes. Comparing current trends with past trends for how educational systems work with immigrant children may also suggest necessary changes in our present and future practices in education.

## **IMMIGRATION AND IMMIGRANTS: THEN AND NOW**

In this section of the chapter, we examine different waves of immigration in terms of their countries of origin. We also consider the timing of peaks of immigration activity.

### **Where We Come From**

According to demographers (e.g., Martin & Midgley, 2003, 2006), U.S. ancestry is categorized several ways (see Figure 1.1, "Who We Are and Were and Where We Came From").

1. *Colonists*: European colonists laid the framework of the society that later became the United States in the early 17th century at Jamestown, Plymouth, and other sites along the eastern seaboard of North America.

2. *Involuntary Americans*: Two kinds of coercion were used to incorporate people into U.S. society. One was the incorporation of Native American, Native Alaskan, Spanish, and French populations as the boundaries of the U.S. expanded westward, including the annexation of Hawaii and Puerto Rico. The other type of coercion was the shipment of slaves from Africa, whose descendants composed 19% of the U.S. population in 1790. An estimated 600,000 involuntary Africans had been brought into the country by the slave trade before the 1808 abolition of the importation of slaves; the majority of the Black population in the United States (35 million in 2005) traces descent to these slaves.

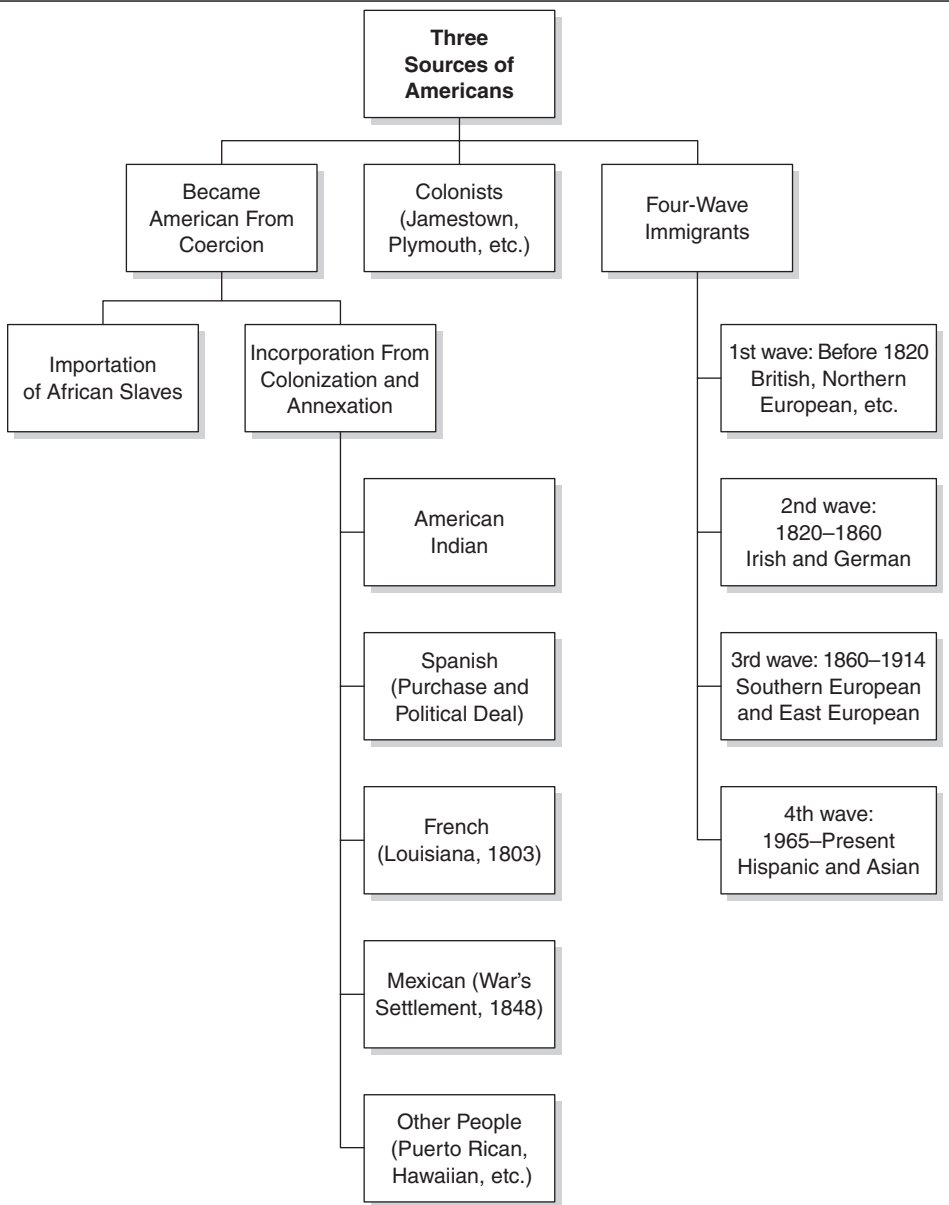
3. *Immigrants*: Here we define *immigrant* to mean a noncitizen, classified by the federal government as an alien, who has voluntarily moved from one society to another and intends to stay in a host society on a long-term basis.

## Four Waves of Immigration

Immigrants have entered the United States in different economic, political, and social climates and under different laws and policies; consequently immigration has varied considerably in magnitude, composition, and means. Scholars (see Martin & Midgley, 2003) have argued that these various factors combined to create four major waves of immigration: the first three were each marked by a peak followed by a trough. The fourth wave began in the mid-1970s and still continues.

Figure 1.1 indicates that the first wave of immigrants arrived between 1790 and 1820 and consisted mostly of English-speaking immigrants from the British Isles (Martin & Midgley, 1994). The second-wave of immigrants (1849–1850s) were predominantly Irish and German settlers who arrived when the United States was undergoing rapid industrialization and expansion. The third wave (1880–1914) brought more than 20 million foreigners to the United States. Most of these were southern and eastern Europeans who found manufacturing jobs in large cities. Immigration in the 20th century was interrupted first by World War I and then, in the 1920s, by numerical country quotas designed to maintain the dominance of northern Europeans in the country's ethnic balance. For example, the 1924 National Origins Act established quotas favoring immigration of northwestern Europeans. The Great Depression and World War II further suppressed the immigration flow in the 1930s and 1940s. The fourth and current wave of migration began with immigration reforms in the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act and the 1965 Immigration Act, which eliminated country-by-country quotas.

**FIGURE 1.1** Who We Are and Were and Where We Came From



The 1965 Immigration Act and its 1976 amendments paved the way for the fourth wave of immigration, the largest ever in U.S. history. From 1970 to 2005, about 29 million immigrants entered a postindustrial and service-oriented U.S. society. A majority of newcomers were from Latin America, particularly Mexico, or Asia. The influx of Latino and Asian students has been particularly dramatic in the West, Southwest, and Northeast of the United States, where in some districts Spanish- and Asian-language-speaking

students comprise a large proportion of the school population. Fourth-wave immigration has also swept rapidly beyond the coastal, gateway states and spread into states experiencing new growth in immigrants, including some intermountain Western states such as Nebraska, Utah, and Iowa. Southern states such as Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee, which had a tradition of low or almost no immigration, have also seen unprecedented expansion. This wave of immigration has resulted in the emergence of many multiethnic communities; it has substantially changed the racial and ethnic mix in most urban schools in the South as well as in some rural Southern schools, which have a long-established racial pattern of only Black and White students (Johnson, 2001). Because the immigration rate accelerated at the beginning of the 21st century, we anticipate that for years to come, fourth-wave immigration will continue to change the size of the U.S. population, the proportion of immigrants from different areas of the world, and the racial-ethnic composition of the U.S. population.

Martin and Midgley (2003), however, have pointed out many similarities between third-wave and fourth-wave immigration. They argue that, during both periods, the U.S. economy was undergoing fundamental restructuring, from agriculture to industry in the early years of the 20th century and from service to information at the start of the 21st century. They believe that both waves brought people from countries that had not previously provided large numbers of immigrants, and they emphasize that questions about the nation's common cultural bonds such as language, religion, and culture have arisen for the second time. We see these questions especially playing out in educational policy.

## IMMIGRATION AND SCHOOLING

U.S. schools have been the most important social institution for absorbing newcomers; few public institutions have been as directly affected by high levels of immigration as the nation's schools. However, the task of integrating new groups of people into U.S. society has become increasingly challenging. In 2005, approximately 11 million school-age children were considered children of immigrants; this population is about one-fifth of the total number of U.S. school-age children. Among the children of immigrants, about 3 million were born outside the United States. Roughly 17 million school-age children spoke a language other than English at home, and more than 3 million children reported problems in speaking English. Because a large proportion of immigrant children live in urban areas, urban public schools in low-income neighborhoods are expected to educate the majority of them. U.S. schools have traditionally been expected to provide education and many other services to immigrant children with a view to integrating them fully and rapidly into U.S. society (Montero-Sieburth & LaCelle-Peterson, 1991). Two basic arguments frame the struggling process of immigrants' settlement in the

United States and their children's schooling. These arguments center on who is an American, how to become one, at what pace and price, and who will pay for the transition. Learning English has been a central issue in debates of this kind. The two major prescriptions for the education of immigrants in U.S. society over the past century have been, first, classic assimilation and, second, pluralism. The assimilationist aims to quickly eliminate ethnic boundaries, while the pluralist aims to accommodate them (Cornbleth & Waugh, 1995; Viadero, 2000). Accordingly, Takaki summarizes two different visions of the United States: a melting pot with a single American identity (Schlesinger, 2002) and a pluralistic cultural democracy (Takaki, 2002).

To better understand the evolution and impact of many influential ideas on and practical approaches to immigrant students' education, we subsequently provide a historical perspective of the major social views and educational philosophies of how immigrant children should be educated in the United States. This indicates how the balance between these competing influences on education has changed over time. Prior to reviewing these changed and changing views, we consider the variations in U.S. immigration policies and their influences across many political and social domains; these developments are inextricably linked to educational policy on immigrant children's education.

### Shifting Immigration Laws and Policies

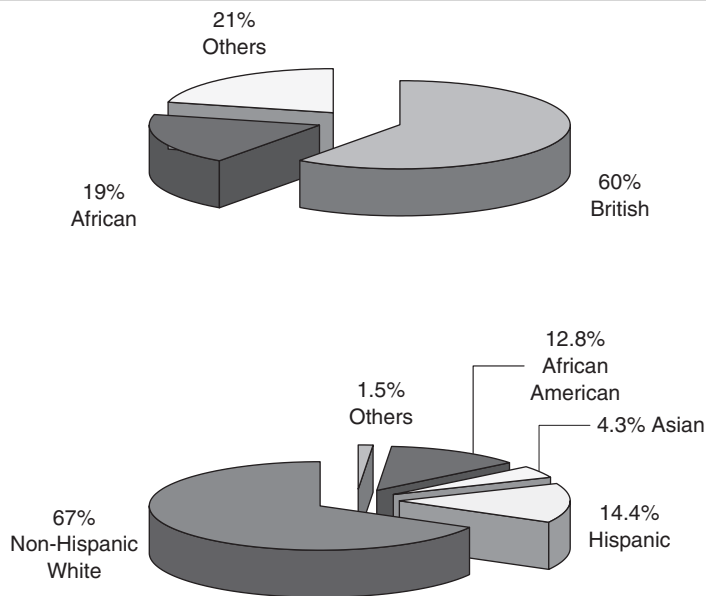
U.S. immigration laws and policies have shifted over time, reshaping the immigration experience and reconstructing the racial and ethnic composition of immigrants. The United States has opened wider doors to, or imposed restrictions on, immigrants whose countries of origin were regarded favorably or unfavorably at the time. In the first century of the country's existence, 1780–1875, a *laissez-faire* policy permitted government at all levels and many private companies to bring immigrants to the United States freely. However, the explicit racial criteria in the Naturalization Act of 1790 limited *citizenship* to white Europeans. Although African Americans successfully challenged this law after the Civil War, this policy had been a citizenship criterion for most non-European immigrants for more than 150 years.

Until 1890, immigrants from northern and western Europe predominated, but by the turn of the 20th century, the majority of immigrants came from eastern, central, and southern Europe. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1908, and the 1924 Oriental Exclusion Act significantly reduced immigration from Asian countries. The Immigration Act of 1924 greatly reduced the total number of immigrants and established quotas that favored northern and western European migration and restricted the entrance of Asian immigrants and other people.

This pattern was changed by the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, and especially the Immigration Act of 1965, which opened up large-scale immigration from Latin America, Asia, and the Pacific Rim. The 1965 act abolished the national-origin quotas that had limited most legal immigration to those coming from Europe, and each country was put on a relatively equal footing with a limit of 20,000 immigrants annually. This law gave priority to those immigrants who had family ties or possessed wanted skills. Since the mid-1960s, the main flow of legal immigration has been from Asia and Latin America, accompanied by an influx of undocumented immigrants from Mexico, the Caribbean, and many other countries throughout the world.

The changes in immigration laws since the 1950s have had many outcomes. For example, Figure 1.2 illustrates the impact of the various immigration waves and changes in immigration laws on the racial-ethnic makeup of the U.S. population. In 1790, when the first U.S. census was collected, the population was categorized as 60% British, 19% African, and 21% others, including both Native American and non-British European. In 2000, the U.S. population was categorized as 68% non-Hispanic White, 14% Hispanic (of any race), 13% African Americans, and 4% Asian. The fourth wave of immigration has changed the United States from a largely biracial society to a multiracial and multiethnic one, with several racial-ethnic groups of considerable size.

**FIGURE 1.2** The Race-Ethnic Composition of the U.S. Population in 1790 (top) and 2000 (bottom)



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census (2003a, 2007d).

Two other notable immigration laws are the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (the Simpson-Mazzoli Act) and California Proposition 187. Neither law accomplished what it was intended to do; however, their major components have had a lasting and profound impact on popular thinking about—and political campaigning for—immigration reform. The 1986 federal law, intended to reduce illegal immigration to the United States, criminalized the act of knowingly hiring an illegal immigrant and established financial and other penalties for those employers. The law also provided for the legalization of some, offering a one-year amnesty program for illegal immigrants who had already worked and lived in the United States up to January 1982. As a result, 2.7 million undocumented immigrants were granted green cards in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This law established two precedents: first, punishing employers who hire undocumented immigrants, although how well this law has worked is questionable; and, second, offering amnesty, or legal means, for undocumented immigrants who meet certain criteria to remain in the United States. In contrast, California's Proposition 187, passed in 1994, became a state law through popular referendum. It attempted to deny schooling and medical care to undocumented immigrants. Although the main part of Proposition 187 was struck down by the California Supreme Court, it was and is still used, though in more or less different versions, as a sample referendum by many states and local governments in an attempt to limit low-income, undocumented immigrants' access, especially that of Mexicans, to public institutions and aids.

After the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center in 2001, debate about immigration intensified. The INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) was abolished and divided into several agencies under the Department of Homeland Security in 2003. Most INS functions now fall under the newly created Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS). We use this new acronym throughout this book. In addition to habitual worries about immigrants suppressing the U.S. labor market for native-born Americans, weakening cultural unity, and threatening the nation's monolingual, English-only practice, the most heated topics after 9/11 include blocking visa requests for international students, enhancing border control to prevent the entry of undocumented immigrants, and detaining and deporting large numbers of undocumented immigrants, some of whom have lived in the United States for decades. The majority of the children of undocumented immigrants have been born in the United States, and they are U.S. citizens on the basis of their birthright (Capps, 2005); however, even they have become targets of a growing nativism.

Although many people agree that terrorism aimed at the United States is a real threat and that both aggressive and defensive measures should be taken to combat it, some argue that no solid evidence shows that the preceding defensive measures are legally valid or practically effective. They claim that some of these efforts reduce U.S. competition in the global economy. For example, the restrictions on admitting international students to U.S. universities have driven many international students to Western



Europe, Canada, and Australia (Mueller, 2004). Furthermore, groups advocating civil liberty rights argue that the historical response to external threat has been internal repression and that the country has not achieved more safety by ignoring the Constitution, the rule of law, and the liberty of its inhabitants (Adelman, 2002; Chemerinsky, 2006). As in former eras, immigration has become a volatile issue in the United States in the early years of the 21st century.

### **Social and Political Changes**

Unlike the previous three waves of immigrants, fourth-wave immigrants have been arriving in a post-civil rights era. The United States is different in several ways from the society that hosted the first three waves of immigrants. First, the structural factors and contexts of immigration today are different from those of the past because of the profound impact of the civil rights movement. Significant changes continue to occur in the nation's major political, judicial, social, and educational institutions. Powerful national organizations and many grassroots groups, those supporting immigrants' rights and those composed of immigrants themselves, have been vocal and active. These politically well-connected groups advocate the preservation of native languages and cultures and the maintenance of ethnic boundaries. Consequently, nativist rhetoric, arguing for the return to a more homogeneous United States, has been challenged. A growing populace asserts the benefits of ethnic identity conservation and of preserving home languages for communicating within families and communities.

In addition, the promotion of a global, free-market economy has led to a reconceptualization of previous immigration theories. The "push and pull" theory (E. Lee, 1966), which attributes people's decisions for moving geographically to individuals and families, no longer fully accounts for migration to postindustrial societies. Instead, international labor market redistribution theories provide more comprehensive explanations for global human geographic movements (Bloom & Brender, 1993; Martin & Widgren, 2002; C. Suarez-Orozco, 2001a). Globalization, and the consequent redistribution of wealth, capital, and technology, shift populations among nations. Permanent cultural boundaries give way, thereby creating dynamic pluralistic global societies. No longer isolated by geographical location, rapidly developing technologies in transportation, communication, and information dissemination allow fourth-wave immigrants opportunities for transnational exchange combined with continuing ties to their indigenous social networks. Sojourner and transnational migration are changing the stereotypic view of immigrants as permanently severed from their original social worlds and uprooted from their motherlands. Sojourners move from their home countries for employment elsewhere, but return home often and expect eventually to return permanently. Transnational migrants move from country to country as employment opportunities arise. The experiences of the sojourner and the multiple-destination migrant, in a process of transacculturation, are replacing what was once

viewed as a one-way adaptation concept, acculturation, and they are blurring the lines between what are the country of origin, the destination country, and other host countries—especially for how social, economic, political, and personal resources are deployed (Brittain, 2002). We believe that 21st-century educators need to recognize that previous assimilationist practices are obsolete, given these new patterns in immigration experiences. Because immigration is itself a major feature of current globalization, it is important to understand in what ways these new international contexts are changing how immigrant children and their families are adapting to their experiences.

Transnational migration affects people differently because of their pre- and postmigration social class, their race-ethnicity, their country of origin, and the conditions of their exits; these differences result in considerable inequities, complicated for immigrants to the United States because of the intolerance rooted in xenophobia, racism, and classism pervasive in this society. Moreover, differences in culture, dress, language, political ideology, and religion have been polarizing agents in the status afforded an immigrant population; historically, immigrant groups have been demonized and unfairly blamed for economic, social, and political crises (Ravitch, 1974; Tyack, 1974). While less affluent immigrants have been labeled as social burdens, middle-class migrants are deemed “crossovers” or “job takers.” Immigrants from the Eastern Bloc and non-Western nations have often been viewed as subversive because of the politically dissonant history between the United States and their countries of origin. Worse, policies have been enforced to segregate these groups from the majority of society. Infamously, Japanese Americans were detained in internment camps during World War II because of xenophobic, and unfounded, fears about these “permanent aliens” and “enemies within.” Displaced and isolated, these immigrants and lifelong U.S. citizens were forcibly removed from their homes and families and lost their land, businesses, and other family belongings. This left an indelible mark on their lives and permanently damaged their children’s memories (Chemerinsky, 2006; James, 1987; Pak, 2002). Moreover, religious affiliation continues to perpetuate stigmatization among immigrant arrivals. From the Irish-Catholics in second-wave immigration to the more recent Muslim immigrants, persecution over faith and attributed fanaticism has been common throughout the nation’s immigration history.

Eighty years ago, the former President Herbert Hoover dismissed New York Congressman Fiorella La Guardia, an Italian American, by claiming that “the Italians are predominantly our murderers and bootleggers”; Hoover recommended that La Guardia “go back to where you belong,” because “like a lot of other foreign spawn, you do not appreciate this country, which supports you and tolerates you” (Martin & Midgley, 1994, p. 19). Fortunately, this kind of overt statement from politicians or policymakers is regarded today as repugnant, although similar anti-immigrant attitudes are represented in more subtle language.

## Changes in Immigration Demographics

Because of the effects of a globalized economy, the United States has attracted different types of immigrants than those who arrived in the past. Fourth-wave immigration brought the most diverse population ever to the United States: people with a variety of business, administrative, political, academic, and artistic skills from diverse cultural, linguistic, religious, political, and socioeconomic backgrounds. A very high percentage of Asian Indians, for example, came with postbaccalaureate degrees, English fluency, and the sophistication to function well in a western society. They were able to quickly begin entrepreneurial, scientific, engineering, and other professional careers. Others, however, with less education, fewer skills, and an uncertain legal immigration status, have encountered numerous barriers to surviving in this country. Fourth-wave immigrants also have included a large number of refugees who have suffered psychological traumas both in their home countries and during the emigration journey. These diverse backgrounds are reflected in various settlement patterns (occupational, residential, etc.) and in immigrants' differential adjustments in the United States. Such differences also affect their children's linguistic transition, schooling behaviors, and educational achievements. Hence, the increase in size and diversity of the fourth wave requires sufficient knowledge to understand the complexities within the immigrants' experiences and the wide range of needs (linguistic, curricular, instructional, counseling, to name a few) to which the federal and local governments and educational institutions have been expected to respond.

The different immigration policies we have discussed have brought different immigrants into U.S. social contexts that have changed and continue to change. Keeping this contextual change in mind, we now turn to the two major models for incorporating immigrants into U.S. society introduced previously: classic assimilation and pluralism.

## MODELS OF IMMIGRANT INCORPORATION

Classic assimilation and pluralism are differing models for how best to integrate immigrants into the U.S. system. In this section, we assess how they have evolved over time and how they are related to two different, but common, models of practice in working with immigrant students: the additive approach and the subtractive approach.

### Classic Assimilation

Research on immigration and education was once dominated by the classic assimilation model, which advocated the elimination of ethnic identity and the reconstruction of an "all American and English only"

immigrant identity. It predicted a straightforward, upwardly mobile progression into U.S. society when “foreigners” completed their transformation. Classic assimilationists hold that the key to immigrant assimilation is immigrants’ perseverance and willingness to succumb to a national identity. This “rugged individualist” mindset endorses self-motivation and self-sufficiency. Classic assimilationists believe that each successive generation residing in the United States will improve its socioeconomic status as children and their families become more familiar with U.S. culture, the English language, and major U.S. institutions, including schools. This perspective postulates higher educational and occupational attainments for each successive generation in the United States, although rates and paces might vary for various groups (Glazer, 2002; Schlesinger, 2002).

Throughout the history of U.S. immigration, a consistent undertone has been the fear that the “alien element” would somehow sabotage the institutions of the country and cause them to disintegrate. Playing on these nativist fears, extreme assimilationists have directed heated rhetoric and resources toward combating these alleged alien elements of evil (R. G. Lee, 200; Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). In the late 19th century, the nation was perceived to be threatened by the third-wave immigration that brought an unprecedented number of people to the United States from southern, central, and eastern Europe. These new immigrants were thought by many to be too alien and backward to adapt to the United States. Educators were not immune to this perception. Strongly influenced by the educational philosopher Ellwood Cubberley early in the 20th century, the nation’s schools took a hard line in the years during and immediately following World War I in seeking the assimilation of new immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. Cubberley (1909) believed that Americanization required breaking up immigrant groups or settlements, assimilating and amalgamating these peoples into an American “race,” and implanting in their children the Anglo-Saxon conceptions of righteousness, law and order, public decency, and popular government. The communal nature and cultural habits of many of the regional, ethnic, and religious communities in the United States had little value in Cubberley’s vision of a truly “Americanized” nation. In Cubberley’s view, immigrants were passive, usually illiterate, servile, and often lacking in initiative; their coming had weakened the national “breed” and was threatening the virtue of U.S. politics and government. Given this crass formulation of the issue of immigration, a kind of ruthless assimilation was prescribed so as to preserve “our national character.” Employers and organizations like the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) and other community agencies followed Cubberley’s lead (Stewart, 1993). So-called “citizenship education” was an attempt to inculcate Anglo-Saxon and Protestant values into these immigrants. Nevertheless, the worst fears of the assimilationists have been discounted by what occurred. The third-wave immigrants increased and prospered, as did their children and grandchildren (cf. Handlin, 1951; Howe, 1980), following

the patterns of the two previous waves. However, heritage languages and cultures have been preserved in many ethnic communities, and the 20th century witnessed the development of a hybrid “mainstream” U.S. culture, which has also been refined and redefined as a more inclusive concept. The United States now appears to rest comfortably in the hands of the descendants of the third-wave of immigrants, those once considered to be exerting fearful “alien” influences (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996).

## Pluralism

What we label the pluralism model is a collection of somewhat different approaches to immigrant incorporation, but all of them share a vision of a heterogeneous, rather than a homogeneous, U.S. society. Pluralism models include selective assimilation, segmented assimilation, accommodation without assimilation, and pluralistic assimilation, and all of them have been developed to represent actual instances of immigrants’ adaptation to a host country (e.g., Gibson, 1988; Olsen, 1997; Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). The pluralism model accounts for the variety in objectives, processes, or outcomes found among different immigrant communities. Immigrant adaptation in this model is viewed as a multidimensional and multifaceted process with micro-level variables such as race, class, gender, and age interacting with macro-level contextual variables such as laws, policies, the socioeconomic and political environment, immigration history, and the reception in communities where the immigrants settle. Furthermore, adaptation varies across people because of the interaction of premigration factors with postmigration conditions. All of these contribute to children’s adjustment to their surroundings and affect their initial and continuing adaptation to the host society. This complex pattern often serves to predict educational achievement and attitudes toward schooling for immigrant youth. Pluralism emphasizes societal obstacles (i.e., xenophobia, racism, low socioeconomic status, etc.) that hinder immigrant acculturation. Pluralism has evolved from debates about whether the cultural characteristics of the immigrants themselves or the social structures of the receiving society (Vermeulen, 2000) are more important to immigrant adjustment. The more recent theory of segmented assimilation (Perlmann, 2000) is the idea that incorporating immigrants into society depends on the interplay of who immigrants are, the history of their experience, and the nature of the society receiving them. Segmented assimilation supporters contend that recognition of community resources and support, in addition to institutional changes in schooling and society, are required to facilitate the needed assimilation (Zhou, 2001).

Segmented assimilation theories claim that critical race theories and pedagogy have likewise served to elucidate glaring inequalities (such as class, education, and labor hierarchies) that frequently result in a systemic deprivation among minority groups (Nieto, 1995; Ogbu, 1987). In reaction

to such inequities and the prejudice and discrimination accompanying them, first- and second-generation immigrants sometimes develop patterns of overassimilation—a form of rapid Americanization (Gibson, 1988; Grant & Rong, 1999; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993). This is characterized by an adoption of U.S. materialistic popular culture and adversarial youth subcultures that interferes with academic achievement and fosters underage labor, excessive extracurricular activities, teenage pregnancy, and substance abuse. Moreover, these behaviors are frequently followed by a rejection of the native culture and decreased parental influence.

### **Assessment of Classic Assimilation and Pluralism**

Neither the classic assimilation nor pluralism models have been fully realized in the United States. Although extreme assimilation advocates the rejection of immigrants' roots and evinces a disdain for whatever immigrants cannot change or disguise in themselves, ethnic affiliation often persists among second- and third-generation Americans, long after the language and knowledge of the "old country" have been lost (Farrell, 1980). On the other hand, the earlier pluralists' insistence on maintaining group identity assumes that ethnic boundaries remain fixed and overlooks divisions within ethnic groups. Historical evidence reveals that, in an open, heterogeneous society such as the United States, people work, make friends, and marry outside their ancestral communities. In addition, they develop increasing commonalities with other Americans with lengthier U.S. residency and more generations (Martin & Midgley, 1994).

Classical assimilative practices have been criticized for supporting the hegemony of the elite through the melting pot approach, at the expense of the variety of diverse cultures and social norms that reflect, and have always reflected, the reality of U.S. society (Tuan, 1998). Such practices contribute to a decline in educational attainment for immigrant populations. Likewise, assimilation has come under attack for overemphasizing the importance of the national society while failing to recognize the strengths and optimism within immigrant communities. In response, recent assimilation models not only focus on institutional barriers, but also seek to champion the solidarity of ethnic communities that act as agents of change to provide social, cultural, psychological, and economic capital for immigrant minorities (Stanton-Salazar, 1997).

Though seemingly very different, both models of immigrant incorporation share a common understanding that immigrant groups have suffered persecution, isolation, and stigmatization (Gordon, 1964; Lieberman, 1980; Park, 1928; Pedraza, 1990). Both posit that the acquisition of the host country's language, an understanding of its laws, familiarity with its customs, and other basic assimilative steps should be attained by immigrants.

The literature we have cited indicates that these models of immigrant incorporation have evolved in the last two decades and reveals gaps

between early and later scholarly work on the goals and means of language education, cultural adjustment and adaptation, and citizenship education. However, schools throughout the past century have found themselves in a pendulum swing between these models of classic assimilation and pluralism (Schnaiberg, 1999). Next, we turn to schools and their practices with immigrants.

## SCHOOL PRACTICES

As we have emphasized previously, educating immigrant children has always been a challenging task for U.S. schools. Because immigrant students bring with them different life experiences and beliefs, cultural communication patterns, languages, and educational traditions, their immediate addition to U.S. schools places strong demands for reform on many public education systems. U.S. public education, however, has strongly rejected conserving and maintaining the native language and cultural values of immigrant children; the preference for emphasizing Americanization in curricula and instruction aimed at socializing immigrants to the norms of the dominant culture can be traced to the country's genesis.<sup>1</sup> The objective then, and in the early years of the federal period, was indoctrination—achieving unity through homogeneity; many taxpayers saw, and many still see, non-Western backgrounds as detrimental to both U.S. national identity and educational standards. However, when integration means Anglicization, schools have been likely to conflict with immigrant parents and communities, especially when the loss of native languages and cultures is involved.

Accommodating immigrant students' needs has never been easy or trouble-free for immigrants or for U.S. schools. Educators struggle to reach some philosophical consensus for policymaking and battle for the finances and other resources to support their efforts. Moreover, school plans, curriculum changes, and outreach actions are often criticized by both immigrant advocates and assimilationists. Pluralists believe that immigrants' optimism, work ethic, and cultural and linguistic resources not only enrich the United States' national heritage, but also enhance its status in an increasingly globalized world by providing new talents, contemporary skills, and increased trade that fuel economic expansion (Bischoff, 2002; Huntington, 2004). Immigrant advocates claim that U.S. schools have failed to meet immigrant children's special needs; their dissatisfaction is represented by the lawsuits that almost every city has pending, charging local governments with having provided inadequate and inappropriate language services for immigrant students. In many assimilationists' views, however, schools have already

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1 However, the existence of bilingual schools (Norwegian, German, etc.) in the Northeast and Midwest during the early and mid-19th century shows the relative permissive local educational policies with regard to eliminating native language education (see Chapter 3 for more details).

succumbed to immigrant communities' demands, jeopardizing the English language acquisition of these children as well as the unity and cultural identity of local communities. Though both classic assimilationists and pluralists seek acculturation to U.S. society, classical assimilation advocates what has been called a subtractive practice in comparison to pluralism's additive approach. Subtractive practice emphasizes immigrant children's deficiencies, whereas additive practice builds on immigrant children's unique qualities.

The subtractive practice is prevalent throughout schools and social institutions. It associates immigrant children with multiple "handicaps to progress" within mainstream society. Its proponents emphasize English-only instruction, rapid Americanization, and a monocultural approach to assimilation. Rather than reforms within the social system, it recommends a corrective curriculum that devalues belief structures outside the mainstream. As a result, it dismisses the influence of ethnic cultures and discredits the authority of parents as well as the support systems of ethnic communities. These beliefs remain in vogue among policymakers, the mainstream media, and the general public.

The assimilation-versus-pluralism debate is played out in many facets of U.S. life. However, in recent years, pluralism has gained momentum as educators and educational scholars have sought to champion the additive model of acculturation. They have asserted that community input and family agency are useful tools in assimilating immigrant youth. Supporters of the pluralism model have posited that promoting mutual respect and cooperation between schools and immigrant communities, and including immigrant families in school decision making, help children to maintain a healthy identity as well as social and psychological well-being (Valenzuela, 1999).

Still, the 29 million immigrants—including 5 million or more children—in the fourth wave of immigration entering the United States since 1970 have posed serious challenges to all major U.S. institutions. For example, the 2000 census reported approximately 10 million school-age children (aged 5–17)<sup>2</sup> who speak a language other than English at home, compared to 6.3 million in 1990 and 4.6 million in 1980. The core of the challenge of contemporary immigration to the U.S. educational system is that a large percentage of newly arrived immigrants demand a variety of sophisticated services, including multicultural curricula and bilingual instruction. However, many of today's desperately low-income refugees and undocumented immigrants need to learn basic survival skills to cope in U.S. society, and the needs of these immigrants are often very different from those of the native-born, or even from many other immigrants in the same cohort.

Unfortunately, because of budget restrictions from federal and local governments, the effects of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, and other factors, teachers and administrators may lack the training, space, and other resources to accommodate the needs of so diverse a group of

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2 Our study is based on school-age children (aged 5–18).



students. Generally speaking, suburban districts are being forced to make difficult changes and adjustments, but they have the capacity to cope and adapt to the challenges posed by immigration. The greatest difficulties are reported in already stressed urban school districts and some rural areas that must find ways to serve both immigrants and the native-born from a diminishing resource base. Overcrowded classrooms, heightened social tensions, fierce controversies over curricula, and substandard instruction provided by inexperienced teachers have been the result (McDonnell & Hill, 1993).

In summary, the emergence of a fourth wave of immigrants in the wake of the civil rights movement has been accompanied by unique political and social developments (Muller, 1994). Tacitly followed practices of Americanization are no longer met with ambivalence. A larger proportion of U.S. citizens share nonmainstream heritages than ever before. These groups are leading campaigns to preserve their native languages and cultures within schools and the greater society. As the size of this diverse citizenry grows, immigrants are having a greater political and policy impact on U.S. society. The non-European background of the majority of immigrants challenges traditional U.S. school practices of monolingualism and monoculturalism. Accordingly, nativist ideologues have responded with measures to ensure structural segregation; this has led to more heated and widely publicized debates (Contreras, 2002; Garcia, 1995; Jo & Rong, 2003). However, the consolidation of movements for pluralism remains strong. In the 1982 Supreme Court ruling *Plyer v. Doe*, an attempt to ban undocumented Mexican immigrant children from attending local schools in Texas and Florida, the court ruled that immigration status could not be used to determine children's enrollment. Even more recently, immigrant community groups, in conjunction with the California Teachers' Union, successfully overturned 1994's Proposition 187, an attempt to limit the health care options and schooling privileges available to undocumented immigrant groups.

Throughout this examination of fourth-wave immigration and education, we consider the varying perspectives and approaches of educators and policymakers to addressing the needs of different immigrant groups. In the next chapter, we turn to the children of the fourth-wave immigrants—who the children are, what the circumstances of their lives are, and what this information may mean for educational policies and practices.