GENERATIONS of EXCLUSION

Mexican Americans, Assimilation, and Race

EDWARD TELLES and VILMA ORTIZ

With a foreword by JOAN MOORE
Main research question

- To what extent are Mexican Americans assimilating into U.S. society over several generations?
Key sample and comparisons

Original Respondents 1965/2000

Children 2000

Gen. 1 21%
Gen. 2 52%
Gen. 3 27%
Gen. 4 24%
Education

![Bar chart showing years of education for different generations.]

Original Resp
- Gen. 1: 7.4
- Gen. 2: 10.0
- Gen. 3: 10.4
- Children: 13.1
- Gen. 2: 13.1
- Gen. 3: 13.1
- Gen. 4: 12.4

Years of education
Earnings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>1965 Earnings</th>
<th>2000 Earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orig Resp, 1965</td>
<td>$25,600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>$29,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>$29,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children, 2000</td>
<td></td>
<td>$36,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>$37,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>$37,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>$30,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annual personal earnings in 2000 dollars
Interruption

Interruption

Gen. 4

Percent married to a Non-Hispanic

Orig Resp, 2000

Gen. 1

10%

Gen. 2

15%

Gen. 3

17%

Children, 2000

Gen. 2

18%

Gen. 3

32%

Gen. 4

38%
Ethnic identity among children

Children, 2000

Gen. 2
- Mexican American: 43%
- Mexican: 28%
- Pan-ethnic: 25%
- American or other: 5%

Gen. 3
- Mexican American: 43%
- Mexican: 15%
- Pan-ethnic: 30%
- American or other: 12%

Gen. 4
- Mexican American: 44%
- Mexican: 10%
- Pan-ethnic: 33%
- American or other: 12%
Education is key

Socio-economic background
Social capital (professionals, church, contact with school)
Catholic school

Education

Socio-economic status
Residential segregation
Interrace marriage
Spanish Proficiency
Fertility
Voting
Immigration attitudes
Exp. with discrimination
Think of self as Am.
Implications

- Our findings consistent with the idea that Mexican Americans are racialized
- Not fully allowed to incorporate into American society
- However not in the manner or to the same extent as African Americans
- But clearly less accepted than European immigrant groups of a century ago
END
Main research question

- To what extent are Mexican Americans assimilating into U.S. society over several generations?
Origins

- This story begins in 1965 to 1970 ...
The Mexican-American People

The Nation’s Second Largest Minority

Leo Grebler, Joan Moore, Ralph C. Guzman
How did we come to do our project?

- Original materials from the 1965 Mexican American Study Project discovered in UCLA Library in late 1992
- Found were surveys with names and addresses
- Decided to re-interview original respondents and interview their adult children
- Our study would serve as a follow-up to the classic *The Mexican American People*
Key sample and comparisons

Original Respondents
1965/2000

Gen. 1
21%

Gen. 2
52%

Gen. 3
27%

Children
2000

Gen. 2
24%

Gen. 3
52%

Gen. 4
24%
Methodology

Original study
Interviewed in 1965 (65-66)
Los Angeles and San Antonio
1500 Adults, age 18-80

Longitudinal study
Re-interviewed original respondents
Selected age 18-50

Inter-generational study
Adult children
0-2 children per family
Original respondent sample

Searched for 1200, age 18-50

Located 79% of original respondents

Interviewed 687 original respondents

Response rate of 57%
Selected 0-2 children per family

Adult children, ages 30-50s

Interviewed 758 children

Response rate of 67%
What is assimilation?

- The process by which groups change and integrate after settling in a new country.
- Long term process which takes place over several generations.
- Change is inevitable, although full assimilation may not be achieved.
- Happens at different rates and to different extents.
How do we study assimilation?

- Compare groups from different countries
  - Other studies
- Compare by generation
  - Our study compares first, second, third, and fourth generation
What do we already know about assimilation?

- Study of European groups who came to U.S. at the beginning of the 20th century
- Found to be fully assimilated by 3rd generation
  - Structurally, culturally, politically
- Model not applicable to African Americans
- How does this apply to Mexican Americans?
How does this apply to Mexican Americans?

- Some argue Mexican Americans are assimilating,
  - Taking a little longer, i.e., more generations
- Others argue that Mexican Americans are racialized
  - Treated more like a racial group
  - Treatment based on physical characteristics
  - Faced discrimination
  - Not allowed to incorporate
Major outcomes

- Structural assimilation
  - Like education and job status

- Contact with other groups
  - Like intermarriage and residential segregation

- Ethnic identity
  - Like preferred ethnic label

- Political attitudes
  - Like attitudes toward immigration and affirmative action
1. Structural assimilation

- Education
- Socio-economic status
  - Earnings
  - Homeownership
Earnings

Annual personal earnings in 2000 dollars

- **Orig Resp, 1965**
  - Gen. 1: $25,600
  - Gen. 2: $29,200
  - Gen. 3: $29,300

- **Children, 2000**
  - Gen. 2: $36,300
  - Gen. 3: $37,600
  - Gen. 4: $30,600
Summary on structural assimilation

- Education does not increase with generation beyond generation 1
- Indicates little assimilation on education!
- Socio-economic status also does not increase with generation
- Little assimilation on socio-economic status!
- Modest earnings and homeownership for original respondents and children
2. Contact with other groups

- Intermarriage
  - Married to non-Hispanic

- Residential segregation
  - Live in a Hispanic neighborhood
Interrmarriage

- Orig Resp, 2000:
  - Gen. 1: 10%
  - Gen. 2: 15%
  - Gen. 3: 17%

- Children, 2000:
  - Gen. 2: 18%
  - Gen. 3: 32%
  - Gen. 4: 38%

Percent married to a Non-Hispanic
Residential segregation

- Orig Resp, 1965:
  - Gen. 1: 59%
  - Gen. 2: 49%
  - Gen. 3: 38%

- Children, 2000:
  - Gen. 2: 54%
  - Gen. 3: 45%
  - Gen. 4: 38%

Neighborhood is 50% or more Hispanic
Summary on contact with other groups

- Intermarriage increases with generation
- Remains less than 40% in generation 4
- Residential segregation decreases with generation
- Indicates assimilation, although somewhat slow and incomplete
3. Ethnic identity

- Question about ethnic origins or background

- Categories
  - Mexican
  - Mexican American, includes Chicano
  - Pan Ethnic
    - Latin American/Spanish American
    - Hispanic/Latino
  - American/other
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
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<th>2000</th>
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<td>1965</td>
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<td>56%</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>67%</td>
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<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generation 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generation 3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>26%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ethnic identity among original respondents**

- **Mexican American**
- **Mexican**
- **Pan-ethnic**
- **American or other**
Ethnic identity among children

Children, 2000

Gen. 2
- Mexican American: 43%
- Mexican: 28%
- Pan-ethnic: 25%
- American or other: 5%

Gen. 3
- Mexican American: 43%
- Mexican: 15%
- Pan-ethnic: 30%
- American or other: 12%

Gen. 4
- Mexican American: 44%
- Mexican: 10%
- Pan-ethnic: 33%
- American or other: 12%

Legend:
- Blue: Mexican American
- Pink: Mexican
- Green: Pan-ethnic
- Yellow: American or other
Summary on ethnic identity

- Significant change over time
  - Used to be Latin American/Spanish
  - Now Mexican American

- Little change with generation
  - Mostly as Mexican American
  - Except immigrants more as Mexican

- Most identify ethnically while few identify as American
4. Political attitudes

- Immigration attitudes
  - “Mexicans should be able to immigrate”

- Racial attitudes
  - “Affirmative action is a good thing for persons of Mexican origin”
Attitude toward immigration

Percent who agree that immigrants should be able to immigrate

- **Orig Resp 2000**
  - Gen. 1: 72%
  - Gen. 2: 63%
  - Gen. 3: 56%

- **Children 2000**
  - Gen. 2: 53%
  - Gen. 3: 54%
  - Gen. 4: 53%
Attitude toward affirmative action

Percent who agree that affirmative action is good for Mexicans
Summary on political attitudes

- Original respondents
  - Less positive attitude toward immigration by generation

- Children
  - Little change in immigration and affirmative attitudes by generation
Summary on generational differences

- Little assimilation on key indicators of education and socio-economic status
- Some assimilation in contact with other groups
  - Intermarriage and residential segregation increases with generational status
- Some assimilation in political attitudes
  - Some generational differences among original respondents
  - No generational differences among children
- So if not generation, what is affecting these outcomes?
Socio-economic status by education

Among adult children

- **Family income gt $50,000**
  - Less than HS: 21%
  - HS graduate or some college: 46%
  - College graduate: 69%

- **Own home**
  - Less than HS: 42%
  - HS graduate or some college: 59%
  - College graduate: 71%
Contact with other groups by education

Among adult children

- **Inter-married**
  - Less than HS: 17%
  - HS graduate or some college: 28%
  - College graduate: 43%

- **Live in integrated neighborhood**
  - Less than HS: 20%
  - HS graduate or some college: 22%
  - College graduate: 44%
Education

1. Socio-economic status
2. Residential segregation
3. Intermarriage
4. Spanish proficiency
5. Fertility
6. Vote
7. Immigration attitudes
8. Exp. discrimination
9. Think of self as American
What affects education?
Social Capital
Knew professionals
Attended church
Communicated with school

Socio-Economic Status
Parents education
Parents income
Parents homeowner
Number of siblings

Catholic School

Education

Cultural
Language Expectations

Segregation
Residential Educational

Industrial Structure
Urban area Manufacturing

Individual
Gender, Age, Skin Color

Generational status
Summary on educational effects

- Significant effects of education especially on socio-economic status
- Also intermarriage, residential segregation, identity, and political attitudes related to education
- Explains more than does generational status
Why do we find little assimilation?

- Low expectations toward Mexicans in society
  - They come to the US to do least paid and lowest status jobs

- Few educational opportunities and poor educational systems
  - Public schools
  - Inadequate funding
  - Tracking
  - Teachers’ expectations

- Is this an experience of racialization?
Racial experiences among children

- **Stereotyped by others**
  - Generation 2: 59%
  - Generation 3: 56%
  - Generation 4: 66%

- **Experienced Discrimination**
  - Generation 2: 48%
  - Generation 3: 48%
  - Generation 4: 46%
Implications

- Our findings consistent with the idea that Mexican Americans are racialized.
- Not fully allowed to incorporate into American society.
- However not in the manner or to the same extent as African Americans.
- But clearly less accepted than European immigrant groups of a century ago.
END
Sources used to locate respondents, Los Angeles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal contacts</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directories</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical directories</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter registration</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drivers license</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other public</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit header</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet sources</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Moved away from 1965 urban area

- Los Angeles (17%)
  - Original Respondents: 15%
  - Children: 22%

- San Antonio (7%)
  - Original Respondents: 2%
  - Children: 11%
## Located and response rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Respondents</th>
<th>Located</th>
<th>79%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Response rate</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Response rate</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Located by Homeowner in 1965

- Homeowner: 89%
- Renter: 68%
Years of Education Among Immigrant Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Years of Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Did Italian-Americans want to assimilate?

- The group ... conspicuous for its retardation in the process of assimilation is ... Italians from southern Italian, including their American born children
- As an illustration, the slow progress of Italians ... in learning to speak English may be cited
- From the immigrant’s point of view, there was no obvious need for ... formal education
- [A child of immigrants] states: ... “when I expressed my intention of continuing with high school and ... [more] education, my parents ... raised an indescribable fury. Seven more years of schooling? Whoever heard of such a thing!”
- the Italian in America ... is least likely to “invest” in the education of his children

Did Italian Americans assimilate?

### Years of Education, 1980

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italians</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Among men, Italian ancestry, born in the U.S., age 25 and older, census data*
Language

- Speak English and Spanish
- Address questions
  - Do immigrants/Latinos/Mexicans learn English?
  - To what extent are they bilingual?
Speak English

Percent who speak well or very well

- Orig Resp: 49%
- Gen. 1: 49%
- Gen. 2: 92%
- Gen. 3: 96%
- Children: 100%
- Gen. 2: 100%
- Gen. 3: 100%
- Gen. 4: 100%
Speak Spanish

Percent who speak well or very well

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orig Resp</th>
<th>Gen. 1</th>
<th>Gen. 2</th>
<th>Gen. 3</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Gen. 2</th>
<th>Gen. 3</th>
<th>Gen. 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent who speak well or very well
Speaking English and length of time in U.S.

Speak only English or English very well among Mexican immigrants

From Ortiz in Waldinger, p 273; LA Region
Speak only English or English very well among Latino immigrants

From Lopez in Waldinger, p 157; LA Region, Age 25-44
Summary on Language

- Mexican Americans born in the U.S. learn English!
- 1st generation (immigrants) speaks English less
- 4th generation still speaks Spanish
- Is bilingualism really a bad thing?
## Generation by urban area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Gen. 1</th>
<th>Gen. 2</th>
<th>Gen. 3</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Antonio</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Union membership

Orig Resp, 2000

Los Angeles: 41%
San Antonio: 13%

Children, 2000

Los Angeles: 23%
San Antonio: 12%
Ethnic Identity:
Original Respondents and Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>Mexican American</th>
<th>Pan-ethnic</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orig Resp, 2000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 1</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 3</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children, 2000</td>
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### Ethnic Identity

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Orig Resp, 2000</th>
<th>Children, 2000</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gen. 1</strong></td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mexican</strong></td>
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<td><strong>American or Other</strong></td>
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<td>Generation 1</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation 2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation 3</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children, 2000</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation 2</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation 3</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation 4</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vote for a Republican Presidential Candidate

Percent Voting for Dole (vs. Clinton) in 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Orig Resp, 2000</th>
<th>Children, 2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 1</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 2</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 3</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

0 5 10 15
Percent Voting for Dole (vs. Clinton) in 1996
Ethnic Identity by Education among Children

Percent Identifying as American or Other

- Less than HS: 5%
- HS graduate/some college: 10%
- College graduate: 15%
Political Involvement by Education

Voting in 1996 Among Adult Children

- Less than HS: 43%
- HS graduate/some college: 65%
- College graduate: 80%
1965 Study

- Surveyed in 1965-66
- 1500 respondents
- Los Angeles and San Antonio
  - 900 in LA
  - 600 in SA
- Head of household or spouse
- Mexican origin or Spanish origin
- Adults between 18-80s
Assimilation in the popular discourse

- Immigrants “should assimilate”
- Immigrants of the past “did assimilate”
- Immigrants of the past “worked to assimilate”
- Immigrants today “don’t want to assimilate”
- Immigrants today “don’t try to assimilate”
Our assumptions about assimilation

- Inevitable process, thus theoretically relevant to know how much has it happened
- Not a value judgment—not studying whether immigrants “should” or “want to” assimilate
Assumptions about assimilation

- In popular discourse
  - Immigrants “should assimilate”
  - Immigrants of the past “did assimilate” and “worked to assimilate”
  - Immigrants today “don’t want to assimilate” and “don’t try to assimilate”

- Sociologists
  - Make no assumption about desire or effort to assimilate
  - Consider it inevitable
  - Largely by structural forces
What is the role of race?

- Race—social categories that have real/material consequences
- Racialize—treated differently due to being a member of particular racial group
- Racialization—the process of treating particular racial groups differently
- We address whether this applies to Mexican Americans
Summary of our book

- Significant assimilation in language
  - All Mexican Americans born in the US speak English
- Other dimensions, assimilation but slow
  - E.g., intermarriage and residential segregation
- Assimilation in politics among original respondents
  - But not among children
- Key indicators of education and socio-economic status, no assimilation
  - No increase with generational status
Summary of our book

- Slow assimilation
  - E.g., intermarriage and residential segregation
- Assimilation in politics among original respondents
  - But not among children
- Key indicators of education and socio-economic status, no assimilation
  - No increase with generational status