
INTRODUCTION

Immigration and Its Relation to Race and Ethnicity in the United States

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This book examines the intersection of immigration and race or ethnicity in the United States in the latter part of the twentieth century. We devote attention primarily to the implications of post–World War II immigration for labor-market and demographic outcomes in the African American population, although some of the book’s theoretical and empirical analyses scrutinize these factors for other racial or ethnic minorities, as well. The volume is intended to complement an earlier book that studies the more general economic implications of immigration for African Americans (Hamermesh and Bean 1998). That study found that somewhat lower levels of education and much lower levels of wealth and asset accumulation among African Americans prevent blacks to a considerable extent from deriving the same degree of economic gain from immigration that accrues to majority whites. The findings of still other research document the decline in black employment that has occurred over the past thirty years, even as average black wages have increased (Jaynes 1990). Taken together, these research results raise questions about the nature and extent of the immigration’s influence both on black labor-market outcomes, especially employment, and on the size and composition of both the black and the total U.S. populations.

The findings of the research endeavors reported here not only shed light on the degree to which recent immigration has affected African American labor-market and employment outcomes; they also help clarify ongoing debates concerning the current economic status of the black population in the United States, how much it has improved in recent decades, and what factors have affected it. Based on analyses of social science data, some observers, such as Andrew Hacker (1995), have been decidedly pessimistic about the degree of improvement in African American economic status; others, like Abigail and Stephen Thernstrom (1997), have argued that the historical record, at least during most of the twentieth century, justifies

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more positive and optimistic conclusions. Still other analysts argue that the evidence supports a more dualistic picture, one that involves increasing social and economic bifurcation in the black population generally (Farley 1996), especially in such high-immigration cities as Los Angeles (Grant, Oliver, and James 1996). The present set of studies about immigration and race or ethnicity—which involve research endeavors carried out by some of the country’s leading sociologists and demographers on how immigration has affected black employment, occupation, labor-market outcomes, employment niches, self-employment, interpersonal hiring networks, migration patterns, residential segregation, and relative population composition—indicate that immigration and the greater racial or ethnic diversity that it has generated contribute in multiple ways to both positive and negative changes in the employment and demographic situations of African Americans. This research thus supports the idea that the economic well-being of blacks, at least as influenced by immigration, involves mixed results that reflect the dualistic portrait of African American economic progress at the end of the twentieth century.

The new immigration also holds implications for the dynamics of racial and ethnic relations and for public policy in the United States. It is not yet clear, however, whether the increasing racial and ethnic diversity deriving mostly from recent immigration trends will ultimately prove to operate as a cohesive or a divisive force in American society (Suro 1998). It is thus especially important that the country formulate and nurture policies that will help ensure that increasingly sharp racial and ethnic fault lines do not develop as a result of immigration. Analysts must determine the extent to which the economic and humanitarian benefits associated with the country’s relatively generous immigration policies over the past thirty years or so are generating a growing need to foster greater socioeconomic opportunities for economically vulnerable individuals least likely to partake of the economic benefits derived from immigration. At least in part because immigration’s economic benefits are unevenly distributed throughout the general population, immigration calls attention to those members of American society whose economic status is most precarious, and immigration’s composition (now largely Latino and Asian) highlights the importance of addressing the policy domains of immigration and race or ethnicity jointly rather than separately. In this context, careful analysis of public policies designed to improve prospects for socioeconomic mobility is essential.

THE INTERSECTION OF IMMIGRATION AND RACE OR ETHNICITY

To explore the implications of immigration for racial and ethnic groups in the United States, we must first clarify what we mean by the terms, race and ethnicity. Following the thinking of George M. Frederickson (1988, 3), we define race as a “consciousness of status and identity based on ancestry and color.” Dropping the color criterion from this phraseology gives a useful definition of the term ethnicity. Frederickson’s definition of race can be fruitfully used to refer to the black population in the United States; but in the cases of the new Latino and Asian immigrant groups, neither the term “race” nor “ethnicity” seems by itself to provide a totally suitable label because it is not clear that “color” is (or is becoming) an attribute that society ascribes to immigrants from Latin America and Asia, at least on a consistent basis. For example, some Latinos view themselves and are seen by others as white, some as brown, and some as black. We thus deliberately use the somewhat imprecise term “race or ethnicity” in the following discussion to refer to groups that distinguish themselves on the basis of ancestry or color (or both).

In thinking about immigration and race or ethnicity, and in particular about how immigration affects the dynamics of racial and ethnic identity in the United States, which in turn may influence racial and ethnic relations, it is important to recall that immigration and race sometimes seem to represent features of the American experience that are very nearly polar opposites, at least as they have been characterized in the postwar period. Few phenomena have so captured the American imagination as immigration, and none has so contradicted American ideals as race (Cose 1992). The image of the successful immigrant enshrined in the Emma Lazarus poem at the base of the Statue of Liberty epitomizes not only the fulfillment of the American dream of equal opportunity and unlimited social mobility but also the capacity of the American nation to offer the oppressed of the world the possibility of both freedom and prosperity. Indeed, the United States is often described as a nation of immigrants, an idea Oscar Handlin elevates to near mythological status by noting that the history of America is synonymous with the history of immigration (Handlin 1973). Numerous books about immigration have incorporated into their titles some variation of the phrase “the golden door,” words suggesting the possibility that newcomers and their descen-

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dants can achieve a better life in America than the one they left behind (see, for example, Reimers 1985; Waldinger 1996). This essentially optimistic and inclusionary view of immigration still resonates strongly in American culture, even as it is challenged by new concerns that competition for resources and environmental strains might place limits on the country's capacity to absorb new immigrants. The resulting tensions have created ambivalent attitudes about immigration in the 1980s and 1990s, contributing to the development of sometimes seemingly contradictory positions toward immigration, such as adamant opposition to unauthorized migration but support for the continuation of current levels of legal immigration (Bean and Fix 1992).

The matter of race, and more specifically relations between whites and African Americans, falls into a different category, however. If immigration has often symbolized the hopeful and uplifting side of the American experience, the practice of slavery in many of the colonies and subsequent states for the first two and a half centuries after European settlement has constituted a more negative and exclusionary part of the historical picture (Tocqueville 1945). Whereas the incorporation of many strands of immigration into the U.S. economic mainstream represents the success of the American experience, the lack of such full incorporation in the case of the African American population almost one and one-half centuries after the end of the Civil War represents for many observers the country's most conspicuous failure and an indication of the residual power of racial discrimination throughout American society (Fredrickson 1988; Rose 1997). Although social and economic progress among blacks has occurred, the questions of how much, when, how fast, and why are still the subjects of much debate and little consensus (Hacker 1995; Thernstrom and Thernstrom 1997). Even some of the most optimistic observers of the past three decades has not been able to conclude that blacks have reached economic parity with whites or that the prospects of social and cultural integration seem close at hand (see, for example, Glazer 1997). The establishment by President Bill Clinton of the Presidential Initiative on Race and the call for a renewed national dialogue on the topic, focusing primarily on relations between black and white Americans, is merely the most recent manifestation that American achievements fall short of American ideals in this area.

African Americans, of course, were involuntary immigrants to the United States. During the eighteenth century, they were the single largest immigrant group arriving in the country (Berlin 1998). Despite this, their experience cannot be understood as analogous to that

of other immigrant groups. Most blacks came to the United States under chattel slavery that bound not only them but also their children to their owners for life (Morgan 1998). The modes of entry and the reception in America of immigrants from Africa were thus especially harsh and debilitating compared with the experience of immigrants from other countries and generally make it impossible to address the experience of blacks in this country as just another chapter in the story of immigration. Nor is it any less an oversimplification to view the difficulties of recent immigrants as just another chapter in the history of racism in the United States.

Although it is misleading to treat the dynamics of immigration and race as essentially similar, neither is it satisfactory to treat race and immigration as completely separate phenomena. Perhaps because slavery has been such a blight on the national historical landscape, it has sometimes been easier to examine race in relatively compartmentalized terms. Thus, David Brion Davis notes that until recently, American historians have tended to study slavery largely in geographically limited ways—as part of the history of the South, for example (Davis 1998). In general, scholars' treatments of immigration have been conspicuous for the omission of any discussion of black perspectives or experience concerning immigration (note Glazer's [1997] observations on this point). Whatever the reasons for such compartmentalization, examples of the tendency to think that immigration and race can be treated as largely separate issues continue even today. Thus, a recent National Academy of Science report argues that immigration to the United States over the past thirty years held few implications for African Americans because most blacks live in different parts of the country from those areas receiving most of the immigrants (Smith and Edmonston 1997). However, when the states of the Deep South are excluded, the geographic distribution of immigrants and blacks does not support the idea that the two groups live largely in different parts of the country and thus are likely to have affected one another.

Part of the tendency to view immigration and race as separate issues in the postwar period may derive from a desire to forget that the two have often been historically conflated, often in ways that do not flatter the recollection. For example, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 forbade the entry of Chinese largely for expressly racist reasons (Reimers 1998). Much has been written recently about the considerable extent to which the immigrants of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were often treated as if they were black (Ignatiev 1995; Jacobson 1998). Indeed, a virulent racism has often seemed to

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provide a handy device to be employed in the service of excluding immigrants when it seemed desirable to do so (Higham 1963). Perhaps the optimism borne of the U.S. victory in World War II and of the strong economy of the 1950s encouraged the idea that immigration and race issues could be approached as separate matters in the latter part of the twentieth century.

If addressing immigration and race issues separately ever made analytical sense, however, it certainly does not in the case of the post-World War II period, during which when the two phenomena have been intertwined in often subtle ways. During those years, American conceptions about immigration and race appear to have been mutually reinforcing, sometimes optimistically and sometimes pessimistically, in a continuing reflection of the country's basic mythological orientation toward each. This mutual interplay also serves as a reminder that popular responses to immigration and racial and ethnic relations, as well as reactions to the public policies that have been contrived to address immigration and racial and ethnic issues, can and do influence one another, sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse. For example, the participation of blacks in the armed forces of the United States during World War II set the stage for the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and for the eventual removal of legal barriers to the participation of African Americans in the institutions of American society (Morris 1984; Higham 1997). To a considerable extent the same forces that sought to maximize equal opportunity for blacks through changes in the legal system contributed to the removal in 1965 of the discriminatory provisions of the National Origins Quota Act of 1924 and their replacement with family reunification criteria as the primary basis for the granting of entry visas to immigrants (Reimers 1985).

In similar fashion, the national mythology about the historic experiences of previous immigrants in overcoming hardship and discrimination and in fulfilling the American dream has often seemed to suggest that African Americans might also achieve integration and economic progress if only legal barriers to equal opportunity were eliminated (Glazer 1975). However, although progress has been made, the task of quickly achieving parity between the black and white populations has proved more difficult than the initially optimistic foresaw. Just as popular ideas about the historical experience of immigration raised hopes for black success as a result of the passage of civil rights legislation in Congress during the 1960s, so the slow progress made bridging the divide between black and white has perhaps contributed to the emergence of a more pessimistic assessment about

the benefits of immigration for America in the late twentieth century. Moreover, if the optimistic outlook borne of the country's experience with the successful incorporation of earlier immigrants has served to reinforce the hopeful idea that lingering discriminatory barriers to black achievement could be overcome by antidiscrimination policies, then so too did the de facto and de jure expansion of affirmative action policies to millions of recently arrived immigrants contribute to the disillusionment of many Americans with such policies (Fuchs 1995, 1997; Suro 1998).

THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND GEOGRAPHIC ASPECTS OF IMMIGRATION AND RACE

It is in the context of national issues about the extent to which the black population has become fully incorporated into American society that questions about the degree of immigration's recent impact on African Americans hold special resonance. The expectation that immigrants might influence the country in general and blacks in particular derives, in part, from the sheer magnitude of recent immigration. Its volume has not only increased since the end of World War II but has also gained momentum, reaching numbers in the 1990s, when both legal and unauthorized migrants are counted, that are comparable to the previous all-time highs occurring during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The national origins of U.S. immigrants have also changed sharply over the past fifty years. Before 1960, the vast majority came from European countries or Canada (often more than 90 percent when calculated on a per decade basis). Even as late as the 1950s, more than two-thirds (67.7 percent) of all arrivals were from these countries. During the 1960s, however, when family reunification criteria rather than national origin quotas became the basis for allocating entry visas, the composition changed rapidly. By the 1980s, only 12 percent of legal immigrants had originated in Europe or Canada, whereas nearly 85 percent reported origins in Asia, Latin America, or the Caribbean (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 1998; Bean et al. 1997).

These relatively recent changes in the national origins of immigrants have converted the United States from a largely biracial society consisting of a sizable white majority and a small black minority (together with a very small Native American minority of less than 1 percent) into a multiracial, multiethnic society consisting of several racial and ethnic groups. This trend became discernible in the 1950s but began to accelerate in the 1960s. By 1998, more than a quarter of

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the U.S. population designated itself as either black, Latino, or Asian. The speed with which the Latino and Asian groups have been growing has meant that the proportion of African Americans in the racial and ethnic minority population has been declining. By 1990, blacks were no longer a majority of this population, making up only 48 percent of racial and ethnic minorities. By 1998, their share had fallen to 43 percent.

How much difference immigration per se has made to changing the racial and ethnic mix of the U.S. population and to its overall growth during the twentieth century can be ascertained by examining the contribution of immigration since 1900 to population growth for the major racial and ethnic groups (as distinct from the amount of growth that resulted from any excess of births over deaths among the pre-1900 entrants and native-born members of each of the groups). Barry Edmonston and Jeffrey Passel (1994) find that post-1900 immigration has accounted for about 30 percent of the growth of the total U.S. population since 1900. Even more significant, they find that immigration's contribution to the growth of the various major racial and ethnic subgroups has varied enormously, accounting for nearly all of the growth among Latinos and Asians (85.7 percent and 97.3 percent, respectively) but virtually none of the overall twentieth-century growth among blacks. Interestingly, since 1980 an increasing amount of black immigration from Africa and the Caribbean has begun to change this equation. According to Yanyi Djamba and Frank D. Bean (1998), black immigration accounted for almost a quarter of the population growth among blacks during the 1980s. Immigration during the twentieth century has thus contributed to a decline in the relative size of the black population as a part of the overall racial and ethnic minority population in the United States, although recent increases in black immigration have begun to reverse this trend.

Although the number of new entrants to the United States has risen appreciably over the past thirty years (Bean et al. 1997), raising the percentage of the U.S. population that is foreign born to almost 10 percent by 1998 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1999), the consequences of immigration depend on, among other things, how the foreign-born population is distributed geographically. The foreign-born population is not evenly dispersed throughout the country. California, New York, Florida, Texas, Illinois, and New Jersey (in that order) receive disproportionately large shares of newcomers—about 70 percent of all foreign-born persons in the United States lived in these states in 1998 (*ibid.*). Because the African American population is concentrated in the South (in 1997, about 55 percent of blacks

resided in the states the Census Bureau calls the South), a region of the country containing relatively few immigrants except in Texas and Florida, it is sometimes thought that immigration exerts little impact on blacks. However, when one tallies Texas and Florida (states containing lots of immigrants) with other states outside the South, the majority of African Americans (about 57 percent) live in parts of the country containing substantial numbers of immigrants.

Further disaggregation reinforces this point. An investigation of the implications of immigration for African Americans must especially examine the structure and process of black employment. Given that blacks continue to be disproportionately concentrated in semiskilled and unskilled jobs (Farley 1996), the large numbers of new immigrants with low levels of education and work skills are particularly salient for African American labor-market outcomes.¹ In the case of immigration's impact on unskilled workers, especially, such impacts are thought to exert their influence through local labor-market dynamics, usually represented in U.S. research studies by variables calculated for metropolitan areas. What does the evidence show about the extent to which blacks and immigrants reside in separate local labor markets? At first glance, the answer seems to be that, to a modest degree, blacks and immigrants do indeed live in different places. Correlating the percentage of blacks in 1990 with the percentage of foreign born across the 175 largest metropolitan areas in 1990 yields a figure of -0.12 . However, this figure proves to be entirely a function of including in the set of the metropolitan areas examined cities in the Deep South (Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina), places containing large black but very small foreign-born populations. With these Deep South cities removed, the correlation is 0.10 , indicating just the opposite. In other words, during the 1970s and 1980s, there existed some tendency for immigrants and blacks to concentrate in the same, not in different, places, except in the Deep South. It would thus seem premature to conclude on the basis of the geographic distributions of immigrants and blacks, whether by state or by city, that immigration has few implications for African Americans on account of the geographic distribution of immigrants.

IMMIGRATION AND THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING AMONG AFRICAN AMERICANS

What can be said about how immigration has affected economic status among African Americans in the postwar period? How and to

what degree has immigration directly influenced economic well-being among blacks? How has economic status been affected by affirmative action? To answer these questions, it is necessary to examine connections among immigration, economic trends among blacks, and affirmative action policies. Accordingly, we explore trends in black economic status over the past four or five decades, the role that affirmative action has played in contributing to these trends, and the role that immigration has directly played in contributing to these trends.

Trends in Black Economic Status

Research evidence compiled on wage trends starting in the early 1960s indicates an appreciable narrowing of the gap between black and white wages from 1963 through 1975, with little change occurring in this gap from that point on. In 1994, black mean weekly earnings remained about 12 percent below those of whites, thus representing considerable progress when compared with the gap of more than 43 percent that existed in 1963. However, a stagnation that has occurred since 1975 indicates that progress toward wage parity has been at a standstill. Because blacks and other minorities are less likely to be employed on a stable basis during any given year (Tienda and Hsueh 1996), many blacks have not been able to convert the gains in hourly wages that have taken place into equivalent gains in annual income. Moreover, the probability of employment among blacks has been declining since the early 1970s, especially among black males with a high-school education or less, and the drops have been of substantial magnitude (Jaynes 1990). In 1970, black male employment rates were almost the same as those for white males. By 1985, the employment rate of college-educated black males was 12 percentage points below that of whites (80 percent versus 92 percent), and the employment rate of blacks with less than a high-school education was 23 percentage points lower (53 percent versus 76 percent) (*ibid.*).

These trends are of even greater concern given that the gap between blacks and whites in the percentage of high-school graduates from eighteen to twenty-four years of age has been growing from near parity in the mid-1970s to as much as 10 percentage points in the mid-1990s (Farley 1996). If this trend continues, progress as measured by increasing ratios of black to white wage rates would be offset by declines in employment, especially among the less educated, the relative numbers of whom may be increasing compared with whites. Stated differently, the economic prosperity of the 1980s and the 1990s has disproportionately benefited those with higher levels of ed-

ucation (Gottshalk 1997), and it is whites who increasingly are located in that category.

Affirmative Action and Black Economic Progress

Given the gains in economic status among African Americans made in the 1960s and early 1970s and the stagnation of further gains thereafter, it is important to ask what role government action played in shaping this trend. The 1964 Civil Rights Act established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and employers with at least one hundred workers were required to report the numbers of minorities and women in all classifications of jobs. President Lyndon Baines Johnson in 1965 and President Richard Nixon in 1974, through executive orders, instructed federal contractors “to take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin” [3 C.F.R. 169 202(1)(1974)]. Programs pursuing affirmative action goals have ranged from government procurement regulations that set aside contracts for competitive bidding limited to minority-owned businesses to private-sector efforts such as preferential admissions to colleges and universities and aggressive recruitment efforts to build a more diverse corporate workforce. These efforts complement and extend civil rights statutes enacted by various government bodies to eradicate discrimination.

Government policies contributed significantly to black progress from 1940 through 1973—a period during which there was a clear record of improving average material status of blacks relative to whites. In their seminal work, *A Common Destiny: Blacks and American Society*, Gerald Jaynes and Robin Williams (1989) expound that “purposeful” actions and policies by governments and private actors over several decades made a large difference in the opportunities and conditions of black Americans. Many blacks attained middle-class status because government and private programs enabled them to achieve better education and jobs, both through affirmative action employment and education programs and through enforcement of equal employment opportunity laws (Leonard 1990; Jaynes and Williams 1989). For example, significant improvement in black educational attainment occurred after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Among blacks who were the parents of babyboomers—that is, among black people born from the mid-1920s through the mid-1930s—only 45 percent completed high school, whereas 72 percent of whites of the same age did. By contrast, among those blacks born in the decade just after 1964, 75 percent completed high school, narrowing

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the gap with whites to about 10 percentage points (Farley 1996, 209). Growth in enrollment and completion rates of blacks in colleges and universities in the past three decades is partially attributable to governmental affirmative action policies encouraging institutions of higher education to seek out these individuals and institutional policies designed to increase diversity, as well as the improved preparation of black students and women that came about through enforcement of civil rights laws and school desegregation (U.S. Council of Economic Advisers 1998).

Other evidence also supports the hypothesis that antidiscrimination policies have had positive effects on African Americans (*ibid.*). One important factor contributing to minority students' economic gains in elementary- and secondary-school performance as measured by the National Assessment of Education Progress from 1970 to 1990 is the quadruple increase in numbers of black parents with college degrees or college experience over this period, reaching 25 percent in the 1990s. After enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, improvement in relative wages was most substantial in the South, where state fair-employment laws were weakest, institutional discrimination greatest, and federal antidiscrimination efforts most focused. Although it appears that there had been some progress in relative earnings of blacks before 1964, the U.S. Council of Economic Advisers (1998) cites evidence that progress accelerated substantially from 1964 to 1973 and that federal attacks on racial exclusion in the South were critical to the acceleration. Blacks moved into several southern industries from which they had previously been excluded, notably textiles.

Increased black employment during the late 1970s in the contracting industry was related to enforcement by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance programs of its requirement that large contractors develop affirmative action programs to remedy underutilization of minorities and women. Affirmative action programs instituted by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) have encouraged a marked increase in the percentage of minority-owned broadcast and cable television systems. In 1978, 0.5 percent of all licenses were minority owned; by the late 1990s, through the FCC's tax certificate program, nearly 3 percent were (Edley 1996). More generally, affirmative action programs in contract procurement (such as set-aside and sheltered-competition programs) resulted in the number of contracts awarded to minority-owned firms (including, of course, those owned by blacks) increasing by more than 125 percent between 1982 and 1991 (*ibid.*).

The Economic Impact of Immigration on Blacks

If affirmative action has worked to improve the economic status of blacks, what can be said about the role immigration has played in affecting the economic situations of African Americans? Assessing the economic consequences of immigration for African Americans requires first examining the economic impact of immigration on the entire country. By economic impact, we mean the overall combination of effects resulting from such factors as immigration's impact on jobs and wages and its impact on the prices people pay for goods and services. At this general level, the most authoritative assessment of immigration's economic consequences has been carried out by the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academy of Sciences (Smith and Edmonston 1997). The council reached two major conclusions: Immigration exerts a positive effect on the U.S. economy overall but only a small adverse impact on the wage and employment opportunities of competing native groups; and immigration benefits high-skilled workers and the owners of capital but not low-skilled workers or those who do not own capital. The report did not delve deeply into the question of the economic implications of immigration for blacks. Fortunately, a recent series of research projects commissioned to examine this question provides relevant evidence (Hamer-mesh and Bean 1998). When the results of the several studies from this set are taken together, they indicate that recent immigration to the United States appears to have exerted negative effects on the economic situations of African Americans. The impact uncovered by each individual research project was small: If viewed in isolation, none of the individual projects would be thought to constitute strong evidence that immigration generates adverse economic effects on African Americans. As a set, however, the studies provide compelling documentation that the overall positive economic effects of immigration emphasized by the NRC in the country as a whole do not extend to African Americans. This is perhaps not surprising given that the NRC study also found that such benefits were concentrated among the highly skilled and the owners of capital, both of which groups include disproportionately fewer African Americans than whites.

Conclusion

The record with respect to improvements in the economic status of blacks in the United States over the past four decades or so is thus a mixed one. Gains occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s when

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civil rights laws and antidiscrimination policies in the form of affirmative action directives helped to lend a positive boost to the economic situations of blacks. Since then, progress has stalled. Without question, much of this stagnation derives from the negative effects of economic restructuring on persons with no more than a high-school education (Smith 1998), a group that includes disproportionate numbers of African Americans. Some of it may also derive from the fact that immigration has, on average, worked against the economic interests of the black community, although the extent to which such a trend may have coincided with the effects of restructuring remains unknown. Whatever the case, researchers now conclude on the basis of the most recent evidence that one of the major forces for the improvements that have occurred in black economic status over the past forty years has been affirmative action (see, for example, Smith 1998).

In general, the economic implications of immigration for African Americans appear less than benign. The fact that gains in black economic status ceased during the high-immigration 1980s and 1990s, after notable gains following passage of antidiscrimination laws and adoption of affirmative action policies in the 1960s and 1970s, encourages the idea that immigration has done little to generate opportunities for economic advancement for native blacks. Moreover, this conclusion is buttressed by the compilation of research evidence indicating that immigration appears to worsen slightly the already precarious economic positions of African Americans, especially those with a high-school education or less. Thus, the racial and ethnic diversification of the United States population over the past three decades brought about by immigration, a trend some analysts might have thought would bring advantages to nonwhite minorities, including blacks, seems, at least at this point in time, not to have improved the economic status of African Americans overall; and given recent political and legal developments limiting affirmative action (Bowen and Bok 1998), its current prospects for improving black economic status may be even less than in the past. Analysts should evaluate the many humanitarian, social, and economic benefits of immigration within a context that includes both the arguably small economic price paid by blacks and the appropriate role of policies that promote economic opportunity for vulnerable segments of our society.

THE CHAPTERS IN THIS BOOK

There is no reason to think that blacks are less likely than the members of the general population to experience the impacts of immigra-

tion uniformly. Just as persons in the total population with greater access to capital and with higher levels of education are more likely to benefit economically from immigration, so, too, are blacks likely to experience divergent effects depending on their levels of education and capital accumulation. In short, socioeconomic status seems to operate to condition the implications of immigration. Immigration may have worsened the economic situations of those in the population with lower socioeconomic status, including many African Americans. By contrast, immigration seems likely to have fostered economic gain, and perhaps social integration as well, for those with higher socioeconomic status. For example, the increased racial and ethnic intermarriage that has occurred in the United States in recent years (Bean et al. 1997; Berg 1995; Hacker 1995), a trend that may plausibly derive at least in some measure from the increased racial and ethnic diversification of American society, appears more pronounced among minorities with higher levels of education (Qian 1995, 1997; Kalmijn 1993; McLanahan and Casper 1995).

The focus of the present volume is on the employment status and labor-market implications of immigration for racial and ethnic minorities, especially African Americans, a topic that takes on added resonance given the deterioration in employment that has occurred among blacks over the past two decades. That many of the implications of immigration seem to be conditioned by socioeconomic status also suggests that other social-structural and interactional contingencies besides socioeconomic position may be involved in mediating the impact of immigration on African American employment status and structure. The research reported in this book involves a search for such conditions, focusing predominantly on factors operating at the level of the labor market and on the role such factors play in generating both positive and negative immigration consequences among blacks. Thus, we ask; Does increased immigration work to help or hurt the employment situations of native blacks, and, if so, under what conditions? Are there instances where immigrants provide points of comparison in employment outcomes with blacks that seem to suggest that immigration contributes to or ameliorates African American disadvantage? These are the broad kinds of questions addressed by the chapters in this volume.

The first chapter, by Frank D. Bean, Jennifer Van Hook, and Mark Fossett, addresses the question of how social- and spatial-structural conditions in American cities operate to cushion or enhance competitive and complementary relationships between immigrants and native blacks. Drawing upon urban ecological theory, the authors hypothes-

ize that the absence of overlap in social and spatial structures fosters symbiotic working relationships in urban economies between immigrants and native blacks and makes complementary relationships (that is, positive labor-market outcomes of immigration) more likely. Arguing that, in the case of native blacks, an examination of employment is more likely to reveal labor-market effects than are measures of earnings and wages or measures of unemployment, the authors estimate fixed-effects models of the impact of immigration to isolate the influence of what they term “residential autonomy” on the probability of employment of black males. Their results show that the social- and spatial-structural features of cities matter for studying immigration effects in general and that increasing spatial-structural autonomy raises the likelihood that immigration will be associated with rising black employment.

Michael Rosenfeld and Marta Tienda examine the process of immigrant succession into the occupational niches African Americans once dominated and whether this trend enhances or detracts from displaced workers’ occupational mobility. Focusing on Mexican immigrants (highly concentrated, geographically, and the largest group of contemporary immigrants) and U.S.-born blacks in three cities—Los Angeles, Chicago, and Atlanta—they find support for both views of the impact of immigration: Immigrants take low-skill jobs away from natives but also help push natives upward in the occupational stratification system. By examining several occupational niches—ranging from those with heavy immigrant influence to those with a total absence of foreign-born workers—Rosenfeld and Tienda discover that occupational niches are undergoing ethnoracial succession, from native control to domination by one or more immigrant groups. Yet even among these niches, by 1990 few showed complete turnover to immigrant control.

At the same time, the researchers find, these transitions, caused by increases in immigration of the unskilled, generally help to improve the occupational mobility of domestic workers. From 1970 to 1990, for example, black employment grew in administrative and managerial, as well as professional and technical occupations, in all locations. The public sector has been largely resistant to labor-market pressure from immigrants, primarily because these jobs exclude non-citizens and require a civil service exam. During the same period, black representation among postal clerks rose in Los Angeles and Chicago, and the number of black women elementary-school teachers doubled in all three cities. As the authors note, “Immigration has been the driving force behind the expansion of school systems in two of the three cities . . . and the important job of teaching these chil-

dren falls almost exclusively to black and white natives.” This suggests that rather than creating a tax burden by requiring more education and services, immigrants not only expand job opportunities for natives but also propel them up the occupational ladder.

Franklin Wilson examines whether employment in ethnic niches enhances labor-market opportunities for urban workers and whether the immigrant share of the workforce of an employment sector is associated with joblessness, low occupational attainment, and low hourly wages. After reviewing 1980 and 1990 data for thirty-two major industry categories and seven occupational categories, stratified within metropolitan areas by ethnicity, Wilson finds that employment in industry- and occupation-based niches of coethnics constitutes a substantial share of the workforce of urban minority workers. At least one in four African American, Asian, and Latino workers are employed in niches dominated by coethnics, with the majority of African Americans located in industries and occupations in which no other group has a niche. Between 1980 and 1990, however, all groups except African Americans experienced an increase in the number of industry- and occupation-based niches; in fact, blacks experienced a decline in the number of niches they occupied.

Unlike other studies, Wilson’s finds that a high immigrant share of the workforce in an employment sector in 1980 was associated with joblessness for African Americans and Latinos and with lower occupational status and wages for all groups. Changes in the level of immigration between 1980 and 1990 were associated with greater joblessness for African Americans and lower joblessness for Latinos, lower occupational attainment for blacks and Latinos, and lower hourly wages for members of all groups. Overall, Wilson finds little support for the hypothesis that niche employment offers advantages; in fact, high joblessness, low occupational status, and low wages are associated with employment in niches, with immigrants faring worse than nonimmigrants.

Self-employment has long been touted as a vehicle for enhancing individual and collective economic mobility among ethnic minorities. Previous studies have found that a high self-employment rate for an ethnic or racial group is strongly associated with a high average income for that group. Furthermore, the self-employed earn more on average that wage and salary workers. Compared with other ethnic groups, blacks traditionally have had lower levels of self-employment, the reasons for which continue to be debated. Low levels of self-employment among blacks have been particularly troubling because self-employment has historically been viewed as a route of economic advancement for disadvantaged groups. John Logan and Richard Alba

examine whether racial and ethnic groups in two cities—New York and Los Angeles—have been organized into enclaves or niches and the impact these have had on the socioeconomic success of the groups. They show that although whites maintained predominant ownership in many sectors, their ownership has weakened, and that other groups has grown selectively. Mexicans in Los Angeles and Puerto Ricans in New York City, for example, have low levels of self-employment because they are concentrated in certain niches (the public sector for Puerto Ricans and the private sector for Mexicans). However, new immigrant groups—Koreans and Chinese—have established and expanded enclave economies, providing employment to a large share of their group members. New sectoral concentrations have been established by some groups with low levels of ownership, including blacks, who are shifting toward self-employment in sectors where they were already concentrated as workers.

Logan and Alba assert that the payoff from self-employment varies among entrepreneurial groups. Although Koreans, for example, have been most successful, establishing large enclaves and entrepreneurial niches, ultimately they earn less money. Neither blacks nor Mexicans have reaped special rewards from a more entrepreneurial strategy. In light of mixed returns to self-employment and sectoral specialization, these authors assert, it would seem unlikely to offer a solution for those groups, like Mexicans, who find themselves at the bottom of the economic hierarchy. Of all the options they describe, public employment may be the best option, because it has proved so beneficial for blacks and Puerto Ricans.

Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou analyze which factors contribute to self-employment within specific ethnic groups, as well as the effect of immigrant enclaves on African Americans' earnings and their propensity for self-employment. In reviewing census data, the researchers find that self-employed workers have higher average earnings than salaried coethnics. Even when individual characteristics, which can account for a substantial proportion of the variance, are taken into account, they fail to eliminate the positive and significant effect of self-employment. Being married exerts one of the strongest effects on probability of self-employment, except for African Americans—the only group in which married men stand no better chance of becoming entrepreneurs than single men. The presence of children also has a positive net effect for all immigrant groups, except for native whites and blacks. Thus, for African American men, marriage and other family variables bring no measurable returns to entrepreneurship, placing this group at a relative disadvantage. Portes and Zhou also find that immigrants with high levels of human capital are attracted

to entrepreneurship in areas of ethnic concentration where opportunities and resources for business creation exist. They argue that these enclaves, however, do not usurp African Americans' economic opportunities but may actually support African American entrepreneurship. Among cities with the largest immigrant enclaves, self-employed African American surpass the average earnings of their salaried counterparts in virtually every case, which suggests that the effects of immigrant business concentration are not deleterious to the economic returns of African Americans.

In addition to ethnic niches and enclaves, immigrants also have established strong networks, which provide them with opportunities to learn about and secure employment in certain industries or sectors. Roger Waldinger argues that such networks are beneficial to immigrants but are often exclusionary to African Americans and others outside the group. To illustrate the dual nature of networks, Waldinger conducted a series of in-depth interviews (in 1993 and 1994) with managers and owners in 230 establishments in Los Angeles and found that such persons rely heavily on network-driven referrals from the Mexican and Central American workforce, especially for entry-level jobs. When hiring for more-skilled jobs, however, businesses tend to use more formalized procedures such as interviews, reference and background checks, and tests. Such formalized screening involves multiple steps, reducing the advantages enjoyed by members of a referral network and severely curtailing its influence. Waldinger asserts that civil service requirements and procedures make government an effective institutional barrier to competition from most immigrants, which is why the same procedures that keep immigrants out of bottom-level public-sector jobs affect less-skilled African Americans similarly. He concludes that immigrants' rich networks can help newcomers, but the repeated action of network hiring favors those with ties to insiders—an outcome that those lacking similar connections, including African Americans, are likely to view as unfair. Bureaucracy, in contrast, may open doors to African Americans that networks close because of an insistence on more formal, objective, screening processes. Still, Waldinger acknowledges, no matter how formalized the process, selection always involves a personal element and may introduce bias, which would unfavorably affect African Americans. Ultimately, network and bureaucracy can both be seen as systems of social exclusion—and their victims are most likely to be black.

In a case study of how immigrant networks can adversely affect African Americans, Mary Waters analyzes the interpersonal and workplace dynamics of a large corporate cafeteria where the workforce was once dominated by African Americans but is now primarily West

Indian. West Indians have a higher labor-force participation rate than African Americans—a trend that has been attributed to both individual factors (West Indians' work ethic or values) and structural elements (selectivity of immigration, structural consequences of immigration, and institutional bias). Waters finds a combination of these factors at play in the company she studied, including network hiring, which gave West Indians greater access to jobs; West Indians' tendency to assess the value of the jobs differently from natives; and white managers' preference for hiring West Indians over African Americans. Immigrants' perceptions of African Americans mirrored those of their white bosses, which contributed to workplace tensions among native-born and immigrant workers. These results, she argues, demonstrate that despite empirical evidence suggesting that immigration does not necessarily take jobs from African Americans or detract from their occupational mobility, explanations for workplace changes that continue to dominate the day-to-day interactions among workers and managers are cultural rather than structural. The danger is that these kinds of perceptions and explanations are often those that find their way into policy debates about immigration, affirmative action, and other issues.

Most discussions of immigration-induced migration emphasize the economic "pushes" and "pulls" of declining Rust Belt and Northeast metropolitan areas, coupled with strong job-generating engines that have evolved in "New South" metropolitan areas such as Atlanta. Somewhat less attention has been given to the impact of immigration on out-migration patterns of African Americans, especially those with low skills, from immigrant-heavy areas outside of the South. This dynamic not only will shape the distribution patterns for blacks, but also hold important implications for the racial and ethnic makeup of these "gateway" regions, which are becoming demographically distinct from other parts of the country. William Frey asserts that the areas experiencing the heaviest immigration flows are also experiencing a selective out-migration of natives, especially African Americans, to other parts of the country where fewer immigrants reside. Using 1990 census data and post-1990 estimates, Frey finds that both blacks and whites tend to out-migrate in response to immigration inflows in high-immigration areas (HIAs). Although the magnitude of the response to immigration is stronger for whites than blacks, the socioeconomic patterns are similar: That is, out-migration patterns are most pronounced among the least educated segments of the population for both whites and blacks from high-immigration states. Also, both poor whites and blacks are more "push-oriented" in their out-

migration patterns, moving away from the high-immigration states and toward more diffuse destinations that differ from conventional long-distance migration destinations. The greatest impact of immigration-influenced black out-migration is in regional differences emerging in metropolitan areas and states. Both whites and blacks out-migrating from HIAs and high-immigration states are headed toward mostly white, mostly black, or largely white and black metropolitan destinations. Therefore, sharper divisions may emerge between regions receiving large numbers of nonblack immigrant minorities and large stretches of the country that remain largely white or white and black.

Underscoring Frey's assertion that areas with high levels of immigration are experiencing considerable changes, James Johnson, Karen Johnson-Webb, and Walter Farrell review what happens when Latino immigrants move beyond traditional port-of-entry communities into states and communities with little or no experience with Latino immigration. In examining census data, they find no overlap between the states that from 1980 to 1994 had Latino population growth in excess of the national average—Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, and Tennessee—and the seven traditional port-of-entry states: California, Arizona, New Mexico, New York, Florida, Texas, and New Jersey. The eight states with the highest rates of increases in the Latino population also had sizable increases in black and Asian populations from 1980 to 1994 but experienced relatively slow white population growth. The authors find that reactions to the Latino newcomers have been mixed: Business leaders are excited about the role immigrants play in local economies and about the emerging market opportunities afforded by their presence. Local citizens, however, have concerns about their effects on the social fabric of communities, and this has led to ethnic tensions and conflicts over schools, jobs, housing, and the like. The researchers suggest that more vigilant action on the part of state and local officials be taken to stem the tide of antagonism and to prevent what has occurred in other cities, such as Los Angeles.

Some believe that recent immigration to metropolitan areas polarizes residential patterns between blacks and whites. Others assert that immigration results in more cross-racial intermingling. Michael White and Jennifer Glick examine the impact of immigration on residential segregation, particularly segregation between blacks and whites, by studying the distribution of thirty-nine major ethnic groups located in 285 metropolitan areas. They find that, generally, the longer a group has been in the United States, the less segregated are its immigrant members and their descendants. However, there are

many exceptions to this, especially among African Americans, who are far more segregated than their vintage would indicate. White and Glick also analyze whether the presence of ethnic groups of more recent vintage has exacerbated African Americans' segregation. Using a key social indicator of race relations from 1980 to 1990, they discover that metropolitan areas experiencing a growth in immigrants show lower levels of segregation between blacks and whites. Thus, they find no evidence to suggest that immigration is driving the United States to become a more segregated society.

This trend toward a more multiracial and multiethnic society is likely to continue well into the future, according to demographers Barry Edmonston and Jeffrey Passel. They predict that by the year 2010, Latinos will become the largest ethnic minority group in the nation, and non-Hispanic whites will become less numerous. Blacks will increase substantially in number, but their proportion of the total population will remain the same. Predicting the proportions of ethnic and racial groups in society is complicated by intermarriage and the way in which descendants of intergroup marriages identify themselves. By 2050, for example, the number of Latinos could range between 67 million and 147 million, depending on the self-identification of Latinos with mixed ancestry. The black population could be as large as 55 million by 2040 if mixed-ancestry blacks choose to identify themselves as black. The researchers point out that such blurring of ethnic and racial lines means that definitions and ideas about race may change in the near future, challenging the idea that the assimilation capacity of new immigrants is less than that of earlier waves of immigrants.

THE IMPLICATIONS FOR RACIAL AND ETHNIC RELATIONS AND POLICY

The findings reported in the chapters in this book thus indicate that the increasing racial and ethnic diversity of the population of the United States resulting from immigration is contributing to the emergence of a more complex system of stratification in the country than the one existing in the recent past (since the end of World War II). The presence of so many immigrants adds another dimension of complexity to that system of stratification, one that may operate independently of race and ethnicity. That is, to the degree that immigrants, because of their limited proficiency in English and other characteristics, are channeled into certain sectors of employment, labor-market segmentation along nativity lines, as well as along racial and

ethnic lines, may be increasing. Undoubtedly, these two kinds of segmentation overlap to a considerable degree, but the substantially increasing diversity introduced by immigration multiplies the possible dimensions along which segmentation can occur. The findings of the research reported here indicate that it is not yet clear how to conceptualize these structural arrangements. They also indicate that some of these arrangements appear to operate in ways that have positive implications for African American employment (ethnic enclaves and patterns of residential autonomy, for example), whereas others seem to operate in ways that have negative employment implications (such as concentrations of ethnic- and immigrant-specific network hiring). An important challenge for future research is to conceptualize these new structural arrangements and to develop theories about their determinants and consequences that clarify the ways through which new immigration affects not only native racial and ethnic minorities but also previous immigrants already in the country.

Theory building also needs to focus on how the new and increased diversity deriving from immigration ultimately operates to affect racial and ethnic identity in the United States. David Reimers (1998) attributes much of the U.S. turn against immigration in the early 1990s to concerns that American identity is becoming fragmented and less Europe oriented. In writing about the implications of Latino immigration for the United States, Roberto Suro (1998) has noted that “identity has once again become a problem for the United States, and as before, the crisis or reinvention will create a new identity that embraces the nation’s new constituents. The presence of so many Latinos ensures that matters of race and language, of poverty and opportunity, of immigration policy and nationality will be central issues in the process” (321). One possible outcome of the process of identity reformation may be that racial or ethnic status will simply become less relevant as a basis for workplace and occupational stratification as well as other forms of social organization in the United States. Increasing rates of racial and ethnic intermarriage over the past two decades provides an example of trends consistent with this possibility (Bean et al. 1997). Such phenomena as the emergence of an interracial political leadership group in Queens, New York, an area of extremely high racial and ethnic diversity during the 1980s and 1990s (Sanjek 1998), and the formation of collaborative organizations such as National Voices for an Inclusive Twenty-First Century show that high levels of diversity may work to foster cooperation and solidarity rather than divisiveness and contention.² Ascertaining the conditions under which racial and ethnic diversity is more likely to lead to posi-

tive as opposed to negative outcomes thus constitutes a significant topic for further research, one whose findings will have substantial implications for public policy.

Another possibility is that increased diversity will reduce the salience of some dimensions of racial and ethnic stratification but leave others intact, or perhaps even enhanced. In that event, an important question involves the nature of the major racial and ethnic fault lines in American society that will persist or be enhanced. The degree to which such fault lines delineate racial and ethnic divides between whites and nonwhites or between blacks and nonblacks will be especially consequential. The posture the country adopts toward policies designed to enhance opportunity among the disadvantaged may be especially likely to influence the degree to which racial fault lines retain their salient character. Further closures of the gap in socioeconomic attainment between African Americans and whites may be slowing or ceasing altogether, particularly with respect to education and perhaps especially in regard to higher education. Some of this change may derive from demographic shifts triggered by immigration, some to the erosion of support for affirmative action. Recent research by Caroline Hoxby (1998) shows that immigration creates “crowding effects” in the use of preferences in granting admission and financial aid in private upper-tier institutions of higher education, thus perhaps diminishing opportunities for native-born African Americans to gain access to prestigious schools and the pathways to status and high income such schools often provide (Bowen and Bok 1998). Elimination of scholarship programs targeting blacks, such as the recent challenge to the Benjamin Banneker scholarship program at the University of Maryland, may lead to diminished opportunities. Several other legal challenges presently working their way through the courts may constrict black educational opportunities further in the future.

Some observers have speculated that part of the political backlash against both immigration and affirmative action results from resentment about the benefits that immigrants have sometimes received from affirmative action policies originally intended to provide support primarily for groups like native-born African Americans (Fuchs 1995). If immigration has contributed to this kind of backlash, it introduces a special element of irony into analyses of the implications of immigration for African Americans. On balance, immigration appears often to have rendered the economic situations of African Americans a bit worse than they otherwise might have been, although the research results reported in this book suggest that the extent to which this occurs varies with social-structural circumstances. Analysts

should then consider whether a slowing of black economic progress as a result of immigration may intensify the need for special programs. To the degree that immigration presents blacks with somewhat more difficult circumstances to overcome to improve their economic circumstances, raises at least a couple of questions. Do the generally widespread economic and humanitarian benefits derived from immigration and enjoyed by the larger society provide a rationale for maintaining policies that promote black economic gains in the future? Should generous immigration policies that operate to fulfill societal goals and that provide opportunities for newcomers to pursue the American dream be accompanied by equally forward-looking opportunity enhancement policies designed to improve the chances of economic success among historically disadvantaged groups and others for whom the playing field needs leveling? Careful consideration of these questions, together with the development and implementation of policies designed to increase further economic opportunities among the disadvantaged, might help to bolster a positive national mythology both about immigration and about race and ethnicity as the United States moves into the twenty-first century.

NOTES

1. In fact, the educational distribution among recent immigrants is bifurcated, with relatively high proportions of both high- and low-skilled immigrants (see chapter 1 in this volume).
2. National Voices is a coalition involving the National Conference for Community and Justice, the Anti-Defamation League, Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics, the National Council of La Raza, and the National Urban League.

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