

The Children of Immigrants in Schools

PI: Richard Alba, The Graduate Center, CUNY

Structure of the project

Five bi-national teams, staffed with senior Ph.D.s from each country plus pre- and post-docs (some funded by the Nuffield Foundation); each team focuses on a limited set of dimensions of educational systems.

School funding and tracking in New York and Amsterdam
Principal Investigators: Jennifer Holdaway, Social Science Research Center and Graduate Center, CUNY
Maurice Cruz, Institute for Migration & Ethnic Studies, University of Amsterdam
Researchers: Norma Fuentes, Fordham University
Mayda Zaai, Graduate Center, CUNY
Helga de Valk, Free University, Brussels
Methodology: Quantitative analysis of existing data, in-depth interviews, ethnography

Navigating borders in schools and communities: Moroccan and Mexican immigrant youth in Catalonia and California

Principal Investigators: Margaret Gibson, University of California, Santa Cruz
Sylvia Carrasco, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Researchers: Anne Rios, University of California, Santa Cruz
Jordi Pàmies Rovira, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Maribel Ponferrada Artega, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Methodology: Ethnography, in-depth interviews

The impact of timing, differentiation, and second chances in Great Britain and the United States

Principal Investigators: Mary Waters, Harvard University
Anthony Heath, University of Cambridge
Researchers: Sherril-Ann Butterfield, Rutgers University
Marco J. Gonzalez, Harvard University
Vicki Boliver, University of Oxford
Methodology: Quantitative analysis of existing data and original survey, ethnography

Innovative, promising schooling practices for the children of immigrants

Principal Investigators: Garba Sulem-Onozco, New York University
Michael Alexanderson, Göteborg University
Researchers: Lory J. Dance, University of Nebraska
Margary Martin, New York University
Sahanes Lunnblad, Göteborg University
Methodology: Ethnography, in-depth interviews, school, district and archival data

The transition to the labor market in France and the U.S.

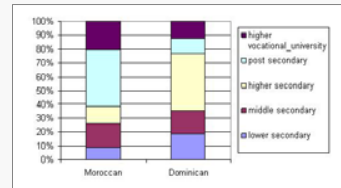
Principal Investigators: Richard Alba, The Graduate Center, CUNY
Roane Silberman, Maurice Hallsbach Center, Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique
Researchers: Dalia Abdel-Hady, Southern Methodist University
Amy Lutz, Syracuse University
Yael Brinkbaum, Université de Bourgogne
Methodology: Quantitative analysis of existing data, in-depth interviews

School funding and tracking in New York and Amsterdam

The study focuses on Dominicans in New York and Moroccans in Amsterdam. These two groups were chosen partly because educational outcomes for the second generation are quite low relative to the native born, raising concerns both about their future labor market prospects and about social inclusion. Also, although different in certain respects, most notably religion, the parents in both cases are predominantly low-wage labor migrants with relatively low levels of education. Residential segregation in Amsterdam and New York means that, in both cases, children from these immigrant groups are highly concentrated in a limited number of schools.

School systems show important differences. On the one hand, the Dutch system is more formally stratified, with some pupils directed to separate vocational programs after the 8th grade and others, who begin secondary education within comprehensive schools, after the 10th grade. Typically, the formally differentiated secondary schools of northern European countries are thought to disadvantage immigrant-origin students. On the other hand, much greater public funding is invested in the early education of these students in the Netherlands; primary schools receive nearly twice as much funding for every immigrant-origin student as for every one from a native Dutch background.

The major finding is that Moroccan students achieve higher levels of education than do the Dominican students:



Key points:

- Many Moroccan students take the "long route" to post-secondary education, working their way upward from vocational tracks at some point in secondary school.
- In both groups, the socioeconomic position of immigrant parents explains remarkably little of the educational attainment of the second generation. The weakness of this linkage stands in strong contrast to the finding for native students in both societies and suggests that research has yet to identify the factors that explain the success of immigrant-origin students.
- The size of the family from which Dominican students come affects how much education they receive, but no similar relationship is found for the Moroccans.
- School tracking, though very different in nature, is of major importance for both the Dominican second generation in New York and the Moroccan second generation in Amsterdam. In both cases the evidence reveals that certain types of educational experience are highly correlated with high or low outcomes.
- In the Moroccan case, a transnational school career, i.e., having spent an extended period in the sending society, has a pronounced negative impact on educational outcomes in the Netherlands.

Navigating borders in schools and communities: Moroccan and Mexican immigrant youth in Catalonia and California

This project focuses on the children of Mexican immigrants in the U.S. and Moroccan immigrants in Spain, two countries that have had radically different immigration histories possess different education systems and policies. Yet there are similarities. Both countries are at the top position in the number of immigrants received annually, and despite official efforts to welcome children from immigrant families, both operate paradoxically in ways that are unwelcoming. In both there are serious disparities in academic achievement during high school and in continuity to post-compulsory education. Comparative ethnographic research in Catalonia and California reveals how school discourses, structures, and practices contribute to the unequal outcomes.

High School Graduation Rates

Catalonia for 2006 ¹	California for 2003 ²
All students	77%
Latin Americans ³	50-70%
Moroccan (largest immigrant group) ⁴	25%
	Latinos (largest immigrant/minority group) ⁵
	73%
	56%

1. High school graduation in Catalonia/Spain is after 10th grade. Graduation rates calculated from MEC 2007 official data.
2. High school graduation in the California/U.S. is after 12th grade. Graduation rates reported in Greene & Winters, 2006.
3. Research estimates. Latin Americans in Catalonia/Spain come from upper-middle to working class in home countries.
4. Research estimates. Moroccans are over-represented 1st and 2nd generation (i.e., children of immigrants).
5. 58% of Latin Americans in California are of Mexican origin (category includes children of both immigrant and native parents).

Key Findings

School discourse & ideology	School structure & practice	Immigrant student experiences
Official school discourse is cosmopolitan and/or aspirational to embrace diversity.	Actual practices can be elitist or tokenistic.	Immigrant students often end up feeling silenced and alienated.
Schools espouse a meritocratic ideology	Language differences become constructed as language hierarchies.	Immigrant students often feel marginalized when using their home language and when using the host language.
	Practices, such as tracking, privilege middle- and upper-middle-class native students	Working-class children of immigrants internalize meritocratic rationalization of unequal outcomes
	Newcomer and ELD classes intend to speed social and academic integration.	Immigrant students find selves segregated and their classes unchallenging.
School discourse is one of inclusion and equal opportunity.	Regular and "high track" academic classes intend to promote academic success for all.	Children of immigrants often feel unsupported, silenced, and marginalized in these classes.
	Schools assume that spaces and activities promote participation and belonging for all students.	Activities are organized in ways that prevent immigrant participation; contributes to experiences of non-belonging.

The impact of timing, differentiation, and second chances in Great Britain and the United States

This project looks at cross-national differences in educational outcomes, measured in terms of secondary-school tracking, secondary-school completion and post-secondary enrollment and completion among the children of immigrants. We compare outcomes at the national level and then examine the effects of schools and social networks on outcomes and aspirations.

The educational systems of the two countries have a great deal in common, with a predominantly comprehensive system of secondary education (based on neighborhood schools), mass (but highly stratified) tertiary education and a fair degree of local autonomy. Both systems are relatively open (with various opportunities for "second chances") and both have rather weak linkages to the labor market, focusing on general rather than vocational education. There are, however, some important differences: Britain retains high-stakes testing at age 16 while the U.S. has affirmative action in tertiary education. This suggests that there may be some differences, with the U.S. showing lesser ethnic disadvantage in access to upper secondary education (because of the absence of exclusionary testing) and lesser ethnic disadvantage in access to elite tertiary institutions.

Statistics for some key variables (standard errors in parentheses)

Panel A: London sample	Percent Academic track	Percent free school lunch	Percent co-racial students	Correlation FSI/Co-rac.
Native White	54	15.7	16.8	-.509 ***
Second generation Chinese	78.8	25.5	1.6	
Second generation West Indian	44.4	17.3	16.1	-.217 ns.
All	53.9	15.4	17.7	-.732 ***
			21.7	-.489 ***

Statistics for some key variables (standard errors in parentheses)

Panel B: New York sample	Percent Academic track	Percent free school lunch	Percent co-racial students	Correlation FSI/Co-rac.
Native White	60.7	26.6	54	-.849 ***
Second generation Chinese	68.9	33.3	25.1	-.222 **
Second generation West Indian	45.2	48.2	54	-.336 ***
All	56.0	37.5	49.9	-.057 ns.
			28.9	

Comparisons and findings

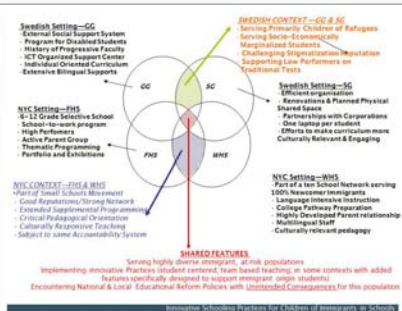
- In both London and New York, Chinese second-generation immigrants were significantly more likely than native whites to follow the academic track in high school. West Indian second-generation immigrants, in contrast, were substantially less likely than native whites to follow the academic track.
- Controlling for a range of individual-level social background characteristics (age, gender, parental education, family structure, and private/public schooling), attending a London (but not New York) school with a higher percentage of free-school-lunch recipients was found to reduce students' chances of placement in the academic track.
- The effect on track placement of the percentage of co-racial students in a school was, however, found to be different for different groups. For the native white group in both London and New York, and the West Indian group in New York alone, having more co-racial students in the school was found to reduce the chances of placement in the academic track. In contrast, having more co-racial students in the school was found to increase rather than reduce the chances of placement in the academic track for the Chinese group in both London and New York, and for the West Indian group in London alone.
- In London, West-Indian disadvantage in test results at age 16 is transformed by a higher rate of progressing to academic tracks in upper secondary and by a generally lower drop-out rate. That is, we find positive "secondary" effects of ethnicity even where "primary" effects were negative.

Innovative, promising schooling practices

This study attempts to identify innovative, promising educational practices that serve the children of immigrants in Sweden and the U.S. Little work has been done in this domain, though systematically examining the essential elements of such programs is an important step toward making sound policy recommendations.

Several criteria were used to select two "innovative" schools in each context. The schools had to serve a high proportion of immigrant-origin youth. They had to be largely neighborhood schools rather than selective ones. They had to have a reputation within the educational community for innovation. They had to have above-average outcomes in standard performance indicators in comparison with other schools with high proportions of "low status" immigrant kids using such criteria as grades; retention rates of students; highly qualified teachers; recruitment and retention of teachers.

Findings summarized:



The transition to the labor market in France and the U.S.

This study examines on second-generation Mexicans in the U.S. and North Africans in France and focuses on school completion and the transition to the labor market.

The two systems exhibit major differences in their educational systems and labor markets. In terms of funding, the U.S. system would appear to be more supportive of inequalitarian outcomes because of the heavy role of local property taxes and state-level financing. Moreover, the French system has experienced significant democratization initiatives in recent decades, including an expansion of the "bac," the credential required for entry into the universities, and a program of extra funding for schools serving disadvantaged populations. However, youth unemployment is much higher in France than in the U.S., though the French government has attempted to promote the creation of jobs for young people by indirect subsidies and weakened protections for young employees.

Findings:

- Despite the differences in the educational systems, the inequalities in educational outcomes are quite similar:

	Anglo born 1971-75, ages 25-29 in 2000	Mexican Americans born 1971-75, ages 25-29 in 2000	Native French born 1969-76, ages 25-34 in 2003	Maghrebins born 1969-76, ages 25-34 in 2003
Non secondary educational	10.2	27.4	19.5	32.5
Basic secondary educational	27.6	31.1	44.2	44.2
Some post-secondary education	61.1	61.5	36.3	24.4
Female				
Non secondary educational	7.7	21.4	16.8	27.4
Basic secondary educational	22.8	27.4	41.7	42.3
Some post-secondary education	69.5	50.9	41.7	30.3

Sources: The 5 percent Public Use Microdata Sample of the 2000 Census for the US and the 2003 Formation Qualifiant Professionnelle survey in France

