DEVELOPMENTAL PATHWAYS THROUGH MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

Rethinking Contexts and Diversity as Resources

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CHAPTER

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Beyond Demographic Categories: How Immigration, Ethnicity, and "Race" Matter for Children's Identities and Pathways Through School

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Demographic questions in the United States, whether on census forms or social science surveys, have long blended national origin, ethnicity, and "race"[1] into a set of color-coded categories. In 1900, the U.S. census categories included White, Black, Indian, Chinese, and Japanese. The 1935 *Handbook of Social Psychology* offered chapters on the social histories of the "White Man," the "Negro," the "Red Man," and the "Yellow Man" (Murphy, 1935/1967). However, recent demographic changes are pushing the limits of demographic categories for science, policy, and educational practice. By 2000, immigration to the United States rivaled the high levels of 1910, with

[1]We put "race" in quotation marks to emphasize its historical and social construction—with powerful effects—and not a given of biology or nature. Ethnicity, social class, and gender are also social constructions but less prone to be understood as biological essences.

present-day newcomers coming principally from Mexico, Latin America, and Asia, rather than the Eastern and Southern European origins of a century ago. And by 2030, children classified as Hispanic, African American, Asian American, and Native American are expected to constitute half of U.S. children under the age of 17 (Hernández, 1999). Demographers have responded to these changes by adding open-ended questions to the U.S. census to capture the increasingly complex configurations of immigration, ethnicity, and "race." On the 2000 census, one question asked about "racial" categories of American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black, and White; another question asked about ethnicity by differentiating Hispanic from non-Hispanic. In addition, adults responding for their families could also write in their own self-descriptions and check more than one category (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002).

As U.S. schools and communities have become more ethnically diverse, children's immigration, ethnicity, and "race" have become more important for research as well as for practices and policies shaping children's developmental pathways. As with gender, academic journals and funding agencies now require demographic descriptions of research participants. Accordingly, scholars have proposed guidelines for doing so, primarily based on parents' reports (Entwisle & Astone, 1994). This marks a great improvement over writings about the "universal child" that permeated research in the early 20th century, when diversity reflecting immigration, ethnicity, "race," social class, and gender either was not studied or was portrayed in terms of deficiencies and deprivation (McLoyd, 1990; Valencia & Black, 2002). Although scholars, policymakers, and practitioners continue searching for general patterns in development and pursue universal rights for children, they also probe how inequalities related to factors such as immigration, ethnicity, and social class may shape children's developmental pathways (García Coll et al., 1996). However, using demographic categories to study children's development can introduce other difficulties.

This chapter tackles these issues, first, by considering the limits of demographic categories for understanding the role of immigration, ethnicity, and "race" in children's developmental pathways through school. We then argue for studying these issues as part of individual, social, institutional, and community processes. To illustrate this approach, we use four questions from our MacArthur Network studies based on interdisciplinary theoretical foundations. We interviewed individual children, observed them interacting with peers and teachers, analyzed institutional practices of schools, and watched community partnerships that sought to support children's pathways through school (see chapters in this volume by Cooper, Domínguez, & Rosas; García Coll, Szalacha, & Palacios; and Thorne, for details about individual studies). Finally, we close with reflections for research, policy, and practice.

LIMITS OF DEMOGRAPHIC CATEGORIES FOR UNDERSTANDING IMMIGRATION, ETHNICITY, AND "RACE" IN CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

To advance science, policy, and practice, scholars seek to describe and predict continuity and change in persons, families, institutions, and communities and to explain what factors enhance and impede development (Cooper & Denner, 1998). Demographic variables such as national origin, ethnicity, and "race" are often used to sort children and families into categories, facilitating comparison on indicators such as health, social skills, emotional well-being, or school achievement. However, consistent with critiques by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Whiting (1976), we argue that these categorical research designs may not fully serve descriptive, predictive, or explanatory goals.

With regard to descriptive goals, relying on mutually exclusive demographic categories for describing social groups neglects the growing numbers of children and families who describe themselves with more than one national, ethnic, or racial identity label (Lee, 1993; Nakashima, 1992). Further, larger sets of categories are often collapsed into dichotomies such as immigrant versus native-born, Black versus White, Hispanic versus non-Hispanic, or high income versus low income (Hirschfeld & Gelman, 1994; Medin, 1989), obscuring variation within groups due to social class, immigration history, national origin, and so forth, while emphasizing differences and neglecting similarities between groups. In turn, these dichotomies can easily slip into hierarchies that imply one category is superior and the other inferior (Cooper et al., 1998).

Second, casting immigration, ethnicity, or "race" as fixed and stable qualities can convey that their meanings and related practices in one setting can predict meanings and practices across time and place. However, studies with adolescents and adults show these meanings change over time, vary across communities and geographic regions, and can also shift for individuals across the social contexts of their lives (Fernández, 1992; Root, 2002; Sanjeck, 1995).

Moreover, for explanatory goals, research that treats demographic categories as independent variables has been interpreted as if group membership provided causal explanations for group differences, such as in children's academic aspirations, school achievement, or intelligence (McLoyd, 1990). Such reasoning has been used to argue that such group differences are grounded in biology, although biological explanations of "race"-based differences have been discredited on scientific grounds (Barkan, 1992; Lewontin, 1982). In contrast, research on disparities in school funding and community economic resources points to these factors as central to children's academic pathways (see chapters by Blumenfeld et al. and by Stipek, this volume).

FOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT PROCESSES IN CHILDREN'S EMERGING IDENTITIES AND PATHWAYS THROUGH SCHOOL

These critiques should not be interpreted as an argument to eliminate or abandon using demographic variables in research, policy reports, or everyday talk. Rather, we seek to stimulate inquiry on how demographic categories are used as well as when they matter—and when they do not—for children's identities and pathways through school. To do so, we consider four questions that map the role of immigration, ethnicity, and "race" in children's development across four related levels of analysis: individual, relational, institutional, and community.

1. As individuals, how do children draw on their families' national origin and ethnicity in constructing their personal identities at school? Social psychologists argue that social identity provides a sense of group belonging that can contribute to a person's well-being (Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi, & Ethier, 1995; Tajfel, 1978; see Fuligni et al., this volume). Researchers have traced ethnic identity development among immigrant adolescents and described an "immigrant paradox"—that some immigrant youth excel in school despite their families' unfamiliarity with U.S. schools (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). Viewing children's ethnic, racial, and gender identification, preferences, and attitudes as precursors of the multiple domains of adolescent and adult identity is consistent with Erikson's theory of identity development as a lifespan process that occurs in families and other cultural contexts (Cross, 1995; Eccles, 1993; Erikson, 1968; Phinney, 1996; Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990). The question of how ethnic identity is constructed by children of immigrants is illustrated in the study of García Coll and her colleagues in Providence, Rhode Island (see García Coll et al., this volume).

2. In their social relations and everyday interactions with peers, how do children in ethnically diverse schools construct and negotiate identity practices? This question reflects the sociological writings of Giddens (1979, 1991), who considered identity to be an ongoing process through which individuals negotiate a series of choices that emerge in relation to others. This view also highlights the social construction of immigration, ethnic, and "racial" divisions in identity. Research on social negotiations of identity among adults by Goffman (1959), on negotiation of gender boundaries among children by Thorne (1993), and on cultural practices by anthropologists Lave and Wenger (1991), prompted Thorne (chapter 3, this volume) to examine this question with an ethnographic study of an elementary school in Oakland, California.

3. How are demographic categories reflecting immigration, ethnicity, and "race" made more or less salient in the institutional practices of schools? Debates on schooling and diversity often center on children's racial-ethnic identity, their school engagement or alienation, and the links between families and schools. Orellana and her team (Orellana, 2002) drew on the premises of sociocultural theory, including the funds of knowledge approach, to view ethnically diverse families' cultural practices as assets (González et al., 1995; see also Lowe, Weisner, Geis, & Huston, this volume). Orellana's (2002) ethnographic work in the Pico-Union area of Los Angeles asked how families' national origin, ethnicity, and race were made more or less salient for organizational practices of schools as children entered school, and how such diversity was viewed and treated.

4. How does immigration matter for children's identities and community resources in building their pathways through school? Ogbu (1991) wrote that under cultural and historical conditions of inequitable access to education, ethnic minority families initially hold high hopes for children's school success. However, as they encounter barriers, parents can develop bleak views of their children's future while their children develop oppositional identities that affirm their solidarity with peers, thus defending against failure in mainstream schools and jobs. Matute-Bianchi (1986, 1990) traced historical and structural antecedents of these patterns among Mexican high school students. Cooper and her team in Watsonville/Santa Cruz, California, drew on Ogbu's (2003) work and on Bridging Multiple Worlds Theory (Cooper, 2003; Phelan, Davidson, & Yu, 1991) in a longitudinal study of children participating in a community program that supports low-income youth going to college. Key questions involve how children's experiences in such programs shaped their cultural and career identities and how these in turn mattered for their pathways from childhood to college.

ALIGNING MIXED METHODS ACROSS THEORIES

Although each of the four research teams drew on different theoretical perspectives, they all traced individual, relational, institutional, and community levels of analysis with a mixed-methods approach. The four studies drew on quantitative analyses of interviews and surveys developed for children, parents, and teachers; institutional records like school transcripts; and school and national census data. They compared or aligned these data with inductive methods of ethnography, including participant observation in schools, neighborhoods, and afterschool programs, and with open-ended interviews with parents, children, teachers, and school and program staff. They also asked children to write about, draw, and photograph key places and people in their lives. This is especially important for studying identity development as a process of individual, social, institutional, and community meaning making to link standardized "outsider" or *etic* viewpoints with local "insider" or *emic* meanings (Cooper et al., 1998).

Demographics Across the Four Sites

Providence, Rhode Island. García Coll and her team (this volume) conducted their research in Providence, Rhode Island, a small, light-industry city with an immigration stream of Portuguese, Dominican, Puerto Rican, African, and Southeast Asian families of Cambodian, Hmong, Vietnamese, and Laotian heritage. The research team focused on the Cambodian, Portuguese, and Dominican communities, the three largest immigrant groups in Providence. Ethnographic histories in each community traced historical meanings of immigration.

Most elementary schools in the study were attended primarily by children of color (from 37% to 76%). Public schools had higher proportions of children from immigrant families, from low-income families, and who were children of color, whereas private schools enrolled fewer children of immigrants and were more mixed in terms of social class. Figures 9.1, 9.2, and 9.3 show contexts of children's activities in the Cambodian, Portuguese, and Dominican communities of Providence.

Oakland, California. Thorne and her team (Thorne, this volume; Thorne, Lam, Orellana, & Chabrier, 1997) conducted ethnographic research in a mixed-income area in Oakland, California. Students in the medium-sized public elementary school that anchored the site were labeled by the school as almost 50% African American, 20% Asian (mostly Cantonese-speaking children of immigrants from Hong Kong, China, and Vietnam, Chinese families who came through Vietnam to the United States, along with speakers of Vietnamese), Mien (a hill tribe from Laos who spoke their own language), and Cambodian, 14% European American, and 15% Hispanic, mostly children of immigrants from Mexico and Central America. Comparing these school census data to 1990 U.S. census data revealed fewer European American students (12% vs. 48%) and more African American students (50% vs. 22%) attending the school compared to their numbers in the official school intake area.

Pico-Union, California. Orellana and her colleagues (Orellana, 2002; Orellana, Thorne, Chee, & Lam, 2001) conducted ethnographic work in the Pico-Union area of Los Angeles, in and around one of the largest elementary schools in the nation, with 2,700 students in kindergarten through Grade 5. The school was divided into three year-round tracks, two of which were in session at a given time. This was an enclave of immigrants primarily from Mexico and Central America. Children from these families made up more than 90% of students in the school, almost all qualifying for free or reduced-price lunches. This might appear to be a school with little ethnic and social class diversity. But as we detail in this chapter, there was greater within-group diversity than captured in the "Hispanic" label. There was also a

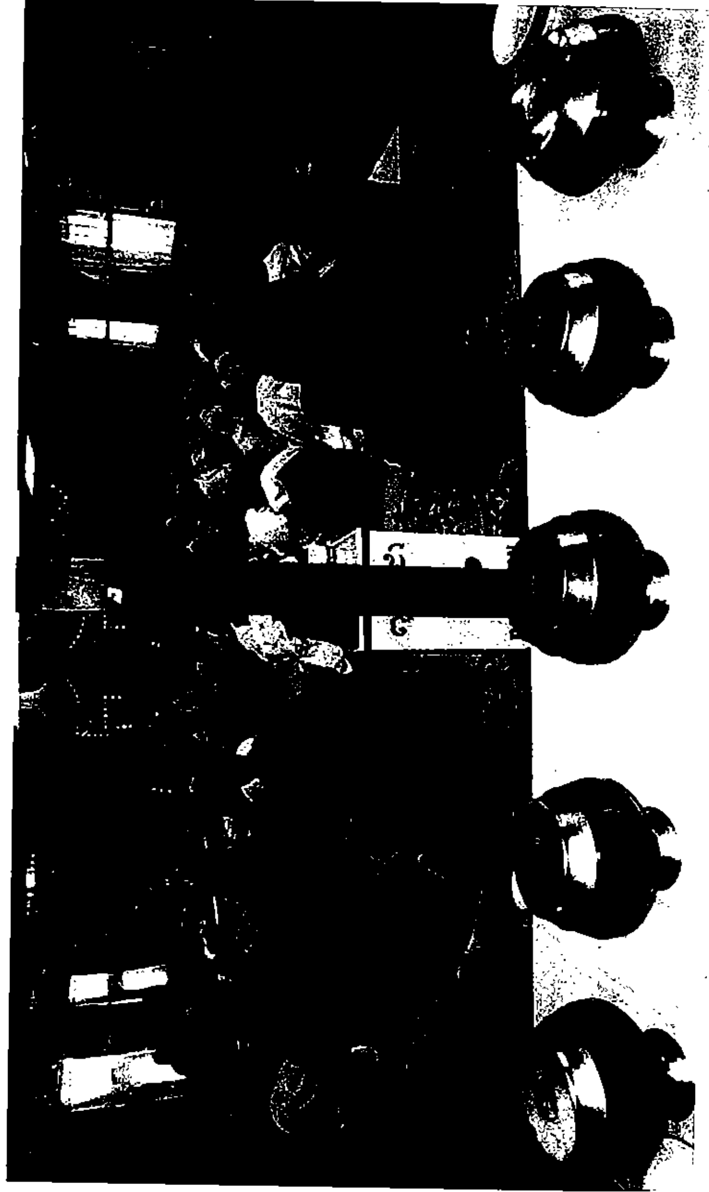

FIG. 9.1. Cambodian children and families at their Buddhist temple in Providence, Rhode Island.

FIG. 9.2. Portuguese children dressed as angels in the Holy Ghost day parade in Providence, Rhode Island.

FIG. 9.3. Dominican family celebrating with their national flag at the local Dominican festival in Providence, Rhode Island.

small, although diminishing, group of children of immigrants from Korea, and a very small number of others classified as African American, Native American, Pacific Islanders, and Asian.

Watsonville/Santa Cruz, California. Cooper and her team began studying a community program in Santa Cruz County in 1995 that serves nine schools by awarding scholarships to the local community college and offering tutoring and enrichment. The county schools reflected a geographic division by ethnicity and immigration: students in one elementary school in the "south county" agricultural town of Watsonville were classified as 93% Hispanic, 6% White, 5% Asian (mostly Japanese), and 2% African American. Of the 60% designated English Language Learners, almost all spoke Spanish. In an elementary school in the "north county" tourist and university town of Santa Cruz, students were classified as 63% White, 24% Hispanic, with small numbers of Asian, African American, and Filipino children. Among the 19% English Language Learners, most spoke Spanish and others spoke Japanese, Russian, Tagalog, and Portuguese (see Cooper, Domínguez, & Rosas, chapter 11, this volume).

Looking Across Sites at Local Meanings of Generic Ethnic-Racial Categories. Local meanings of Asian and Hispanic demonstrate how general categories can obscure local meanings. According to the U.S. census, in Providence, Rhode Island, Asian children were primarily Cambodian, and Hispanic children were primarily from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. In the Oakland, California, neighborhood, census data indicated that Asian children were primarily from Chinese families and Hispanic children were primarily of Mexican descent. In the Pico-Union site, Asian children were primarily children of Korean immigrants and Hispanic children were primarily from Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala. And in the Watsonville/Santa Cruz site, Asian children were primarily Japanese American and Hispanic children were primarily children of Mexican descent. These variations across sites suggest caution in generalizing from samples described with general categories, whether local or national.

ILLUSTRATIVE FINDINGS

As Individuals, How Do Children of Immigrants Draw on Their Families' National Origin and Ethnicity in Constructing Their Personal Identities at School?

In Providence, García Coll and her team interviewed first- and fourth-grade children of Dominican, Portuguese, and Cambodian immigrants as they chose identity labels, ranked their relative salience, and explained their

meanings (see Akiba, Szalacha, & García Coll, 2003, for details). Children were asked, "are you ____?" in response to a list that included labels for gender, role (such as student), "race" (such as Black), nationality (such as Cambodian), and pan-ethnic group (such as Asian). The most salient identity was assessed by the first label children chose to describe themselves. The meanings of children's identities were assessed by asking them, "why do you think you are ____?" for each label they chose.

Even primary-grade children chose multiple identity labels, with older children choosing more labels than younger, and children most often choosing labels for their ethnicity, gender, and family roles. On average, children in the sample chose seven labels: all children interviewed chose at least one ethnic label and a gender label, 77% also chose a label for their family role, 36% chose a racial label, and 26%, a religious label. Thus gender, ethnicity, and family role seemed to be the most central to their identities. Fourth graders chose more labels as applying to them than first graders, both for the sample as a whole (7.7 vs. 6.6 labels, respectively; $t = 5.1$, $p < .001$), and within the Portuguese, Dominican, and Cambodian samples ($t = 5.2, 4.1, 10.5$, respectively, all $ps < .001$). Among the ethnic labels chosen, similarity across groups was seen in children choosing nationality labels most often (and more frequent among older children), followed by cultural and language labels like Khmer and Spanish, then "hyphenated American" labels like Portuguese-American, and finally, pan-ethnic labels like Asian or Latino.

The salience of ethnicity for children's identities was greater for Cambodian and Dominican than for Portuguese children. Ethnicity was the most salient dimension of identity for Cambodian and Dominican children, but gender was the most salient for Portuguese children, who were considered "White" in Providence, $\chi^2(12, N = X) = 23.5$, $p < .05$. These findings indicate that "minority" children in the United States who have "racial features" that are easily marked by society internalize these features as more salient aspects of their identity.

Children readily explained personal meanings of their multiple identity labels, with older children expressing more complex meanings. Children who chose ethnic labels cited language ("I am Cambodian American because I go to school, I talk English; I come back home and talk in Cambodian"), their own or their parents' birthplace ("I am Portuguese because even if I was born here, my parents were born there"), and cultural identity and practices ("I am Khmer [a Cambodian ethnic group] because that is my closest culture. My family believes in it. There is a [Buddhist] temple for Khmer"; see Fig. 9.1). Explanations by older children reflected their more advanced cognitive skills. For example, a 6-year-old girl and a 9-year-old girl, both from Portuguese immigrant families, chose "Portuguese American." The 6-year-old explained, "because my mom wanted me to come to Amer-

ica," and the 9-year-old said, "I understand when people talk to me in Portuguese even when they don't know I understand them." Overall, the research team was surprised at how easily children chose and explained multiple identity labels. For example, after Carlos, a fourth-grade Dominican boy, chose "Boy," "Dominican," "Dominican-American," "Latino," and "White," he explained as follows: "I am a boy, because God made me one; I am Dominican because my parents were born in Dominican Republic; I am Dominican American because I was born here; I am Latino because that's what they call here people who speak Spanish, and I am White because my skin is light."

Children Negotiated Identities Across Cultural, Ethnic, and Racial Lines and Social Contexts. Children's explanations reflected both their family histories and their comparisons and social interactions with schools, families, and peers that reached across cultural, ethnic, and racial lines. One Dominican boy explained that he called himself "White" because even if he appeared mixed-race, his skin was lighter than that of many Dominicans. And the importance of social contexts and social negotiation in children's identities can be heard in the comments of Aisha, a fifth grader whose most salient identity was religious—being Muslim:

> I am happy to be Muslim. It is a good religion for me. We [her family] pray and we give money to the poor. . . . I like that this religion is unique, because a lot of people practice it and other people know who you are because only Muslims wear this headpiece. So they know who are Muslims. . . . When I was in kindergarten, they [other children] used to tease me and try to pull my headpiece off. It made me feel very angry and sad because they treated me bad because I am different. I do not think they should try to be mean because they are different. You should try to be friends . . . to learn about the difference.

In sum, the Providence study has revealed how even primary-grade children were actively constructing and negotiating multiple dimensions of their ethnic identities, including national, racial, and pan-ethnic meanings (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996), as revealed by their choices, explanations, and rankings. Age-related shifts in ethnic self-labeling and identity among immigrant youth have been reported, as have the links of identity to school engagement, achievement, and alienation (Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Ogbu, 2003; Phinney, 1996; Phinney & Rotheram, 1987). In studies of ethnic identity in San Diego and Miami (Rumbaut, in press), some immigrant adolescents shifted over time from national to pan-ethnic labels; García Coll's (this volume) longitudinal analyses will reveal whether such shifts occur during middle childhood.

In Their Social Relations and Everyday Interactions With Peers, How Do Children in Ethnically Diverse Schools Construct and Negotiate Identity Practices?

In their ethnographic research at the Oakland site, Thorne and her team (this volume) were especially interested in tracing children's social relations and interactions at school. The team observed children's identity practices—how they marked, muted, and negotiated the salience and meanings of identities related to nationality, language, racial ethnicity, social class, gender, and other dimensions of social life (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Thorne et al., 1997). Observations of children in classrooms, hallways, and especially the cafeteria and playground (where they had more latitude to create their own groups without adult intervention) revealed children's "borderwork"—interactions that marked and sustained social boundaries between groups set apart by social differences (Barth, 1969; Thorne, 1993). This was illustrated by Jessica, a sixth-grade girl, whose parents immigrated from China, as she explained how teams got chosen during physical education classes:

> And so, whenever there are two Black people, and they are choosing teams, usually it's the fat people, and the Chinese and Mexicans who would stand on the side, and the other people, like those who know how to play and the tall ones, are chosen. We, usually the four of us [her friendship group, who were widely known as "the Chinese girls"] don't play well, but the teacher says they need to choose some of the other people, and then the captains are all quiet and ask the teacher if they really have to, and the teacher says they have to, so it's like nobody wants to choose us.

Thus, Jessica juxtaposed demographic categories (Blacks, Chinese, and Mexicans) with distinctions based on body type and skill in sports.

When Does a Difference Make a Difference? This classic question, posed by Bateson (1972), focuses attention on which differences are named and made salient, in what contexts, and to what effect. In the Oakland school, where Thorne and her team (chapter 3, this volume) observed, about half the children were called "African American" or "Black." Teachers and children used these labels interchangeably, although one boy insisted he was "Black but also part Indian." The next largest group was "Chinese," a label other children and teachers used for children of parents from Hong Kong and China; ethnic Chinese from Vietnam, Cambodia, Korea; Mien from Laos; and "mixed Asian." The "Chinese" label was made salient by the presence of two Cantonese bilingual classes. In the combined fifth- and sixth-

grade class that Thorne observed, "Blacks" and "Chinese" were also the racial-ethnic terms most often named in children's intergroup relations. As students chose seats, they clustered into a predominantly African American area, with much interaction between girls and boys; a predominantly "Asian" area, with more gender separation; and two tables with children of Mexican, Yemeni, Filipino, and Cambodian descent, three "mixed," and two "White" girls. But on the playground, these same children divided first by gender and less by ethnic-racial categories. Boys' basketball and soccer games tended to be more ethnically mixed than girls' activities, such as climbing on bars, jumping rope, and the turn-taking game of rock–paper–scissors. An exception was a group of older girls and boys—Black, White, Filipina, and "mixed"—who routinely played touch football.

When Can Differences Be Renegotiated or Contested? Children varied in how much they could redefine their social labels. Two girls called "mixed" by themselves and other children—one with a Jewish father and a Chinese American mother, the other with an Egyptian father and a White mother—were close friends. They used their multiple identities to avoid fights (because "mixed" meant not on either side of ethnically charged conflicts), to avoid the slight stigma of being "White," and to build alliances ("I told the Black kids that I'm African American, because my dad is from Egypt, and that's in Africa"). Identities were signaled not only by labels but also by dress and speech. Yemeni Muslim girls, who wore headscarves, withstood teasing and being asked "Why do you wear that thing on your head?" by answering with the school discourse of multicultural tolerance ("it's my tradition").

Diverging Social Pathways in the Transition From Elementary to Middle School. Speaking a language other than English marked children as immigrants, and, if known to speak English, as deliberately setting themselves apart. Among "the Chinese girls," four were U.S.-born and bilingual and the fifth was a recent immigrant from Hong Kong not fully fluent in English. "The Chinese girls" maneuvered to sit and hang out together. They spoke Cantonese loudly and switched back and forth with English. When Eva Lam, a Cantonese-speaking fieldworker, asked them how they decided to speak Cantonese or English, Jessica replied, "We speak Cantonese when we want to talk about someone, and when it's more personal, and when we don't know some words in English." This led other children to worry they were being talked about and to make fun of them, imitating Cantonese talk with phrases like "ching chong." But the social pathways of "the Chinese girls" diverged the next fall when they entered the nearby middle school, known for racial divisions and fights among "the Blacks, the Asians, and the Mexicans." Janet, an immigrant from Hong Kong, spoke English with an accent and had neither the interest nor means to buy the "cool teen clothes" the others began to wear. She started hanging out with a group of girls who also had recently immigrated from Hong Kong, and, like Janet, were in an English as a Second Language (ESL) track. The other "Chinese girls" connected with several Vietnamese girls, stopped speaking Cantonese at school, and began to identify themselves as Asian as well as Chinese.

Thus, the ethnographic fieldwork of Thorne and her team revealed that categories reflecting immigration, ethnicity, and "race" had greater impact in children's social lives at school under four conditions: if they were coded in local classification systems; if children seen as in a labeled category made up more homogeneous groups; if markers such as appearance, language, dress, food, family lineage, and birthplace were visible and consistent; or if categories were named in children's intergroup conflicts. Thorne saw children responding to each of these markers in the classroom, cafeteria, and playground, but she also saw children resisting and reworking social labels other children gave them as they negotiated identities within relations at school.

How Are Demographic Categories Reflecting Immigration, Ethnicity, and "Race" Made More or Less Salient in the Institutional Practices of Schools?

In each of the four research sites, research teams observed how institutional practices of schools defined but sometimes obscured categories reflecting immigration, ethnicity, and race, so their meanings became more or less salient in children's daily lives and consequential for their developmental pathways. For example, we saw how official school records and sorting practices could highlight language, ethnicity, "race," age, gender, language, or disability and ignore other distinctions and how these divisions could have consequences for enacting school policies.

School Enrollment Forms and Home Language Surveys. We were struck by the variation in how demographic information was gathered and interpreted from school enrollment forms, both within and across school districts. For example, when parents enroll their children in school they are asked to fill out a survey of languages spoken at home. This information was used primarily to identify children for language testing and program placement. But in practice, it was sometimes equated with the school's ethnic profile. As one school secretary in California said, "[the home language survey] tells us how many English we have, how many Hispanic, how many Korean."

Consequences for children's pathways could be seen in the Los Angeles school, which had no bilingual classes in any of the indigenous languages

spoken by families at the school (Zapotec, K'anjobal), so Mayan children from Guatemala and southern Mexico were placed in bilingual Spanish–English classes. In their countries of origin, children and their parents more often summarized ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identities by labeling themselves by their hometowns, not by pan-ethnic labels like "Mayan" or more specific ethnic labels like "K'anjobal." Similarly, the primary identity for nonindigenous families might also be their hometown affiliations, with a secondary identity based on national origin. However, these identities were lost when they crossed the schoolhouse door, with all effectively becoming "Hispanic." More generally, schools' institutional use of pan-ethnic categories such as Hispanic or Asian highlighted certain distinctions while muting others that were more meaningful to some families.

Language Programs and Tracking of Immigrant Children Highlight Some Categories and Mute Others. School programs for children of immigrants use language categories to allocate resources and create contexts for social interactions. At the school in Los Angeles, language practices made the Spanish–Korean division salient and grouped the few "English Only" African Americans and Whites together. This crowded year-round school divided tracks based on where children lived so children on a given street could be on vacation at the same time (Orellana & Thorne, 1998). The track that became known as the "Korean" track facilitated more interethnic group contact than other tracks because it housed both Koreans and Latinos but also because most "English-Only" students, or speakers of other languages such as Khmer and Laotian, were placed there. Similarly, the ESL track in Providence brought together children from many different ethnic and racial backgrounds whose primary language was not English. They were grouped together because there were insufficient numbers to create a bilingual strand. Instead, the focus was on providing ESL supports in mixed-language-heritage classrooms, but this isolated them from English-dominant peers from whom they may have learned "mainstream" culture (and perhaps more English). The bilingual tracks in Providence and Los Angeles served students from Spanish-speaking homes; these appeared to offer validation for their home language and a sense of unity, in spite of differing national origins and immigration histories. In contrast, African American and European American children, who shared English as a home language, were minorities in the Los Angeles, Providence, and Oakland schools we observed. In this way, language labels muted the Black–White divide while reinforcing other practices and social groupings.

Schools' Visual Representations Also Marked or Muted Identities. In Providence, schools with the same language and ethnic groups varied dramatically in how these groups were marked in public displays. In some

schools, bulletin boards, murals, curricula, signs, and school rituals had little multicultural content. Other schools celebrated diversity but in stylized ways that did not convey their own students' identities (such as with murals of the world showing children with different-colored faces). Variation in school teaching practices could be seen or heard in classrooms across the hall from one another through artwork, books, and students' projects ("Children, can you tell me—in your native language—what is the word for . . . ?"). Bilingual tracks were the most consistent in using multicultural material, whereas ESL classes sometimes emphasized the reverse. In the Oakland school, some teachers assumed speakers of Mien were Chinese (although Mien are an ethnic minority of Laotian refugees displaced by the Vietnam War). Still, across the four sites, we also observed teachers who were well informed about their students and drew on their knowledge as a resource.

In sum, there was much variation in the demographic labels used by schools to group students. This variation depended in part on whether students were being grouped for instruction such as in bilingual, ESL, or "English Only" classrooms; to report to state or federal agencies using current demographic categories; or to represent the school in public displays to its community and to visitors. In general, few of these labels mapped onto the identities that were most meaningful to children and families. Still, institutional labels had implications for children's social groupings, their opportunities to learn particular languages (English or their heritage languages), and to acquire and appreciate particular cultural practices.

How Does Immigration Matter for Children's Identities and Community Resources in Building Pathways Through School?

How did immigration matter for children getting selected for a community college program? The community program with which Cooper and her team worked required all participants to be from low-income families, as indicated by their eligibility for free or reduced-price federal meal programs at their schools. Students wrote an essay application with these instructions: "Think of yourself in your ideal job. Describe your job. How has that changed your life? Explain how you reached your ideal/dream job. What were your obstacles? How did you overcome these obstacles? How will you help your family and community?" Students could write their essays in either English or Spanish. Cooper and her team analyzed the applications of the 116 applicants to the program from 1995 to 1997 (for details, see Denner, Cooper, Lopez, & Dunbar, in press). Most students in this sample (62%) wrote in English. Almost half described college-based career goals as higher executives or major professionals (46%); the most common were

doctor and lawyer. Students' goals did not differ by their country of birth, application essay language, or gender. Selection for the program took place during meetings among each school's principal, teachers, and the program director. The research team observed that some teachers nominated students doing well academically, whereas other teachers nominated students having difficulties who might benefit from extra support or recognition and teachers chose others because a friend or sibling was already in the program and felt these ties would support students' participation. Interviews with teachers and the program director indicated they took care not to consider the prestige of students' career goals. Rather, teachers described the importance of *corazón* (literally, "heart" in Spanish), the heartfelt emotion for helping their communities. More girls than boys were selected (82% of girls vs. 53% of boys), $\chi^2(1, N = 81) = 6.75$, $p < .01$. Interviews suggested that compared to boys, teachers saw girls as more well-behaved and less likely to disrupt program events. Students selected did not differ in country of birth from those not selected. Thus, children's access to the community program required them to express a career aspiration and their selection reflected their gender and socioeconomic status but not their immigration status.

How Did the Community Program Foster Immigrant Children's Reflecting on What It Means to Be American and on the Future? The research team observed as staff in the community program led discussions of "what is 'American'?" and asked a group of Mexican-descent 11- and 12-year-olds to write about "What is American? Are you American? Why or why not?" To many of these children of Mexican immigrants, an American was someone who was born in the United States, who spoke English well, and who had light skin and blonde hair. Like children's explanations of their identity labels in the Providence study, these children in California considered where someone was born, what language they spoke, and their physical features as they defined identities that did and did not apply to them. Children who did not call themselves American defined their identities based on their birthplace in Mexico, speaking Spanish, their physical features, their parents' birthplace in Mexico, and not being rich or racist. Children who called themselves American defined their identity in terms of their birthplace and citizenship and did not see Americans as rich or racist. However, only children who did not identify as American or who identified as both Mexican and American mentioned "land of opportunities." Thus, the research team saw that children chose labels reflecting immigration, ethnicity, and "race" to define not only their identities but also their views of the future. These patterns extend those of Matute-Bianchi (1986) in finding Mexican immigrant youth as more optimistic than second-generation youth about their future opportunities.

Teachers in a Community Partnership Learned About Children's Identities and Families' Cultural Practices as Resources. As part of the community partnership with Cooper and her research team, teachers at the "north county" elementary school built on the "funds of knowledge" approach (González et al., 1995) by sending home a survey that offered a more personal approach to demographics than official language surveys. The survey asked in English and Spanish, the most common home languages among families of that school, the following: "What languages does your family speak? What holidays does your family celebrate? How do you say to have a happy holiday in your language(s)?" When the research team tallied responses, the number of languages spoken was 21, far more than those reported from the state language survey designed to identify children with limited English proficiency. Families reported an astonishing diversity of family holidays; almost all holidays on the calendar of the National Council on Community and Justice (http://www.nccj.org) were celebrated by at least one family in the school. As one Hindu child wrote

> Ganesh Pooja is our favorite holiday. We wear new clothes. One elder from our community brings a big picture of Sri Ganesh our god. They decorate the picture with beautiful flowers, garlands, and colorful sarees [*sic*]. Some people bring delicious fruits and sweets to offer to god. We all sit in rows and chant prayers in honor of Sri Ganesh. At the end of the chanting we all stand up and offer flowers to the god. Then we share the prasad and have a vegetarian meal together. I like to play with my Oriya friends.

In sum, these activities of community-based partnerships between programs and schools were designed to support low-income, ethnic minority, and immigrant children building pathways through school to college. Cooper and her team found that when community programs and schools asked about and valued families' and children's cultural practices, including their home languages, then these dimensions of demographic diversity were not obstacles to children's success in school and in building pathways to college. With regard to children's emerging identities, these experiences were designed to support children succeeding in school without giving up their ties to family and cultural communities. The community defined success or "the good path of life" as both looking up to future aspirations and giving back to the next generations.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SCIENCE, POLICY, AND PRACTICE

Demographic data are useful for creating general portraits of communities, states, and nations as they change in immigration and in ethnic and racial composition. However, demographic categories can be supplemented with

analyses of the social processes at the individual level, in daily social interactions at school, in institutional school practices (enrollment forms, classroom sorting and placement, visual representations, and holiday observances), and in community partnerships among families, schools, and communities. Institutional labeling, sorting, and tracking shape children's identities and pathways in profound ways (Oakes, 1985). Official school categories can also shape how teachers and administrators think of their students. But children and their families are not pawns moved about by structural forces. They play active roles in creating meanings from these categories. They also participate with and sometimes in opposition to institutional practices in constructing and negotiating the meanings of ethnicity, immigration, and "race" for their identities. Our studies point to four key implications.

First, although many adults think of identity development as a hallmark of adolescence, the four studies revealed that the identities of children of immigrant and ethnic minority children are multifaceted, changing over time and across contexts and growing more complex during the elementary school years. So when we ask children and families to "check one box" or when teachers use generic demographic categories, we may miss important identities and connections from children's lives at school to their families and communities that can support their developmental pathways.

Second, adults may see childhood as a tranquil time of innocence and tolerance, but these studies revealed children's conflicts and negotiations about socially marked differences. Children used or sometimes muted divisions reflecting immigration, ethnicity, and "race" in their relations with one another and in reworking friendship networks over time. In other words, whether demographic categories reflecting immigration, ethnicity, and "race" mattered for children's lives at school depended on the social context, rather than being a single uniform experience, and children actively shaped the meanings of these social categories through negotiating with peers.

Third, these studies indicate that adults' greater understanding of how children construct their identities can enhance educational practices at school. We know that teachers helping children bridge their identities between family and school is not automatic; we observed some teachers talking about children as "Hispanic" or "Asian," with little understanding of the national or ethnic meanings so salient among their students (see also Collignon, Men, & Tan, 2001) and also critical for sending translated notices home to parents. These findings point to ways teachers can bridge practices and meanings from home to school. We need to know more about how these activities map onto emerging identities and school pathways (e.g., McIntyre, Rosebery, & Gonzalez, 2001). Examples of teachers' activities for helping children bridge home and school identities appear in Fig. 9.4, which shows the family "roots" drawn by a 9-year-old boy from Vietnam in the

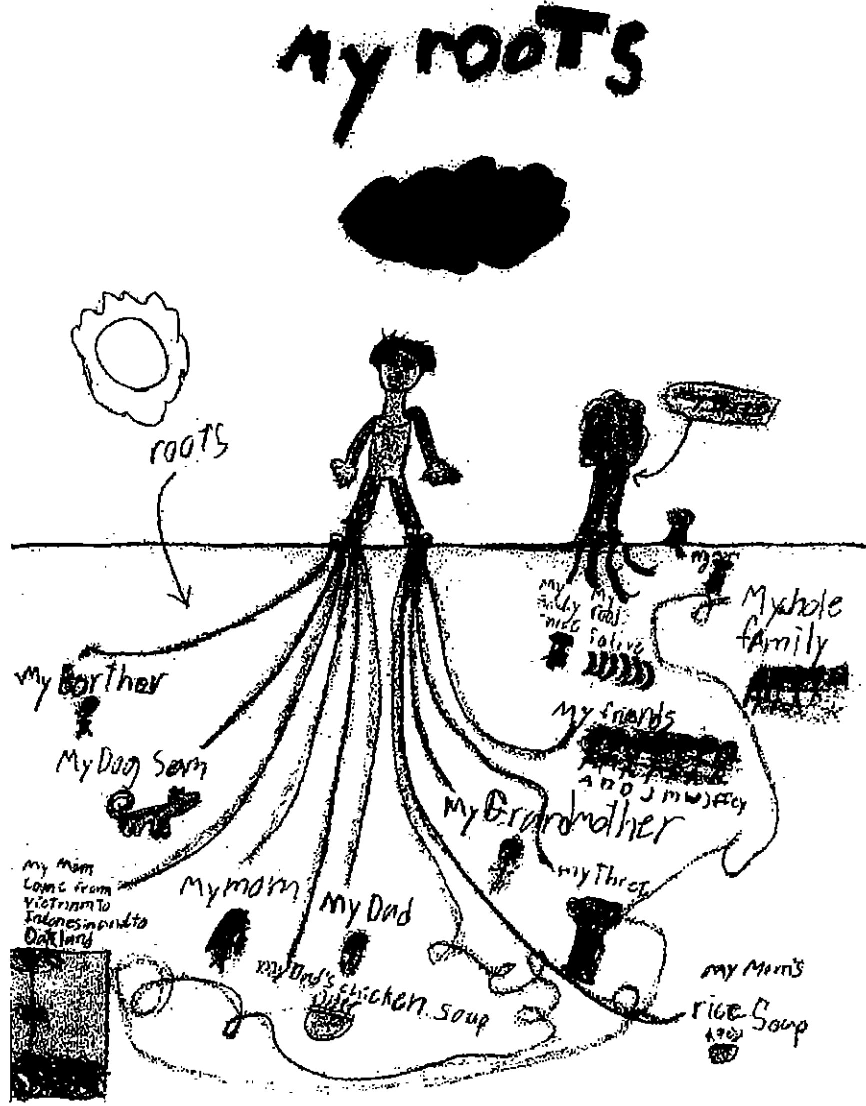

FIG. 9.4. "My roots" drawing made in an Oakland, California, school by a 9-year-old son of Vietnamese refugees. At bottom left he wrote, "My mom came from Vietnam to Indonesia and to Oakland."

Oakland school where Thorne observed, and in Fig. 9.5, which shows the worlds of an 11-year-old boy from Guatemala in the Los Angeles school where Orellana observed.

Fourth, although many adults see immigrant, ethnic minority, and low-income families as holding low aspirations for their children's education (Valencia & Black, 2002), recent studies document that immigrant parents hold high aspirations for their children's education and future careers (Azmitia, Cooper, Garcia, & Dunbar, 1996) and that these dreams for a better life have often motivated families' immigration. In this sense, a child's identity and academic pathway becomes an intergenerational family project.

Examining how immigration, ethnicity, and "race" are created and used by individuals in daily interactions of children in schools and communities informs our understanding of multicultural societies. Using demographic categories to describe samples and school populations can be useful, but assessing differences between labeled groups is only a first step in understanding the resources and challenges that underlie these differences and the conditions in which children from each group may find successful pathways through school to adult work and family roles.

One key issue that has been largely unexamined involves the emerging identities of children of undocumented immigrants. Researchers have just begun to map immigrant children's developmental pathways to the "green card" (once but no longer green) that identifies those carrying it as legal permanent residents of the United States (Green, 2003). Besides a national identity, the card brings eligibility for scholarships and other resources for pathways through school. A longitudinal study of children who succeeded in obtaining a green card found that this process took from 8 to 10 years, with children remaining active and persistent as they built networks and drew resources from parents, school counselors, community organizations, parents' employers, members of Congress, and government immigration authorities (D. Cooper & Villagomez, 2003). These findings demonstrate the interplay of individual children's agency, relationships, and institutional and community resources in constructing legal national identities and hold implications for research and policy for millions of undocumented children currently in the United States (Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2000).

The heightened sense of the limitations of existing research with diverse populations can be heard in the growing press for greater inclusiveness in science, policy, and educational practice. Although social divisions have been part of institutions and communities throughout history and have clear implications for children's developmental pathways, it is a welcome sign that researchers, policymakers, and educators increasingly address experiences of both majority and minority children. This more inclusive approach defines experiences of ethnically diverse children and families as

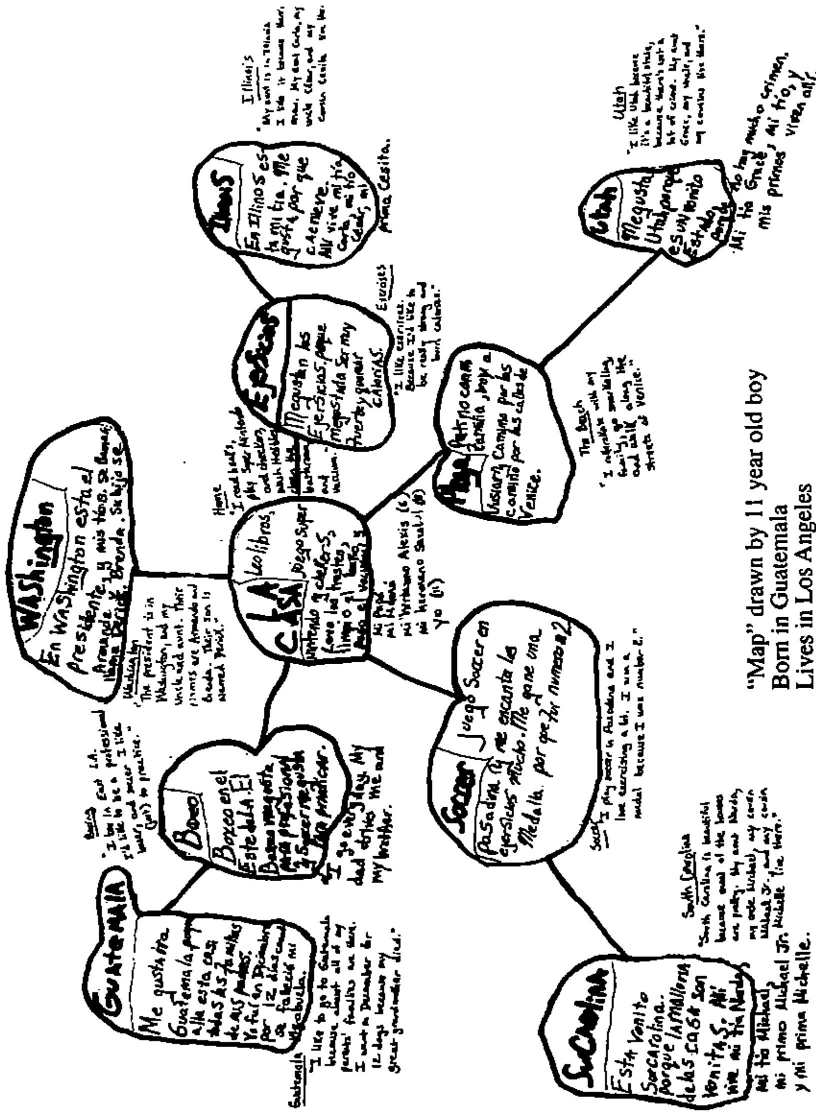

FIG. 9.5. Drawing of "my worlds" made in a Los Angeles school by an 11-year-old son of Guatemalan immigrants.

normative and marked by resources as well as challenges. The studies in this chapter show researchers, schools, and community programs learning about children's and families' histories, changing traditions, and future aspirations rather than seeing them only in terms of cultural traits or "at risk" stereotypes (Henze, 2001). These issues extend beyond demographic representation or external validity to consideration of the ethics of inclusion in research, policy, and educational practice in multicultural societies.

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CHAPTER

10

Children of Dominican, Portuguese, and Cambodian Immigrant Families: Academic Attitudes and Pathways During Middle Childhood

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One of every five Americans, more than 55 million strong, is a first- or second-generation immigrant (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). The "new" immigrants to the United States, the second largest flow of international migrants in the last century, present different profiles than did those who migrated from Europe. Many of these post–World War II immigrants, non-European and non-English-speaking, who come from developing nations in Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean (Rumbaut, 1997), are people of color who cannot assimilate easily into White, mainstream, American society (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Because this new wave of immigration was unparalleled both in its size and in its diversity (color, class, and cultural origins), there are profound implications for the study of immigration and its impact on developmental processes. As children of immigrants enter U.S. schools in unprecedented numbers, examining their experiences provides a unique opportunity to investigate adaptation in a new and different sociohistorical period.

Research on the psychosocial and academic orientation of children of immigrants has been conducted almost exclusively with adolescents. In general, these studies suggest that the adolescents are doing relatively well in spite of their families' relatively low status in the social stratification system of this country and their relative unfamiliarity with the school system. Youth from immigrant backgrounds are physically healthier, work harder and have higher achievement in school, and have more positive social attitudes than their peers (e.g., Fuligni, 1997; Hernandez & Charney, 1998; Kao &