"WHAT HAPPENS TO A DREAM…"IN THE LAND OF MILK & HONEY?:
UNDERSTANDING IMMIGRANT YOUTH RACIAL-ETHNIC IDENTITY &
ASPIRATIONS

By

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ABSTRACT

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Racialization, the aspirations of young people and discrimination have been at the heart of sociological investigation since the birth of sociology as a discipline in the United States. Since the election of Barak Obama as president of the United States, one critically important discussion that has emerged is the impact of this event on the aspirations of young people, especially the children of immigrants and young people of color. However, as researchers we can only understand this impact if we first understand critical aspects of the aspirations and goals of these groups of young people *before* this epic historical event.

Using the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) data this dissertation research investigates the racial-ethnic identity and aspirations of the children of immigrants in the United States. This research probes the relationships that exist between aspirations and racial/ethnic identity for youth as they move through adolescence into emerging adulthood. The overarching research questions are: (1) What relationships exist between identity and aspirations for the children of immigrants; (2) What types of aspirations exist among 1.5 and second generation immigrant youth; and (3) How do these youth integrate aspects of racialization and social position into their identity? The research described herein has two goals; (1) ascertain the types of aspirations that exist among immigrant youth; and (2) begin to understand the relationships that exist between racial-ethnic identity and aspirations for these youth.

This dissertation research is seen to contribute to our present understanding of immigrant youth of color, aspirations and identity in at least two ways. First it will facilitate an understanding of the way that identity, specifically racial-ethnic identity is integrated and used by youth to make decisions about their lives. Second, this study will illuminate how the aspirations of immigrant youth change over time and if these changes are related to changes in racial-ethnic identification and other social aspects of racial-ethnic identity.

DEDICATION

To my Great Grandmother, Rachael Hawthorne; my Grandmothers Rose Marie Roussell and Kimlyn Dubé; and my mother Brenda Joyce Fermin; your bodies could not make the journey along with me, yet your spirits never abandoned me to labor alone.

To my friend and colleague, Kim Perez, you were an example of how to find comfort in struggle and who gave all in an effort to bring diversity in knowledge, rather than solely in her person.

To all the TRIO advocates, workers and students that go above and beyond to demonstrate that the programs are relevant.

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For strength sufficient for the task; peace that passed all understanding; for keeping me in and through all things, I thank God.

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INTRODUCTION

Aspirations are the personal educational and occupational desires and goals that one has for their future. Although accomplishments are seemingly unheard of without prior goals, comparably, significantly more empirical work focuses on achievement outcomes than aspirations. For immigrant children and the children of immigrants, the bulk of this research has contemporarily focused on segmented assimilation; the adaptation and incorporation of these youth into multiple segments of the stratified socioeconomic structure of the U.S.

Much of the work that exists regarding aspirations has found that educational aspirations are high among adolescents from almost all backgrounds. This is one of the most consistent findings in the literature. In particular, young people who intend to pursue postsecondary education have ambitious, and potentially misguided, aspirations. However, research on aspirations has also uncovered that misguided or ill-planned aspirations are not the only constructs that influence the pursuit of or changes in

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aspirations. The present study, as well as previous empirical work, indicates that in many cases the influences that prove to bear significantly upon aspirations differ when the social positions of the young people who have these goals are different.

This dissertation uses a common structural milestone for young people, constructing and pursuing educational and occupational goals for their futures (i.e. aspirations), to expose the very real empirical impacts of race, particularly in its hegemonic application in the United States. The results of the analysis indicate that how immigrant adolescents and emerging adults understand race in society and their racial-ethnic identity act upon the logic they employ in creating and pursuing their aspirations. With data from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS), this research probed identity and aspirations among immigrant youth in the United States. The youth in the CILS sample are those who were born to immigrant parents, yet themselves came to the U.S. at a young age (1.5 generation) or were actually born in the U.S. (second generation). Since both groups are born to foreign parentage, the possession of large quantities of inherited human or social capital that may be relevant and useful in the U.S. context can likely be limited at best, and potentially non-existent at worst.

The socialization that young people receive from their families concerning the racial-ethnic group to which they identify is a significant part of their self-concept. For those young people who identify themselves with groups that are stigmatized or racialized negatively, this socialization has been found to be imperative in creating a positive self-concept along with pro-social aspirations (Ogbu, 1979; 2003; Wilson and Wilson, 1992; Wilson, 2010). Although this positive socialization is definitely a key

factor in success, what is still unclear is whether informing young people of the potential obstacles they will face ahead of time is helpful, or if this type of sharing is best retained for when a young person begins to experience difficulties. Thus, whether socialization should be anticipatory, and potentially discouraging, or experiential, and potentially too late to fortify, is debatable.

This is an interesting gap in the current literature, in which the present study places itself. A primary interest of this research was the type of aspirations immigrant youth would establish and pursue depending on their knowledge of these structural agendas and socio-political mechanisms. This is a significant contribution since much of the analysis that saturates the study of the consequences of racial-ethnic identities, racialization, or discrimination experiences among populations of immigrant youth focuses on outcomes (i.e. achievement) rather than desires or intentions (i.e. aspirations).

The central research question for this investigation is: *what is the relationship between racial/ethnic identity and aspirations for immigrant youth of color*. The answer(s) to this question will also illuminate the nature of racial-ethnic identity as more than merely an impact of factor to 'deal with' as one navigates the structural terrain. In particular, CILS is the optimal set of data for such an exploration because it includes both 1.5 and second generation immigrant youth. The purpose of this research is to explore how we can expand our conceptual and theoretical understanding of the ways that adolescent and young adult 1.5 and second generation immigrants incorporate their understandings of the racialized structures of the U.S. into the creation and pursuit of their aspirations.

In order to accomplish this purpose, the dissertation is organized into five main chapters, with separate sections for an introduction and concluding comments and implications. The first chapter describes the theoretical underpinnings of the project and provides context for the research concepts and model proposed in Chapter 2. The purpose of Chapter 1 is to provide a theoretical discussion that helps us understand the development of the study of aspirations among youth and emerging adults, including those who are 1.5 and second generation immigrants and the intended contributions of the present study.

Chapter 2 focuses on the key concepts for the research and presents the model for the study as it was initially proposed. It defines the concepts pivotal to understanding the theoretical genealogy of the present project and explains the relationships the present study sought to investigate. The first half of the dissertation ends with chapter 3, which delineates and describes the project's research questions, hypotheses and assumptions, and details the methods utilized in the project.

The second half of the dissertation begins with a description of the results in Chapter 4, focusing on the findings for the hypotheses and assumptions that were presented in Chapter 3. In Chapter 5, the first half of the dissertation is connected to the second half through an analysis of the project's results employing the theoretical and conceptual frameworks described in Chapters 1 and 2. Chapter 5 also reintroduces the original research model and two modified models resulting from the analysis of the results. Following Chapter 5, the Conclusion offers concluding remarks, including statements concerning the limitations and contributions of the project.

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter discusses the theoretical underpinnings that lay at the foundation of the present study. The intent of the chapter is to provide an analytical description of the various theoretical streams that contribute to the framing, assumptions, analysis and significance of the entire dissertation project. It expands on the scholarship referenced in the introduction and provides the background necessary to ascertain the contribution of the conceptual model presented in the introduction and described in detail in chapter 3. It also illuminates the scholarly importance of investigations that explore aspirations among adolescents and emerging adults, particularly for those of foreign parentage.

The present study contributes to the sociological study of race and ethnicity, particularly among immigrant youth, and aspirations. It is unique because its focus is on the manner in which racial-ethnic identification leads 1.5 and second generation youth to create and pursue aspirations. Much of the extant literature focuses on aspirations as related to typologies of identity, or as related to health or behavioral issues. Whereas,

the study at hand examines the direct relationship between aspirations and racial-ethnic identification, without employing identity as a precursor to depression, drug use, early onset or risky sexual behavior, or a myriad of other health and behavioral issues.

Aspirations: The Identities Connection

The Social Sciences has long asserted that ethnic identity is crucial to the self-concept and social psychological functioning of ethnic group members (e.g. Gurin and Epps, 1975; Maldonado, 1975). Critical issues include the degree and quality of involvement that is maintained with one's own culture and heritage; ways of responding to and dealing with the dominant group's often disparaging views of their group; and the impact of these factors on psychological well-being and social behaviors. Contemporary interest in the issue of ethnic identity was brought to the fore by the projections of changing demographics, including differential birthrates and increasing numbers of immigrants and refugees throughout the world which began to be noted in the early 1990s.

The formation of ethnic identity may be thought of as a process similar to ego identity formation that takes place over time, as people explore and make decisions about the role of ethnicity in their lives (Maldanado, 1975; Phinney, 1990; Nagel, 1994; Haller and Landolt, 2005; French et al., 2006; Quintana et al., 2006; Quintana, 2007). Both the social identity and the acculturation frameworks acknowledge that ethnic identity is dynamic, changing over time and context. In a similar vein, several of the definitions include the idea that ethnic identity is achieved through an active process of decision making and self-evaluation (Caltabiano, 1984; Hogget al, 1987; Simic, 1987;

Phinney, 1990; Portes and MacLeod, 1996; Quintana et al., 2006; Quintana, 2007;).

Self-identification (also called self-definition or self-labeling) refers to the ethnic label that one uses for oneself (Aboud, 1987; Rumbaut, 1994; Hintlin, 2006). Research with children has been concerned largely with the extent to which children "correctly" label themselves—that is, whether the label they choose corresponds to the ethnicity of their parents (Aboud, 1987; Nagel, 1994; Hintlin, 2006). A related issue has been whether "incorrect" labeling is associated with a poor self-concept (Cross, 1978; Buriel, 1987). Beyond childhood, the concerns are different. Adolescents and adults can be assumed to know their ethnicity; the issue is thus one of choosing what label to use for oneself. Although this appears to be a simple issue, it is in fact quite complex, inasmuch as one's ethnicity, as determined by descent (parental background), may differ from how one sees oneself ethnically (Buriel, 1987; Alba, 1990; Waters, 1990; 1999; Portes and MacLeod, 1996; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001).

In countries first settled predominantly by Europeans, the use of an ethnic label, for example, Polish American is for the most part optional for people of European descent. Many Whites under these circumstances use no ethnic label and may in fact be unable to identify their country of origin (Singh, 1977; Alba, 1990; Waters, 1990). However, among those who are racially distinct, by features or skin color, or whose culture (language, dress, customs, etc.) clearly distinguishes them from the dominant group, self-identification is at least partly imposed. Calling oneself black or Asian American is less self-categorization than recognition of imposed distinctions, and the issue is less whether to use an ethnic label than which ethnic label to adopt. For example, people whose parents or grandparents came from Mexico can call themselves

Mexican American, Hispanic, Latino, or Chicano (among others), each of which has a different connotation (Buriel, 1987).

For decades, scholars have noted and tried to correct inconsistencies in how race, ethnicity, racial identity, and ethnic identity have been used in social science research and theory (e.g., Helms and Talleyrand, 1997). Much of the inconsistency regarding definitions of race and ethnicity stems from the multiple influences on the definitions. There are, of course, explicit as well as implicit definitions of race and ethnicity (e.g., Phinney, 1996). Like other terms in lay and technical language, these terms evolve and change in the context of their use. Explicit definitions, akin to dictionary definitions, need to be updated from time to time to reflect the way the terms have evolved in common usage. Some have been troubled by the tendency for race and ethnicity to be used interchangeably (Helms and Talleyrand, 1997), but some of these practices may reflect the natural evolution of language in which popular and common usage of terms eventually become reflected in official definitions.

A clear trend in the uses of these terms has been an evolution from definitions that are restricted to these terms' demographic denotations to definitions that include socially constructed connotations of these terms. This evolution first occurred for race and more recently for ethnicity. The uses and definitions of race have evolved from being based on exclusively biological and genetic dimensions to being reflective of socially constructed meanings (Helms and Talleyrand, 1997). More important, the use of race has moved from its strictly demographic origin and now reflects sociological processes, namely, the social distance between groups (Quintana, 1998; Smedley and Smedley, 2005). Social distance among sociocultural groups can be objectively

measured by indexing sociological features such as rates of intermarriage, level of segregation, and interracial attitudes (Gans, 1997; 2007; Waters, 1999). Similarly, ethnicity has also been defined historically in demographic terms (e.g., common language, national origin, culture), but it also has some socially constructed meanings as well.

Developmental social psychologists (e.g., Phinney, 1996; Quintana et al., 2006) and anthropologists (e.g., Roosens, 1989) do not restrict ethnicity to its demographic denotations but acknowledge the socially constructed connotations of the term. An obvious third alternative, proposed by Cross and Cross (2007), to these two classification strategies is to use a hybrid approach: classifying groups as racial-ethnic. This approach would acknowledge that the social distance and treatment of Latinos or Hispanics is based on racial as well as ethnic features. Similarly, there are important ethnic features to African Americans' racial identity, and there are a growing number of calls to theorize and investigate the ethnic foundation to African Americans' identity (see Cokley, 2005). Cross and Cross (2007) have taken this hybrid approach a step further and suggested that sociocultural identities be referred to as racial-ethnic-cultural identities because the phenomenological experience of minority populations does not support the artificial differentiation of race, ethnicity, or culture as separate identities.

Minority status, although most saliently based on racial-ethnic identification or labeling in the United States, is a mechanism of the social structure that many immigrant families accurately comprehend as complex and cavernous (Ogbu, 1998; Gans, 2007; Alba, 1990; Gans, Glazer, Gusfield, and Jencks, 1979; Nagel, 1994; Waters, 1990). Foreign-parentage young people, although often operating as racial-

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ethnic minorities, are often ill-socialized and ill-insulated compared to domestic racial-ethnic minorities to initially cope with this highly stratified aspect of U.S. society. As such, their acceptance (whether reluctant or ready) of this social position can often be understood using a framework illustrated by the work of Goffman (1959) as a "spoiled identity."

Spoiled identities contain discredited elements of the self-concept that the individual is encouraged to conceal or "manage." Failure to do so often exacts social costs. Identities embody the answer to the question: "Who am I?" A substantial core of the content of the self-concept involves identities – the meanings that individuals attach to the self. In many respects, identity is the most "public" feature of the self-concept because it typically describes one's place or membership in structural arrangements and social organization (Gans, 2007). However, there may be a cost to the public nature of identities. A spoiled identity is one that is socially undesirable. As an aspect of one's self-concept it is stigmatized (Goffman, 1959), and can negatively impact the question that embodies aspirations: "Who will I become?"

Aspirations: The Self-Concept Connection

As the goals that one sets for future educational or occupational endeavors, aspirations are interwoven ideas that emerge out of one's self-concept (Schneider and Stevenson, 2000; Coleman, 1988, 1990; Hogg et al., 1987). Self-concept, as a classical sociological idea, connects social contexts and personal functioning (Goffman, 1959; Mead, 1967). Thus, for this research it is tremendously useful since its composition includes identity and navigation of social structure.

An understanding of the function of ambition and status attainment in aspirations is most effectively garnered through an integrated comprehension of aspirations and one's self-concept. Presently, sociologists conceptualize self-concept as "composed of various identities, attitudes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences, along with their evaluative and affective components (e.g., self-efficacy, self-esteem), in terms of which individuals define themselves" (Gecas and Burke, 1995; p. 42). These processes involve reflexivity and self-awareness; that is, a level of consciousness or awareness about one's self that emerges from the distinctly human capacity to be an object and a subject to one's self.

This post-modern re-conceptualization absorbs the highly *social* nature of the self-concept as developed by sociologists like Mead (1934) and furthered by others like Gans (1979; 2007). In the contemporary conceptualization of self-concept, other people have substantial influence on the form, content, consequences, and revelation of the self-concept. Building off the earlier sociological traditions of Marx, Cooley, and Mead, social stratification theory has posited the links between features of social structure (e.g., education, income, occupation, and work conditions) and self-concept. For scholars interested in migration and immigration, the focus across these structural mechanisms has been the mode(s) of incorporation.

How young people fare as they navigate the social structure of the United States is inextricably dependent upon the manner in which a group is incorporated into their society of settlement (Nee and Sanders, 2001; Portes and Zhou, 1993). The group variations in adaptations are stark and uncomfortable to admit. The research in this arena has undeniably demonstrated that contemporarily immigrant children and the

children of immigrants have significant challenges facing them as they seek to adapt to U.S. society (Portes and Zhou, 1992; 1993; Portes, 1995; Portes and Rumbaut, 2006; Kasinitz, 2008).

Contrary to an all-inclusive characterization of the 'mainstream', it is evident that what immigrants aspire to for their children, if not for themselves, is the level of occupational status and income that make possible the enviable lifestyles of the mostly white upper and upper-middle class. The promise of American society, a significant pull factor for so many foreigners, lies in the seemingly unrestricted access it provides to well-remunerated professional and entrepreneurial careers and the affluent lifestyles perceived to be associated with them.

At the same time, it is obvious that not everyone gains access to these positions and that, at the opposite end of society, there is a very unenviable scenario. This is the scenario confronted by many minority populations trapped in the U.S. underclass and described, in poignant detail, in the urban inequality and poverty literature. Immigrant families navigate the terrain between these two opposite extremes, seeking to steer their young people in the more appealing direction of the narrative mainstream.

The most immediate and relevant structural mechanism to present a navigational barrier in the lives of immigrant youth is education (Kroneberg, 2008). Examining attainment, achievement and aspirations within an educational context, researchers have illuminated that the main forces at play as immigrant youth traverse the structural terrain of the United States. Specifically, three major factors have been identified: the human capital that immigrant parents bring with them, the social context in which they are received in America, and the composition of the immigrant family (Portes and Zhou,

1992; Zhou and Bankston, 1998; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; 2006; Levitt and Waters, 2002; Kasnitz, Mollenkopf and Waters, 2002; Waters, Ueda and Marrow, 2007; Kasnitz, Mollenknopf, Waters and Holdaway, 2008).

Human capital, operationally identified with formal education and occupational skills, translates into competitiveness in the host labor market and the potential for achieving desirable positions in the American hierarchies of status and wealth. However, the transformation of this potential into reality depends on the context into which immigrants are incorporated. Several basic contextual factors are helpful: receptive or at least neutral reception by government authorities; a sympathetic or at least not hostile reception by the native population; and the existence of social networks with well-established co-ethnics pave the ground for putting to use whatever credentials and skills have been brought from abroad. Conversely, a hostile reception by authorities and the public, and a weak or non-existent co-ethnic community will present handicaps for immigrants. These types of contexts make it difficult for immigrants and their families to translate their human capital into fitting occupations or to acquire new occupational skills. The mode of incorporation is the concept used in the literature to refer to these tripartite (government/society/community) differences in the contexts that receive newcomers (Kasnitz, et al., 2008; Waters, Ueda, and Marrow, 2007; Portes and Rumbaut, 2006; 2001; Levitt and Waters, 2002; Kasnitz et al., 2004; Hirschman, 2001).

Discussions within the literature abound regarding the educational, occupational and economic outcomes of the children of immigrants in the United States. Most conclude that if these outcomes for immigrant youth appear similar to their domestic counterparts, that the same factors that shape non-immigrant minority youth life

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chances also shape those of immigrant youth (Fernandez-Kelly, 2008; Kasinitz, 2008; Kasinitz et al., 2008; Kroneberg, 2008; Zhou et al., 2008; Wallace, 2008; Yoo and Lee, 2008). This is particularly the case in the social sciences where emphasis on racial-ethnic structures and hierarchies are privileged when attempting to explain and understand the derivation of post-1965 immigrant cohorts from the immigrant cohorts in earlier historical epochs of the United States.

Aspirations: The Status Attainment Connection

Research has established that many young people use their ambitions like a compass to help chart a life course and to provide direction for spending their time and energy (Schneider and Stevenson, 2000; Mau and Bikos, 2000; Mau, 1995). From these perspectives when one employs the logic of rational-choice (see for example, Coleman and Fararo, 1992), apparent pathways to underachievement *and* success, among 1.5 and second generation immigrant youth, can be easily understood. When evaluations of effort and return are applied to the life chances and opportunity structures available for immigrant youth of color, decisions to pursue ambitious future plans or to abandon them, as is an aspect of the downward assimilation described by segmented assimilation, become clearer.

For example, Konczal and Haller (2008) found that one factor that successful immigrant youth were able to socially navigate were instances of clearly communicated and observed perceptions about certain failure (see also, Portes and Fernandez-Kely, 2008; Grivjalva, 2010; Zhou, Lee, Vallejo, Tafoya-Estrada and Xiong, 2008). This means that most often youth who were able to be successful (i.e. accomplishing their

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aspirations), even when identifying with racial-ethnic groups that typically would be predicted to "achieve" downward social mobility, were those youth who were able to constructively deal with the reality that "most folks like me don't make it" (Fernandez-Kelly, 2008; Kasinitz, 2008; Konzcal and Haller, 2008; Zhou et al., 2008; Portes and Fernandez-Kelly, 2008; Wallace, 2008; Yoo and Lee, 2008). In fact, the most successful of these groups had to be able to overcome experiences with group members that they were close to failing to achieve upward social mobility (MacLeod, 1995; Pattillo-McCoy, 1999; Wallace, 2008; Yoo and Lee, 2008; Konzcal and Haller, 2008; Zhou et al., 2008; Portes and Fernandez-Kelly, 2008)). Overcoming these notions of failure enabled some youth of color, both of foreign parentage and not, to escape the corresponding loss of hope and sense of disempowerment that has sealed the anticipated outcome for their counterparts (Konczal and Haller, 2008; Grijalva, 2010; Portes and Fernandez-Kelly, 2008; Zhou et al., 2008).

Overcoming notions of failure sometimes means tempering their goals, so that ambitions were adjusted in order to be achieved (Schneider and Stevenson, 1999; Silva, 2001; Skorikov, 2007; Madarasova et al., 2010). Hence, even when forming goals, in a cost-benefit calculation, individuals' recognition of the long odds they face in overcoming barriers may undermine their ambitions, whether initially or eventually. This has potentially devastating consequences for the ultimate life outcomes one experiences, since it can inhibit the goals one sets at the onset. Moreover, it could also work as a feedback mechanism where lowered goals lead to lowered expectations and increased engagement in at risk behaviors. Ambitions can decrease engagement in these types of behaviors, simultaneously increasing the chances that adolescents will

take school seriously, gain admission to the college of their choice, and view their

success as a socially self-created product of hard work (Zhou et al., 2008; Schneider

and Stevenson, 2000; Mau and Bikos, 2000; Mau1995; MacCleod, 1995). This is

particularly important since ambitions developed during adolescence also have life-long

significance; they influence career choices and future earnings (Schneider and

Stevenson, 2000; Mau and Bikos, 2000; Mau, 1995; MacCleod, 1995).

Status attainment research has consistently shown that educational expectations

are among the most important predictors of eventual socioeconomic attainment (Sewell,

Haller, and Portes, 1969; Duncan, Featherman and Duncan, 1972; Haller and Portes,

1973; Sewell and Hauser, 1975, 1980). Within the status attainment paradigm, there

are two views of the power of expectations. One view holds that expectations are

essentially achievement ambitions, and are therefore a psychological resource that

individuals draw upon to decide upon further schooling (Sewell and Shah, 1967, 1968;

Davies and Kandel, 1981; Campbell, 1983; Caplan, Choy and Whitmore, 1991).

Another perspective argues that expectations are realistic calculations of the prospects

for future education (Alexander and Cook, 1979; Jencks, Crouse and Mueser, 1983).

These views are not mutually exclusive, and it is likely that both help to explain why

expectations are such strong influences on subsequent outcomes. Decades of research

demonstrate that one of the most important early predictors of social mobility is how

much schooling an adolescent *expects* to obtain (Hagy and Staneic, 2002; Cabrera and

LaNasa, 2000; Schneider and Stevenson, 2000; Adelman, 1999; Cameron and

Heckman, 1999; Bowen and Bok, 1998). As such, it is rare that a young person who

does not aspire to an ambitious level of educational or occupation achievement will actually be successful at attaining that level of status.

Most often understanding status attainment immediately leads one to interrogate the outcome of achievement. Attainment, however, is rarely present a priori implicit and/or explicit aspirations. As an outcome in and of itself, aspirations are formed through a complex interplay of self-concept and social position (Gottfredson, 1981; Rosenberg, 1981; Davies and Kandel, 1981; Hogg et al., 1987; Rumbaut, 1994; Fernandez-Kelly and Schauffler, 1994; Awad, 2007; Fernandez-Kelly, 2008). These elements cognitively coalesce as a young person engages as an agent in the process of making decisions – navigation of social structures.

The existing literature indicates that adolescents' aspirations are among the most useful predictors of eventual choices and achievements in adulthood (Schoon and Parsons, 2002; Trice and McClellan, 1993). Traditional theories of development proposed that educational and career aspirations develop in specific stages through childhood and adolescence. For example, Ginzberg (1952) assumed that in early adolescents, from 11 to 14 years of age, young people had tentative choices based on their interests, but with little attention to realistic constraints. Super (1990) and Ginzberg further proposed that from late adolescence through emerging adulthood, starting at 14 until 24 years old, youth are in the exploration stage with a progressive narrowing of career options from identifying tentative options to making final decisions regarding career, and consequently educational, goals.

L. S. Gottfredson's (1981, 2002) theory asserts that after age 14 students begin to adjust their career aspirations to factors of the personal self and compromise their

aspirations according to more realistic factors. In previous stages, students would base their aspirations on factors such as perceived gender, prestige, and power of vocations. Although all of these theories make suggestions about the influence of the environment, they propose a rather circumscribed sequence of stages in adolescent career development which are largely determined by chronological age.

Conversely, concepts of development based on a developmental-contextual approach have stressed that context is an essential component of career development. According to this approach, the development of educational and career aspirations can only be understood as a dynamic interaction of person and context (Vondracek, 2001; Vondracek, Lerner, and Schulenberg, 1983, 1986). This is an important theoretical advancement compared to classic stage models of development. Empirical studies showed that the specific demands of the environment had a profound influence on timing and content of adolescent aspiration development that went beyond influence of chronological age (Reitzle, Vondracek, and Silbereisen, 1998; Schmitt-Rodermund and Silbereisen, 1998; Vondracek, Silbereisen, Reitzle, and Wiesner, 1999; Heckhausen and Tomasik, 2002).

Since the development of aspirations is sensitive to context and not solely chronological maturity, two aspects of the literature become important: 1) how immigrants, including immigrant youth are incorporated and adapt to their country of settlement; and 2) how young people integrate an apprehension of their social milleux in the creation of their aspirations is empirically critical. Most adolescents in the U.S. have high ambitions, but unclear or misguided life plans for reaching them (Schneider and Stevenson, 2000). This is particularly true of immigrant youth (Fernandez-Kelly and

Schauffler, 1994; Fernandez-Kelly, 2008). Likewise, the parents of these adolescents have similarly high aspirations for their children, and oftentimes are no more knowledgeable than their progeny regarding how to appropriately pursue their goals. Most often, neither young people, nor their parents, possess sufficient and accurate knowledge of connections between education, credentials and future work opportunities in the United States.

For 1.5 and second generation adolescents, the disappointment of aspirations that are too ambitious are exacerbated by two social-psychological factors. The first of these factors is that parental aspirations are many times amplified as families seek to be successful, proving both that they belong in their new location and that their decision to leave their native land was wise (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; 2006; Waters , Ueda, and Marrow, 2007; Waters, 1999; Kasnitz et al., 2007). The second of these factors is that immigrant families' knowledge and understanding of the educational and occupational structure that their children are navigating is frequently limited or inaccurate.

These qualities can leave the familial mechanism of socialization and predisposition for immigrant youth with ambitious educational or occupational aspirations lacking. As such, the study of foundational aspects of aspirations for immigrant youth is both theoretically interesting and empirically underestimated. It is particularly critical to explore these areas for 1.5 and second generation youth of color as they are often an enigma lumped with native U.S. populations of color when they flounder and become amalgamated with white populations in the U.S. when successful.

When we consider the task of evaluating success, particularly for the progeny of immigrants of color post-1965, we must consider the racial-ethnic dynamic of poverty,

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socioeconomic mobility and societal incorporation (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997; Alba and Nee, 1997; Dewind and Kasinitz, 1997; Nee and Sanders, 2001; Kasinitz et al., 2002; Kasinitz, 2008; Zhou et al., 2008). Many immigrant groups of color witness their social and economic capitals diminish in value upon emigration from their homelands to the United States (Zhou and Bankston, 1994; Esser, 2004; Fernandez-Kelly, 2008; Kroneberg, 2008; Nee and Sanders, 2001; Rumbaut, 2008). Thus, the potency of their human capital becomes all the more important in the journey of incorporation and social mobility.

One thing that must be noted in these processes is that the forces at work in the journey away from poverty are not the same as those involved in the transmission of status from one generation to the next among people who occupy different class positions in the United States (Fernandez-Kelly and Schauffler, 1994; Alba and Nee, 1997; Kasinitz, 2002; Esser, 2004; Fernandez-Kelly, 2008; Kasinitz, 2008). Minority youth, from immigrant and non-immigrant families alike, are more often faced with deficient schools and a lack of access to adequate employment. Within this context they are asked to navigate the complex obstacle course toward social ascent. This presents a myriad of mental, emotional and even physical challenges that are inconceivable among those more privileged. (Konczal and Haller, 2008; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Kasnitz, Mollenkopf and Waters, 2004; Portes and Rumbaut, 2004).

The perception of barriers (real or imagined) enters into actors' calculations about where, when, how and perhaps even whether to apply effort to achieve the future endeavors of their choice (Goffman, 1959, Coleman and Fararo, 1992; Konczal and Haller, 2008; Zhou et al., 2008). This means that the perception of barriers influences

the decision process that creates aspirations and later evaluates their feasibility, leading to their maintenance. As such, it is important to understand what impact the social aspects of racial-ethnic minority status (e.g. discrimination, racialization) have on racial-ethnic identity and future expectations and goals (Konczal and Haller, 2008; Kasnitz, 2008; Waters , Ueda, and Marrow, 2007). Moore and Tumin (1949) observed that knowledge of social factors (i.e. prejudice, discrimination, racial hierarchies, etc.) and ignorance of these social factors should not be viewed as mutually exclusive categories, but rather as polar antipodes on a continuum. Thus, we should be sure to investigate the self-acknowledged presence of such factors separately from understandings of their existence and operations. Explicitly, the awareness of racial-ethnic inequalities and/or racialization should be understood as separate from experiences with discrimination.

These notes, nuances and cautions underscore the need to examine the aspirations of immigrant youth with a fresh emphasis on their agency. This added analysis should attend to the incorporation of social knowledge into the navigational schemas of these young people. Although not nearly as extensive as interest would suppose, without the extant empirical work in this arena, we would be at a loss to investigate the phenomena that impact aspirations this closely. Hence, the present study is timely in nature and will contribute to the validity of our understandings as we extend the frontiers of our theoretical apprehension and clarify our conceptual acumen.

Through this study we can begin to explore the realities of racialized structures and group identity in an environment where the ability to provide context-relevant, race specific socialization is minimized. The process of racial-ethnic socialization via parents and/or other caregivers is one that extant research indicates is correlated with the ability

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of young minorities in the U.S. to overcome the stigmas of racialized structures and identities. Anticipatory socialization in adolescence is an important precursor for successful development across the life-span and is closely related to adolescent adjustment and well-being (Skorikov, 2007); particularly as it concerns educational and occupation aspirations (Super, 1990). During adolescence, developing a vocational identity is a central developmental task (Erikson, 1968; MacLeod, 1995; Schneider and Stevenson, 1999; Beal and Crockett, 2010). One's vocational identity or occupational self-concept is typically reflected in a person's expressed educational and career aspirations (Super, 1990; Beal and Crockett, 2010). Aspirations refer to an individual's expressed educational and occupational goals or intentions and also include motivational components which are not present in mere interests (Silvia, 2001).

In the exceedingly stratified context of the United States, two important factors suggested to affect the ability to successfully achieve aspirations (i.e. achievement or status attainment) are race and socioeconomic status (SES) (Mau and Bikos, 2000; Brown, 2000; Fouad and Brown, 2000; Turner and Lapan, 2003). Both factors, as measures of social position, are significantly related to aspirations and goal striving. Minority group designation in the U.S. context is associated with stigmatized and undesirable social positions that are generally excluded and impoverished.

Designations of various social positions have been argued to affect the nature and quality of aspirations (Kleiner and Parker, 1963), and to affect the chances of achieving goals (Parker and Kleiner, 1966). Individuals with higher SES have access to resources (education, money, social networks, transportation, credit, technology) that make goal attainment less challenging; as opposed to individuals with lower SES, that

lack these and other resources (Howell, Frese and Sollie, 1984; Mau, 1995; Wilson and Wilson, 1992). The same is argued to be true for race-ethnicity; in general blacks, Latinos and immigrant populations have more limited resources than do whites, thus their ability to achieve goals is harder than for whites (Mau, 1995; Wilson and Wilson, 1992; Farrell and Pollard, 1987).

Research suggests that among immigrant children and the children of immigrants there is much socioeconomic diversity and the pathways to social mobility will likely not be a straight line or unidirectional (Portes and Zhou, 1993). This perspective, known as the Theory of Segmented Assimilation, traces the potentiality of divergent adaptation of immigrant children in the post-1965 wave to: (1) the nature of reception by U.S. society, (2) access to social capital through ethnic communities and (3) exposure to oppositional cultures of marginalized domestic minorities (Rumbaut, 2008). Retaining much of the outline of the traditional immigrant incorporation framework of assimilation, this perspective portends that the consequences of assimilation have not entirely reversed, yet are in no way a straight line toward the U.S. middle class.

The popular image of the United States as a "nation of immigrants" is deeply etched in American consciousness as the U.S. narrative (Fuchs, 1990; Thernstrom, 1980). This image has a corollary creed that immigrants and their descendants should have the same socioeconomic prospects as natives. Although these beliefs were not universally adhered to, especially in the treatment of racial minorities, the basic ideology has served to legitimate the gradual social and economic absorption of successive waves of immigrants over the last 200 years (Handlin, 1973).The standard model of immigrant progress is generally framed as an intergenerational process that leads

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consistently to an upwardly mobile position within the middle class of the U.S. (Gordon, 1964; Lieberson, 1980, Esser, 2004; Portes and Rumbaut, 2006).

Segmented assimilation is an expansion of the classic concept of assimilation. Early definitions of assimilation emphasized the cultural and social dimensions of immigrants adapting and fitting into American culture and society. Park and Burgess (1921) referred to incorporation into a 'common cultural life,' yet, contemporary assimilation analyses are more likely to focus on educational and economic outcomes as the most important and measurable considerations. As those close to segmented assimilation describe, the process of adaptation has become segmented so that the question is now into what sector of U.S. society will a particular immigrant group assimilate (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Rumbaut, 1994; Portes et al., 2005; Fernandez-Kelly and Schauffler, 2008; Waters et al., 2010).

Rather than the relatively uniform stream of upward mobility traditionally depicted by assimilation theories, Portes and Zhou (1993), along with their colleagues in later research, predict several distinct forms of adaptation (Gans, 2007; Zhou et al., 2008; Levitt and Waters, 2007; Kasnitz et al., 2008; Kasnitz, Mellonknopf and Waters, 2004). One of them replicates the time-honored portrayal of growing acculturation and parallel integration into the white middle class; a second leads straight in the opposite direction to permanent poverty and assimilation into the underclass; while a third associates rapid economic advancement with deliberate preservation of the immigrant community's values and tight solidarity (Gans, 1992; 2007; Fernandez-Kelly, 2008; Zhou et al., 2008; Kasnitz, 2008; Grivalja, 2010). Segmented assimilation points to a variety of outcomes, challenging conclusions about the holistic absorption of newcomers into American

society – itself an abstraction implying more of a monolithic object than the actual, fragmented reality that is the United States. It emerges from the different ways in which foreign-parentage youth approach these challenges and the resources that they bring to the encounter (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990, 2001, 2006; Zhou, 1997; Zhou et al., 2008; Kasnitz, 2008; Portes and Fernandez-Kelly, 2008).

Understanding Aspirations: The Present Study

The last generation or so of social science research has illustrated that educational aspirations and expectations are more important predictors of educational attainment for youth of color than for white youth (Portes and Wilson, 1976; Kerckhoff and Campbell, 1977; Alba and Abdel-Hady, 2005; Bowen and Bok, 1998). High educational expectations; for example, have been shown to protect Latino youths against dropping out of school (Driscoll, 1999). Most people tend to aspire to educational and occupational attainments that seem realistic, given what they have seen people achieve who are similar to themselves in race, class and gender (Flanagan, 1993). However, adolescents may initially view the world idealistically, and thus see a wide range of opportunities for themselves, unconstrained by race, class or gender (Grant and Sleeter, 1988). As they grow up, "…the range of possibilities that seem open and real to them gradually narrows" (Grant and Sleeter, 1988: p. 35).

This narrowing of the field is shaped by the development of understandings about the structure of society and the ways that one's opportunities are influenced by the ways that society sees you – in essence, who you are. Research on 1.5 and second generation immigrant youth focus on the various pathways of achievement and

incorporation that exist among the population (Portes, 1996; Portes, Macleod and Dag, 1996; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Portes and Zhou, 1993). Intertwined in these discussions are ideas about identity.

Rosenberg (1992) asserted "[that] although the individual's view of himself may be internal, what he sees and feels when he thinks of himself is largely the product of social life" (p. 593). Extant research on the influence of racial discrimination on racial-ethnic minorities, conducted with both youth and adult samples, indicates that perceived discrimination impacts not only aspects of identity, but also impacts psychological distress and self-conceptualization of mastery (see Broman et al., 2000; Sellers et al., 2003). The complexity of processes involving self-dynamics indicates that actors are often motivated to protect the self-concept from external threats.

One protective aspect is what Coleman and Fararo describe as optimization. According to Coleman and Fararo, optimization is the distinguishing characteristic of rational choice theory, be it "expressed as maximizing utility…[or] minimizing cost…But however expressed…it compares actions according to their expected outcomes for the actor and postulates that the actor will choose the action with the best outcome…What we do not see in a simple optimization model of rational action is the disaggregation of choices along lengthy structured sequences oriented toward specific goals. Maximizing utility does not provide information about objectives pursued or the weight of decisions as perceived by agents. Likewise, models of rational action often fail to specify the influence of other relevant social actors." (Konczal and Haller,2008; p. 165). Therefore, it is necessary to center attention on patterned experiences – not just attitudes and

values – in any attempt to explain socio-economic ascent or decline among the second and 1.5 generation of immigrants.

The idea of overcoming adversity in pursuit of one's aspirations in order to achieve status and stability when one has come from "nothing" is heartwarming and motivating. Yet, focusing on outcomes obfuscates the ability of that outcome to be understood as an achievement or a failure, regardless of whether it is the agent or the structure being examined. An emphasis on aspirations allows researchers to understand the intentions of immigrant youth, exploring the rationale and logic underlying their decisions and patterns of social behavior. The present study has the ability to expand the scholarly conversations about aspirations and lead to broader conversations that increase our ability to understand and theorize concerning the indistinct cusp at the nexus of culture and social structure.

CHAPTER 2

RATIONALE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The primary intention of this chapter is to describe the rationale for the present study. This chapter will also provide definitions and explanations of the most critical concepts necessary to understand the research model and significance of the research. It will begin with the presentation of a conceptual model depicting how the present study proposes the key conceptual components work together to impact aspirations. Then, a generous description of the concepts and processes in the model is provided. Finally, these descriptions will be brought together to outline the rationale of the research before the chapter concludes. The purpose of the chapter is to provide a descriptive foundation of the fundamental concepts of the study before launching into the multifarious theoretical web supporting the research, which is the focus on Chapter 2.

The present study focuses on aspirations, racial-ethnic identity for 1.5 and second generation immigrant youth and their parents, discrimination and racial (in)equality awareness. Although much of the empirical work on adolescents and emerging adults that are considered at risk focuses on outcomes (e.g. academic

achievement), there is a smaller yet steady stream of literature that highlights aspirations.

The Study's Conceptual Model

Figure 1, below, is the conceptual model guiding the analysis in this study. It depicts relationships that the present research has proposed tempers or inflates the aspirations that 1.5 and second generation immigrant youth have for their futures. What this study seeks to demonstrate is the robustness of the final relationship in the model presented below in Figure 1: a young person's racial/ethnic identity directly conditions the contours of their aspirations.

FIGURE 1: PROPOSED MODEL FOR THIS STUDY
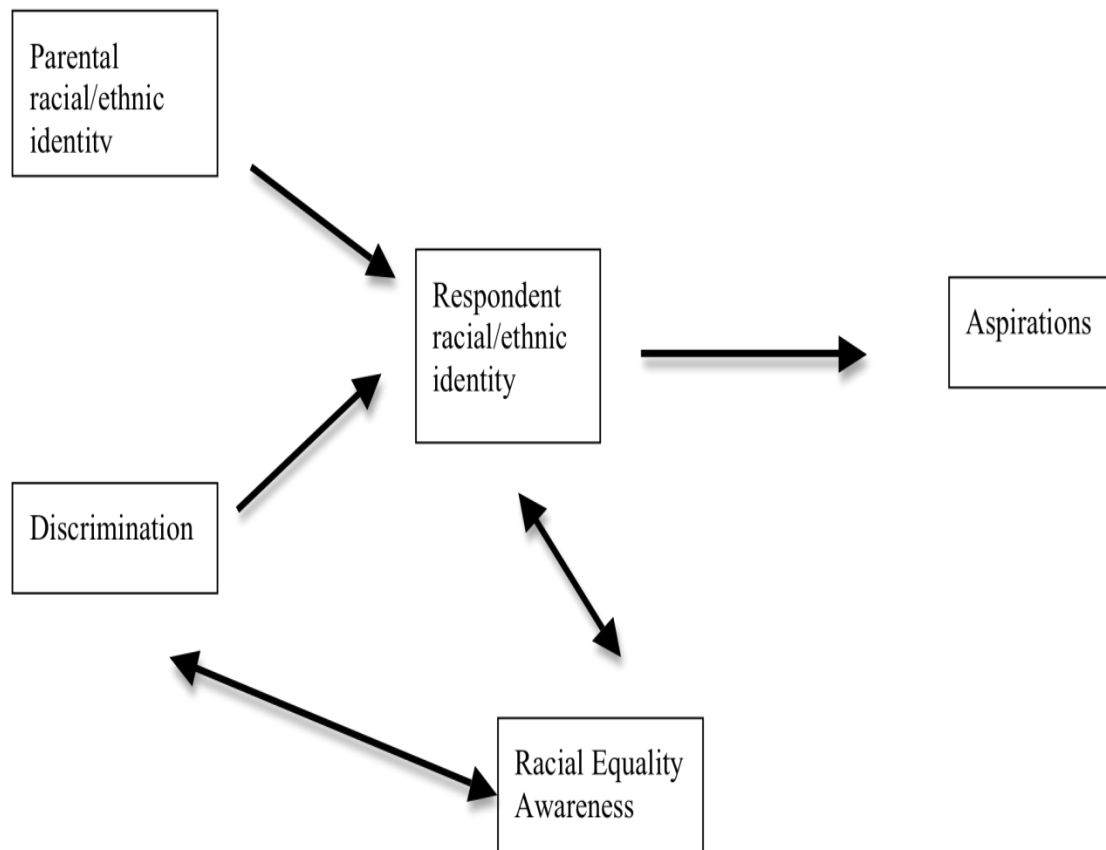
The model consists of the following major components: 1) Youth Aspirations, which serves as the dependent variable of the study; 2) Parental Racial Ethnic Identity, which acts as a moderator variable influencing youth aspirations via the primary independent variable; and 3) Respondent Racial-Ethnic identity. The framework of the model presented also incorporates social domains such as 4) Discrimination and 5) Racial Equality Awareness, both exogenous variables which influence the respondents' racial-ethnic identity.

The aspirations of adolescents and emerging adults are impacted by a number of social forces. One of the most prominent of these, is the racial-ethnic identity of the young person, which is understood as a reflective and reflexive aspect of self-concept composed of personal/political group identity/affinity and socially/politically ascribed group identity (that is personally acknowledged/lived). These personal and social aspects of racial-ethnic identity emerge by virtue of three dynamic mechanisms. The first, considered by the literature to be the most important (whether overtly present or lacking) is the racial-ethnic identity of young people's parents. Parental racial-ethnic identity operationally impacts culture, but also influences in tandem the type and intensity of socialization processes young people experience.

As you review the model from left to right, you can see once again that the foundational conceptual relationships are that the racial/ethnic identities of young people are shaped (a) by the racial/ethnic identities of their caregivers (Stevenson,

1995; Ogbu, 1979; McHale, Crouter, Kim, and Burton, 2006), particularly their primary

caregivers or parents, through enculturation and socialization processes, and (b) by

experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination that they observe and/or experience (Feagin,

1992; Wallace, 2008; Vandiver, Fhagen-Smith, and Cokley, 2001). Moreover, the

awareness that these young people possess of racial (in)equality in the U.S., in concert

with and independent of experienced or observed discrimination, also shapes their own

racial/ethnic identity (Feagin,1992).

Awareness of the racial climate and structure of the U.S. is important because of

its relationship in the literature and research to discrimination (Allport, 1954; Blumer,

1958; Bobo and Hutchings, 1996; Bobo and Fox, 2003). Structural discrimination, also

known as institutional discrimination, refers to policies or practices that are race or

gender neutral but have negative consequences for racial ethnic minorities and/or

women (Feagin, 1992; 2006; Massey, 2007). Institutional discrimination typically tends

to be more invisible than interpersonal, or individual, discrimination (Feagin, 1992; 2006;

Massey, 2007). Research has repeatedly shown that people from ethnic minority groups

have lower incomes and are concentrated: in environmentally and economically poorer

geographic areas; in poorer quality and more overcrowded accommodations; in less

desirable occupations; and in longer periods of unemployment than their ethnic majority

counterparts (for a review and history see, Pager and Shepherd, 2008; Massey, 2007;

Feagin, 2006). This is also true of many immigrant populations, with variations

depending on aspects of ethnicity and citizenship (Kasinitz, 2004; 2008).

Additionally, the literature indicates that experiences with discrimination,

behaviors and decisions that demonstrate a racial-ethnic bias in the allocation of power

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or resources, impact aspirations indirectly through its ability to galvanize either personal or social aspects of racial-ethnic identity (Allport, 1954; Blumer, 1958; Alba, 1990; Bobo and Hutchings, 1996). This holds true whether the young person experienced the discrimination directly or only bore witness to the discrimination (Fernandez-Kelly, 2008; Portes and Fernandez-Kelly, 2008; Kasinitz, 2008; Kasinitz et al., 2008;Konczal and Haller, 2008) .

Groups that discover their identities, racial-ethnic and otherwise, are being used as grounds for major decisions by institutions to determine the allocation of social resources and opportunities are more inclined to see those identities as important and to make then the basis of their own actions (Cornell and Hartmann, 2007; Massey, 2007). When ethnicity and race are used as principles of allocation, as they are in the United States, that fact encourages its emergence as a basis of identity and group identification (Cornell and Hartmann, 2007; Massey, 2007). Consequently, race and ethnicity commonly hold importance in situations of competition over seemingly scarce resources: jobs, housing, access to schools and quality education, prestige, political power and so on.

The salience of discrimination is separate and unique from the awareness that young people have of racial equality in the social allocation of resources (Demo and Hughes, 1990; Hitlin et al., 2006; Cornel and Hartmann, 2007). Racial equality awareness may be garnered though observation or socialization and refers to the understanding that a person has of (potential) prejudice, stigma and privilege in societal opportunities as a result of racialized hierarchical structures (Aboud, 1987; Demo and Hughes, 1990; Rumbaut, 1994; Stevenson, 1995; Caughey et al., 2006; Lalonde et al.,

2008; Stevenson and Arrington, 2009). It is an understanding that has a reflexive

relationship with racial-ethnic identity.

This reflexive process molds and speaks to the internalized goals of young

people. As these internalized goals aspirations are pre-figurative orientations,

composed of specific beliefs about one's future trajectory through the educational

system and one's ultimate class or status position (see Schneider and Stevenson, 1999;

Coleman, 1988, 1990). As adolescents age, these expectations and aspirations are

presumed to condition current behavior and, in the process, become self-fulfilling

prophecies (Kahl, 1953; Haller, 1982).

Kahl identified parental pressure as the most crucial determinant. Corresponding

roughly to two types of students, he saw two types of parents: those who sought to rear

"getting by" children and those who sought to rear "getting ahead" children. Many of the

factors that determined whether parents adopted the getting ahead rearing strategy

were idiosyncratic, and yet there were some systematic differences, relating primarily to

parents' own experiences with the labor market. The extent to which parents saw

college as having a genuine payoff for occupational attainment, based on their own

experiences in the workplace, was crucial.

Expectations and aspirations then became the central mediating variables in

status attainment research, especially following the publication of what became known

as the Wisconsin model of status attainment, which was based on early analyses of the

Wisconsin Longitudinal Survey (Sewell et al. 1969, 1970). The full model was first fully

specified in two influential articles published in the American Sociological Review

(Sewell et al. 1969, 1970) that reported results from both the original 1957 data and the follow-up 1964 data on the educational and early occupational careers of young men. Beyond Kahl's focus on exploring the formation of college plans, these articles aimed to explain the entire process of educational and occupational attainment. In particular, this line of inquiry established that significant others – parents, teachers, and peers – define expectations that students then internalize as educational and occupational aspirations. Since the underlying theory assumes that students are compelled to follow their own aspirations, the model is powerfully simple and implies that significant others can increase a student's educational and occupational attainment merely by increasing their own expectations of him.

Regarding the specific processes of aspiration formation, the principal social psychological theorist, Archibald Haller, maintained that aspirations are formed in three ways: imitation, self-reflection, and adoption. Once formed, Haller (1982) wrote that aspirations are embedded in "approximately consistent and mutually reinforcing cognitions" which then "have an inertia of their own and are expressed in corresponding behavior (p. 5-6)." Thus, students' educational and occupational aspirations become stable abstract motivational orientations (see Spenner and Featherman, 1978).

Amid critiques of the model, the researchers modified the original model, increasing the exogenous influences; diluting its initial explanatory clarity. The cutting edge of research in the sociology of education then shifted toward studies of institutional and demographic effects on educational achievement and attainment, as researchers generally sought to avoid debates over whether social psychological models unnecessarily blame the victims of a constrained opportunity structure. In the most

recent research, however, new models of educational attainment are now attempting to account for the beliefs that determine educational attainment, as well as the reflexive nature of structural influences in familial or group socialization processes.

Some researchers have begun to focus on changes in post-industrial society and how these are reflected in the processes by which adolescents plan for their futures. Others, seeking to integrate sociological and economic approaches, have attempted to build models of educational achievement and attainment that are sensitive to the exogenous impact of shifts in costs and benefits but that also give substantial scope to independent belief formation processes that can overwhelm narrowly expected utility calculations. By and large, this new work has the potential to help determine how structural dynamics should be incorporated into models of educational attainment, as structure that is imposed from the outside as the rigid constraints maintained by institutions or via individual responses to perceived structural constraints. The present study is a contribution to this very stream of research as it continues to develop.

Description of Model Assumptions

The model presented for this study has two primary assumptions. The first is that it assumes, based on the various typologies of racial-ethnic identity and theories regarding the impact of racial-ethnic identity on self-concept, that young people with diasporic or transnational identities will have higher aspirations than those with racial-ethnic identities more aligned with social and political understandings of race/ethnicity. (Those youth who identify as white within the U.S. racial context may be the exception

to this.) The second assumption in the relationships depicted in the model is that the

aspirations of 1.5 and second-generation immigrant youth are either tempered or

inflated depending upon the youth's racial-ethnic identity. Based on the data provided

in the CILS study, the researcher is convinced that second and 1.5 generation youth's

aspirations are more in line with those of non-immigrant native born U.S. youth rather

than the high expectations of their parents or communities, even for those youth that

possess a more diasporic or transnational identity.

The first assumption of the model is fundamentally based on the typologies of

racial-ethnic identity created by Mary Waters (1999) in one of the foundational pieces of

research that studies racial-ethnic identity among immigrant youth of color. It is also

based upon the assumptions put forth in the literature on racial-ethnic identity among

racial-ethnic minorities over the life course (c.f., Phinney, 1989; Caughy et al., 2006;

Demo and Hughes, 1990; Stevenson, 1995; Yip, Seaton and Sellers, 2006; Seaton,

Scottham and Sellars, 2006). This research and its plethora of theoretical suppositions

regarding the impact of racial-ethnic identity on self-concept underlies the prediction for

this research that young people with diasporic or transnational identities will have higher

aspirations than those with racial-ethnic identities more aligned with U.S. social and

political understandings of race/ethnicity. The exception to this may be those who

identify as white within the U.S. racial context.

It is understood that young people's racial-ethnic identity is related to the racial-

ethnic identity of their parents and caregivers; however, this relationship can go in

several directions. Strong diasporic or transnational parental identity can produce either

a similarly strong type of identity among their children or it can produce an antithetical

response from their children who want to distance themselves from this identity for any number of reasons. Additionally, parents who down-play or neutralize their racial ethnic identity for any number of reasons could as a consequence (latently) encourage a weak racial-ethnic identity among their children; or, through their own weak racial-ethnic identity parents could encourage a strong racial-ethnic identity among their children.

Several studies to date have worked to create typologies of identity formation among immigrant children and the children of immigrants. However, only a handful of studies have investigated the impact of identity on the aspirations of these young people. Instead, much of the focus is on applying these typologies of identity or identity development to understanding achievement outcomes, rather than the intermediary creation of aspirations. As such, they do not examine how the development of racial-ethnic identity may impact aspirations over time. This study analyzed the changes in aspirations that may occur over time and the social processes and factors may be related to these changes.

The primary factor that this study's research model proposes as related to aspirations, and changes in them over time, is one's racial-ethnic identity. Theoretically, it is clear that understanding race-ethnic identity within the vacuum of U.S social and political norms creates a gap in our ability to understand how all youth, particularly those who are 1.5 and second generation, develop and integrate their racial ethnic status and identity into their everyday living behaviors and decisions. As described in Chapter 1, employing the ideas of transnationalism and diaspora are important in bridging this gap.

A diasporic identity for stigmatized and/or abject groups of color is characterized by communities of consciousness that focus on agency, cultures of endurance,

resistance, and actions of the particular groups of people (Cohen, 1997;1998; Gold, 2002; Davies, 2007; Hamilton, 2007). What people do to assert themselves; what they create; and how they remember their past contribute to the formation of communities of consciousness that arise out of very particular experiences of structural inequities. Importantly, collective identity formations are inscribed by common socio-historical experiences. These experiences are shaped and conditioned by the multi-layered global system of domination and unequal social relations. Racial-ethnic identities based on communities of consciousness are unique from those based oppositional stances, as well as strategic or wholesale cultural acquisition.

An identity based on global understandings of racial hierarchies and structures would navigate and understand social labels differently. This emphasis on global relations is not a part of the other identities found in the literature. Assimilated, acculturated, and oppositional identities all place primacy on the country that has received the immigrant. These perspectives focus the lens on reception and incorporation, passive processes that do not place primacy on the immigrant as an agent with more than two choices – adapt or oppose. Thus, the adoption of customs, values and beliefs that are new and foreign to the immigrant are given precedence and intentional strategic navigation of social structure by immigrants, and the children of immigrants in particular, are minimized. Within the perspectives currently given primacy, what the immigrant already knew and held dear is hardly considered when compared to the new context and situations in which the immigrant is immersed.

Along with understandings of diasporic identities, the activities that keep the homeland present in the minds of migrants must also be understood. So, both

transnationalism and diaspora become critical concepts, as well as theoretical

perspectives. The term transnational describes any population that has originated in a

land other than that in which it currently resides; and whose social, economic and

political networks cross the borders of nation-states, possibly spanning the globe

(Vertovec and Cohen, 1999). Contemporarily, immigrants live their lives across borders

and maintain their ties to home. This is the case even when their countries of origin and

settlement are geographically, and at times politically, distant. Schiller et al. (1992)

found that, in a number of ways, migrants forge and sustain multifaceted social relations

that link their societies of origin and residence/settlement.

The most dominant component that adding the theoretical precepts of

transnationalism and diaspora contributes conceptually is an expanded point of

reference for structures or hierarchies of oppression. This expansion can impact racial-

ethnic identification, racial (in)equality awareness and the experiences with

discrimination that are a part of the reality for immigrant youth in the U.S. The impact

can most definitely vary, yet the wide range of the impact does not negate the

importance of attending to it in empirical explorations.

The second assumption of the model is that this research will show that the

aspirations of 1.5 and second generation immigrant youth are more in line with the

aspirations of non-immigrant native born U.S. youth, even for those with a more

diasporic or transnational identity. Overall, the researcher believes that the study will

show that immigrant children and the children of immigrants have tempered aspirations

in comparison to the aspirations that their parents have for them. Since the research

has worked with the assumption that the aspirations and high expectations for upward

mobility of the parents are congruent with the aspirations of their children, the theoretical understandings about achievement have been skewed. As such, much of the literature concludes that immigrant children and the children of immigrants are less successful than models predict they should be.

Moreover, the researcher believes that second and 1.5 generation youth's racial-ethnic identity is a mitigating factor that shapes (tempers or inflates) their aspirations for their future. This study will reveal that although racial-ethnic self-identification may be diasporic or transnational that the children of immigrants and immigrant children who understand, whether fully or partially, the racialized structure of U.S. society and the social position they hold within it will have different aspirations than those youth who do not understand this structure. Thus, young people's understanding of the consequences of racialization and social position will not necessarily be reflected directly in their racial-ethnic identity, but will most likely be mediated through it to impact their aspirations, goals and quite possibly their achievement(s).

Conceptual Contributions of the Present Study

Both dramaturgical and reflective sociological theories about the development and presentation of self indicate that by adolescence meta-cognitive processes are a large influence on the self that an individual presents to other (see Mead, 1934, and Goffman, 1959). From the sociological perspective, it is not simply identity, but the social aspects of identity (i.e. how it is invoked by its possessor and perceived by others) that impact the aspirations of young people, especially those of color. This is

demonstrated in Waters' research as, throughout the data, her respondents recognize that there is an advantage to remaining culturally exotic and having an identity that at a minimum only partially American, what many would call hyphenated (Waters, 1999). This reality for immigrant populations of color is in stark contrast to Water's earlier study of white ethnics whose immigrant and ethnic backgrounds were personally important, but nonetheless afterthoughts that had no consequences for their social mobility or social position. The conceptual contribution of this research to the arena of race and ethnicity is an appreciation for how these youth integrate the whole of their racial, ethnic, political and cultural identities in order to navigate the social structures they encounter. Additionally, how these aspects of their identity become intertwined and shift as they grow and develop in U.S. society.

Extensive research indicates that aspirations are high among all groups of students; yet, for students of color, the actual transition from middle and high school into postsecondary education is far less common than it should be based upon student aspirations (Schneider and Stevenson, 1999; American Youth Policy Forum, 2000; National Commission on the High School Senior Year, 2001). If we are to understand this disparity, particularly for immigrant youth of color, the current state of the literature warrants an investigation of the fundamental relationships and the expanded conceptual and theoretical applications that will be applied in this study. The findings from this research add an additional richness and depth to our current perspectives. From the present study, the explorations of the educational and occupational goals of the children of immigrants in the United States will enrich our understandings of how these young people navigate social structures like race and ethnicity.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The previous chapters introduced the significance of the present study and the

theoretical background that lay the foundation for the assumptions and questions of it.

The original model for this research was also presented. The model illustrated the

conceptual relationships this research seeks to affirm and explore. The purpose of

chapter 3 is to describe the data used in the present research and delineate the

analytical methods and tools that used to explore the model presented earlier.

Additionally, the hypotheses and assumptions that guided the proposed relationships in

the model and the analysis employed for the project will also be described.

The state of the research on aspirations assures that the contribution of this

research will be beneficial to the field. Little empirical work has been done on the

linkages between the perception of barriers or impediments (as they vary by class

position) and corresponding processes of aspiration formation, on one hand, and the mapping and execution of status attainment strategies, on the other. Thus, an emphasis on the ability of empirical work to be important and relevant for theory building is necessary. As it concerns theory building, Coleman and Fararo (1992) discuss three kinds of criteria that should be met if sociological theory to be wholly satisfactory. Of those, the one they view as least important is 'a psychological theory or model of the springs of individual action.' Yet, this is the very terrain we seek to explore, since the timing and development of theories related to aspirations implore that we do so. As segmented assimilation expands our theoretical and conceptual terrain we currently lack a complete understanding of how racial-ethnic identification and the perception of personal discrimination impacts aspirations and future expectations specifically. Thus this study seeks to sociologically explore the aspects of individual action that Coleman and Fararo (1992) discarded.

Description of the Analysis Tasks and the Data

To undertake this task, the methods used for the present study include regression and factor analysis, as well as path analysis. In this chapter, we will describe the data, define the variables used in the present study and describe the analyses used for the present research. These descriptions include clarification and justification of how the concepts described in earlier chapters are operationalized and why particular analyses were undertaken.

The Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) continues to be the largest longitudinal project on the subject of second generation adaptation in the United

States. The study was directed by Alejandro Portes of Princeton University and Rubén G. Rumbaut of University of California – Irvine and was supported by research grants from the Russell Sage Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Spencer Foundation, and the National Science Foundation. The first CILS survey was conducted in the spring of 1992; and the first follow-up survey, as well as the parental survey, was both conducted in 1995-96. The final wave of data from the CILS study was for the second follow-up survey, which was conducted between 2001 and 2003, when respondents averaged 24 years of age.

The three waves of the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) were designed to investigate the adaptation process of the immigrant second generation, which is defined broadly as U.S.-born children with at least one foreign-born parent (second generation) or children born abroad, but brought at an early age to the United States (1.5 generation). Table 1 displays the basic demographics of the CILS sample (from left to right: S1.Q18; S1.Q21; S1.Q23; S1.Q22). From Table 1, we can see that the sample is generally evenly representative of generation status, gender, and time spent in the U.S. and the sample of young people are overwhelming citizens of the United States despite their immigrant status.

TABLE 1: RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Respondent Details			
Sex	Generation Status	Citizenship	Time in U.S.
51% (Female)	50% (1.5 Generation)	70 % (U.S. Citizens)	46% (all their life)
			26% (ten years or more)

The original survey was conducted with samples of 1.5 and second generation children attending the 8th and 9th grades in public and private schools in the metropolitan areas of Miami/Ft. Lauderdale in Florida and San Diego, California. Table 2 (based on S1.Q19) demonstrates that the majority of the CILS sample is squarely with the predisposition phase of college choice development – early adolescence (Hossler and Ghallager, 1987; Cabrera and LaNasa, 2000; Fermin and Pope, 2003; Fermin, 2006) - and thus for this study are an exemplary sample to use for the examination of aspirations (Schneider and Stevenson, 1999; Bowen and Bok, 1998).

TABLE 2: RESPONDENTS' AGE

Range and Percentage of Respondent's Age						
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
< 1%	19%	44%	29%	7%	< 1%	< 1%

The first survey, conducted in 1992, had the purpose of ascertaining baseline information on immigrant families, children's demographic characteristics, language use, self-identities, and academic attainment. The total sample size was 5,262 adolescents. The previous tables demonstrate that the sample is evenly divided by sex (see Table 1), age and/or year in school (8th, 9th – see Table 2) and birth status (foreign-born/U.S.-born – see Table 1). Table 3 (based on S1.Q.21a) shows the diversity of cultural and ethnic backgrounds represented in the CILS sample. Respondents came from 77 different nationalities, although the sample reflects the most sizable concentrations among Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and West Indians in South Florida; and Mexicans, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians in

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California. Fifty-four percent of the interviews were conducted in Miami/Ft. Lauderdale and 46 percent in San Diego.

TABLE 3: RESPONDENTS' ETHNICITY

RESPONDENTS' NATIONAL ORIGIN	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS'
CUBA	23%
OTHER CARIBBEAN	11%
OTHER LATIN AMERICAN	7%
OTHER ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDS	6%
MEXICO	14%
PHILIPPINES	16%
VIETNAM	7%
LAOS	3%
NICARAGUA	7%
COLOMBIA	4%

Three years later, corresponding to the time in which respondents were about to graduate from high school, the first follow-up survey was conducted. Its purpose was to examine the evolution of key adaptation outcomes, including language knowledge and preferences; ethnic identity; self-esteem; and academic attainment over the adolescent years. Table 4 (based on S2.Q3; S2.Q22; S2.Q23) provides an overview of some of the important general information about the sample participants in the follow-up surveys.

TABLE 4: DEMOGRAPHICS FOR CILS FOLLOW-UP

Follow-Up Respondent Details		
Reinterviewed	Citizenship	Time in U.S.
81%	68% (U.S. Citizens)	47% (all their life)
		40% (ten years or more)

With the follow-up survey, respondents were asked both their national origin and their

racial identity. National origins did not differ from the first survey, yet race began to

adhere to U.S. conceptions. Table 5 (based on S2.Q23 and S2.Q23a) demonstrates

this and when compared with Table 3, which highlights the ethnicity of the CILS sample

based on country of origin, you can see the pan-ethnic racial understandings of the U.S.

emerge among the young people's self-identities.

TABLE 5: RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS FOR STUDY FOLLOW-UP

Respondents' Self-Reported Race (Collapsed Categories)	
White	14%
Black	7%
Asian	26%
Multiracial	11%
Hispanic	24%
Nationality	15%
Other	4%

The survey also sought to establish the proportion of second generation youths who

dropped out of school before graduation. This follow-up survey retrieved 4,288

respondents, or 81 percent of the original sample. A series of statistical tests indicated

that this follow-up is not seriously biased with respect to the original survey, although

there is some overrepresentation of children from higher-status families (Portes and

Rumbaut, 2005).

The third survey was conducted when respondents had reached early adulthood,

at the average age of 24 years. This survey was conducted using a combination of

mailed questionnaires, telephone, and in-person interviews. By then, most respondents

had left their parents' home, requiring a nationwide tracking effort. In total, this follow-up survey retrieved 3,613 respondents representing 69 percent of the original sample and 84 percent of the first follow-up.

Focus of the Present Study

The present study is driven by an interest in investigating three overarching research questions: (1) What relationships exist between identity and aspirations for the children of immigrants; (2) What types of aspirations exist among 1.5 and second generation immigrant youth; and (3) How do these youth integrate aspects of racialization and social position into their identity? The research described herein has two goals; (1) ascertain the types of aspirations that exist among immigrant youth; and (2) begin to understand the relationships that exist between racial/ethnic identity and aspirations for these youth.

Hypotheses

There are three primary hypotheses that were used to construct the analysis of data. The first hypothesis is that young people with diasporic or transnational identities will have higher aspirations than those with racial-ethnic identities more rooted in socio-political understandings of race/ethnicity in the U.S. (Those youth who identify as white within the U.S. racial context may be the exception to this hypothesis.) The second hypothesis for this study is that this research would show that the aspirations of 1.5 and

second generation immigrant youth are more in line with the aspirations of non-immigrant native born U.S. youth, in general and particularly for those of similar racial-ethnic identification. The third hypothesis is that second and 1.5 generation youth's racial-ethnic identity is a mitigating factor that shapes (tempers or inflates) their aspirations for their future.

The first hypothesis is based primarily on the typologies of racial-ethnic identity created by Mary Waters (1999) in one of the foundational pieces of research that studies racial-ethnic identity among immigrant youth of color. It is also based upon the assumptions put forth in the literature on racial-ethnic identity among racial-ethnic minorities over the life course (c.f., Phinney, 1989; Caughy et al., 2006; Demo and Hughes, 1990; Stevenson, 1995; Yip, Seaton and Sellers, 2006; Seaton, Scottham and Sellars, 2006). This research and its myriad of theoretical suppositions regarding the impact of racial-ethnic identity on self-concept underlies the prediction for this research that young people with diasporic or transnational identities will have higher aspirations than those with racial-ethnic identities more aligned with U.S. social and political understandings of race/ethnicity. The exception to this may be those who identify as white within the U.S. racial context.

The second hypothesis, that this research will demonstrate that the aspirations of 1.5 and second generation immigrant youth are more in line with the aspirations of non-immigrant native born U.S. youth, in general and particularly for those of similar racial-ethnic identification. Overall, I believe that the data will show that immigrant children and the children of immigrants have tempered aspirations in comparison to the

aspirations that their parents have for them. Since the research has operated with the assumption that the aspirations and high expectations for upward mobility of the parents are congruent with the aspirations of their children, the theoretical understandings about achievement have been skewed. As such, much of the literature concludes that immigrant children and the children of immigrants have great potential to less successful than models predict they should be.

The final hypothesis is that second and 1.5 generation youth's racial-ethnic identity is a mitigating factor that shapes (tempers or inflates) their aspirations for their future. This research will reveal that although racial-ethnic self-identification may be diasporic or transnational that the children of immigrants and immigrant children who understand, whether fully or partially, the racialized structure of U.S. society and the social position they hold within it will have different aspirations than those youth who do not understand this structure. This is to say that when immigrant youth have an understanding of a biased system in which racial-ethnic identity is likely to impact opportunities it will influence the logic of their aspirations in some manner, no matter how cursory that understanding may be. Thus, young people's understanding of the consequences of racialization and social position will not necessarily be reflected directly in their racial-ethnic identity, but will presumably be mediated through it to impact their aspirations.

<u>Measures</u>

The *dependent variable* for the present study is **Respondent Aspirations**. The dependent variable is measured using a composite of three items each on the first and second wave of the CILS survey questionnaires. The items are 60, 61 and 62 on the first wave survey and items 260, 261 and 263 on the second wave survey (CILS citation). The composite measure is obtained from the following questions:

60. "What is the highest level of education that you would like to achieve?"

   1) Less than high school

   2) Finish High School

   3) Finish Some College

   4) Finish College

   5) Finish a graduate degree (masters, doctor, etc.)

61. "And realistically speaking, what is the highest level of education that you think you will get?"

   1) Less than high school

   2) Finish High School

   3) Finish Some College

   4) Finish College

   5) Finish a graduate degree (masters, doctor, etc.)

For item 62 and 263 on the surveys, respondents were asked an open ended item stating, "What job would you like to have as an adult? (Please write clearly)." Then for the next item included in the present study's composite variable for aspirations, item 63 and 265, the respondents were asked the following:

63. "And realistically speaking, how certain are you of getting this job as an adult?"

    1) Not certain at all

    2) Pretty Certain

    3) Very Certain

    4) Other, Explain: [space provided to write in explanation]

265. "And realistically speaking, how do you see your chances of getting this job?"

    1) Very Poor

    2) Poor

    3) Good

    4) Very Good

These multiple questions at both waves were used to create the composite variables Aspirations (which included the items from wave 1) and Aspirations2 (which included the items from wave 2). Each composite was calculated by summing the responses to the items associated with that construct, and then dividing by the total points possible. In order for the composites to be on a four-point scale, the lowest response option on each scale was set to 0 and the others were adjusted accordingly; so for instance, an item with a scale ranging from 1 to 5 was re-coded to have a scale of 0–4. By doing this, someone who marks the lowest point on every item in a composite receives a composite score of 0 rather than some positive number. It also assures that 2 is the true mid-point. The denominator for each composite is determined by computing the

maximum possible sum of responses for a series of items, and then dividing by 4.

The *independent variables* for the present study are **respondent racial-ethnic identity, parental racial-ethnic identity, discrimination,** and **racial equality awareness**. The primary endogenous variable in the model, **respondent racial-ethnic identity** is fundamental to the basic premises of the present study and is directly impacted by the exogenous variable **parental racial-ethnic identity**. The development of racial/ethnic identity has been posited as an integral facet for minority youth. Research indicates that among youth, racial/ethnic identity is influenced by both general and specific racial/ethnic parental socialization strategies and that it impacts overall functioning among youth. Research findings have provided support for this hypothesis particularly among samples of U.S. racial-ethnic minorities.

Another exogenous variable in the model is **discrimination**. As used for this study it is a composite based on items 85, 86, and 87 on the surveys for both wave 1 and wave 2. The variables included in the models are the composite measures discrimination and discrimination2 based on the following questions which are ordered and appear the same on both surveys:

85. "Have you ever felt discriminated against?"
    1) Yes
    2) No

86. "(If yes) And by whom did you feel discriminated? (Check all that apply)

    a) teachers

    b) students

    c) counselors

    d) White Americans in general

    e) Latinos in general

    f) Black in general

    g) others (Write in): [then space was provided for responses]

Item 87 on both surveys are open-ended items with space provided for responses. The item on the surveys reads as follows:

87. "What do you think was the main reason for discriminating against you?" (Please write clearly)

The inclusion of discrimination as a measure in the model is important. Discrimination has been defined as the process by which a member, or members, of a socially defined group is, or are, treated differently because of membership in that group. Discrimination may exist in multiple forms. Individual experiences of discrimination refer to discriminatory interactions between individuals that can be directly perceived. Research has suggested that experiences of racial discrimination, both individual and structural, may generate stress and in turn alter social-physiological processes, like goal setting, adversely (Williams et al., 1997).

The final exogenous variable in the model is labeled in the model as racial equality awareness, and it is also a composite measure. The variable, labeled as Awareness and Awareness2 for the first and second wave, is a composite of the likert scaled items numbered 79, 81, 82 and 84 on both the wave 1 and wave 2 surveys that read as follows:

79. There is racial discrimination in economic opportunities in the U.S.

81. There is much conflict between racial and ethnic groups in the U.S.

82. Non-whites have as many opportunities to get ahead economically as whites in the U.S.

84. Americans generally feel superior to foreigners.

The choices for responses to the items on the likert scale are from left to right, 1) "Agree a lot;" 2) "Agree a little;" 3) "Disagree a little;" 4) "Disagree a lot."

Data Analysis Procedures

Although scaling all of the data for the measures of focus would have been optimal, due to the nature of the data, only a few composite variables for the dimensions in the model were created. Prior to conducting the path analysis, each hypothesized predictive dimension (parental racial-ethnic identity, discrimination, awareness, and respondent racial/ethnic identity) was regressed on respondent aspirations. The dimensions and outcome, aspirations, were regressed using variables measured at Wave 1, Wave 2 and with Wave 2 aspirations regressed by Wave 1 predictive dimensions.

The regression models analyzed for the present study represent the structure, assumptions and hypotheses of the model depicted in Figure 1. These regressions were used to determine the relationship each of the factors in the model had to its associated factors and the unique contribution each made to the research model. Additionally, the regressions were used to determine which relationships depicted in the model were significant.

After completing the regression analyses, AMOS was used to estimate path coefficients and determine the direct and indirect effects of the dimensions in the model. The path model tested included the variables (D1) parent racial-ethnic identity (at Wave 1), (D2) discrimination (at Wave 1), (D3) respondent racial-ethnic identity (at Wave 1), (D4) racial equality awareness (at Wave 2) and (D5) aspirations (at Wave 2). In the path model analyzed for this study, D1 and D2 are exogenous variables, D3 and D5 are endogenous variables, with D5 as the outcome variable, and D4 is an outside factor that must be considered in the model as supported by the present study's theoretical framework and hypothesis.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Before presenting the results of the analysis, it is important to review the

information that has already been presented, as to refocus attention on the contribution

the content of chapter 4 has to offer. The introduction to the dissertation, along with the

theoretical framework presented in chapter 1 explained that although there is much

work about racial-ethnic identity and adaptation, along with evaluations of the status

attainment and achievement of 1.5 and second generation immigrant youth. However,

as chapter one highlighted, our scholarly understandings of the aspirations of these

same young people are not on par. This is the juncture where the present study seeks

to proffer its findings.

The purpose of analysis in this research was to determine the ways that certain

aspects of race, specifically identity, discrimination and racialization, impact the

aspirations of 1.5 and second generation immigrant youth. The multivariate analyses for

this study document that many of the proposed relationships in the study's model are significant and function in the manner hypothesized. Interestingly the relationships that were not significant were primarily those that from all indications in the data and the literature were those whose effects were most likely mediated through other variables in the model. Analysis indicated that at both wave 1 and wave 2 the aspirations of immigrant youth are sensitive to demographic variables in similar ways to the aspirations of domestic U.S. youth.

In addition to the demographic variables, the addition of each of the independent variables to the model increases the ability of the model to explain variance among immigrant youth aspirations; yet, only incrementally. Furthermore, independent variables that the literature indicates are seminal to the development and attainment of aspirations such as respondent racial-ethnic identity and experiences with discrimination are not consistently significant in their unique contributions to the model; withal, their addition to the overall model does increase the fit of the model significantly. Consequently, path analyses follow the regression evaluations in order to facilitate a fuller assessment of contextual interrelationships and mediating effects.

Hypothesis I: Social Aspects of Identity and Aspirations

The first hypothesis is that based on the various typologies racial-ethnic identity and theories regarding the impact of racial-ethnic identity on self-concept the prediction for this research is that young people with diasporic or transnational identities will have higher aspirations than those with racial-ethnic identities more aligned with social and

political understandings of race/ethnicity. (Those youth who identify as white within the U.S. racial context may be the exception to this hypothesis.) Analysis indicates that the aspirations of immigrant youth are sensitive to demographic variables in similar ways to the aspirations of domestic U.S. youth. The simple model that includes the basic demographic variables explains 2.8% of the variation in aspirations among the sample. R-squared = 0.028; F = 26.414 > 5.192168; p = .05. This demonstrates that the model is adequately constructed. It indicates the significant and predictable importance of demographic variables such as age, gender and length of time in the United States for understanding aspirations.

Table 6. Regression of aspirations at Wave 1 on basic demographic measures of sample included in model

Gender	1.907*
Age	-1.780*
Citizenship Status	-2.301
National Origin	.032*
Length of time in United States	-1.403*

*p < .05, unstandardized coefficients presented

All demographic variables contribute uniquely and significantly to the model except respondent's citizenship status. The basic demographic variables included in the model that were significant at the level of p = .05 were age, gender, generational status, and length of time in the U.S. The model is a good fit for predicting the aspirations of immigrant youth.

When the ethnic identity of the parents is added to the model it remains a good fit for predicting aspirations of immigrant adolescents. The addition of parental ethnic identity

to the model only slightly increases the ability of the model to explain the variance in aspirations. R squared = .029; F = 18.931 > 3.865989; p=.05.

Table 7. Regression of aspirations at Wave 1 on basic demographic measures of sample and parents racial-ethnic identity

Gender	1.795*
Age	-1.781*
Citizenship Status	-2.104
National Origin	.025*
Length of time in United States	-1.385*
Mother's racial-ethnic identity	.008
father's racial-ethnic identity	.006

*p < .05, unstandardized coefficients presented

Although once the racial-ethnic identity of parents is added to the model it remains a good overall fit for predicting aspirations, the addition of parental identity is not significant. The unique contribution of parental identity to the model is t_{mother} = .855; t_{father} = .651. Neither of these t-values are significant at the level p = .05.

Adding respondents' ethnic identity to the model only slightly increases the ability of the model to explain the variance in aspirations. For the model that included all previously discussed demographic variables, parental racial-ethnic identity and respondent racial ethnic identity, the R squared = .030 and F = 17.189, which is greater than the critical F value of 3.500464 at the level p = .05. This is as the researcher expected, since aspirations between non-immigrant racial-ethnic groups differ only slightly, yet there is consistently some amount of significant influence on aspirations from young people's racial-ethnic identity.

Table 8. Regression of aspirations at Wave 1 on basic demographic measures of sample, parents racial-ethnic identity and respondent racial-ethnic identity

Gender	1.749*
Age	--1.786*
Citizenship Status	-2.168
National Origin	.024*
Length of time in United States	-1.468*
Mother's racial-ethnic identity	.016
father's racial-ethnic identity	.017
Respondent's racial-ethnic identity	.045*

*p < .05, unstandardized coefficients presented

The researcher expected the respondents' racial ethnic identity to contribute, even if only slight, in its own right to the aspirations that immigrant youth in the sample had for their future. In wave 1 of the data, the unique contribution of respondent's ethnic identity to the model in this study is significant. $t_{respondent} = 2.210$. Thus, for every one year increase in aspirations, respondent self-identification becomes increasing complex (i.e. hyphenation and/or multiple identities, diasporic).

Adding discrimination variables increases the model's ability to explain variance in immigrant youth's aspirations. The model that includes variables that measure immigrant youth's experience (both directly and indirectly) with discrimination explains 3.5% of the variance in aspirations among the sample. For this model, the R squared = .035 and F = 2.521, which is greater than the critical F of 2.424364 at the level p = .05.

Table 9. Regression of aspirations at Wave 1 on basic demographic measures of sample, parents racial-ethnic identity, respondent racial-ethnic identity and awareness of racial inequalities

Gender	1.001*
Age	-2.090
Citizenship Status	-2.399*
National Origin	.032*
Length of time in United States	-.517*
Mother's racial-ethnic identity	-.023*
father's racial-ethnic identity	-.028*
Respondent's racial-ethnic identity	.013*
Feel discrimination by teachers	.947
Feel discrimination by students	.769
Feel discrimination by counselors	1.495
Feel discrimination by white Americans?	-.167
Feel discrimination by Black Americans?	-1.824
Feel discrimination no matter education	-.072

*p < .05, unstandardized coefficients presented

Although adding in measurements of immigrant youth's experiences with discrimination increases the model's ability to explain variance in aspirations among these youth, the unique contribution of the discrimination variables is not significant. This is not surprising, nor is it problematic. The model for this research presents youth experiences and understandings of discrimination as an aspect of social reality that is mediated through their racial-ethnic identity. As such, the assumption is that discrimination variables would *not* contribute *uniquely* to the variance in the aspirations of immigrant youth.

This assumption is confirmed when regressions are completed of respondent racial-ethnic identity by the variables parental racial-ethnic identity and discrimination, as indicated in the model. In wave 1, the model measuring how well respondents' racial-ethnic identity is predicted by experiences with discrimination and parental racial-ethnic identity is a good fit, with a F value of 56.729, which is greater than the critical value of

F = 1.101326. With an R squared value of .306, it explains about 31% of the

differences in respondent identity that we see in the sample. This confirms two of the

basic assumptions of the model put forth in this dissertation: 1) that variance in the

racial-ethnic identity of 1.5 and 2nd generation is sensitive to the racial-ethnic

identification of their parents; and 2) that respondents' racial-ethnic identities are

sensitive to their experiences with discrimination. Thus the impact of these variables on

aspirations is mediated through respondents' racial-ethnic as indicated by the model.

For the second wave of the data the simple model that includes the basic

demographic variables explains 1.7% of the variance in aspirations among the sample.

For this model, R squared = .017 and F = 16.227. This is greater than the critical value

of F = 6.591382 at the level p= .05.

Table 10. Regression of aspirations at Wave 2 on basic demographic measures of
sample included in model

Gender	2.428*
Age	-.222*
Citizenship Status	-1.019
Length of time in United States	-1.109*

*p < .05, unstandardized coefficients presented

In this basic model for the second wave of data all demographic variables contribute

uniquely and significantly to the model except citizenship. Compared to wave 1, gender

at wave 2 has a larger contribution to variance in aspirations. Moreover, the age of

respondents at wave 2 has a smaller unique contribution. Both the variables age and

gender remain significant in explaining the variance in aspirations among immigrant

youth.

For the second wave of the data, adding parental ethnic identity to the model

increases the ability of the model to explain the variance in aspirations in the sample.

The addition of parental racial-ethnic identity to the model for the second wave explains

2% of the variance in aspirations within the sample. The R squared = .020 and the F =

12.498, which is greater than the critical value of F = 4.387374 at the level p = .05.

Table 11. Regression of aspirations at Wave 2 on basic demographic measures of
sample and parents racial-ethnic identity

Gender	2.338*
Age	-.216*
Citizenship Status	-1.164
Length of time in United States	-1.095*
Mother's racial-ethnic identity	.017*
Father's racial-ethnic identity	.020

*p < .05, unstandardized coefficients presented

The unique contribution of the mother's identity to the model is significant at the level

p = .05. The coefficient for mother's racial-ethnic identity is t_{mother} = 1.956. This means

that for every 1 year increase in the amount of education immigrant youth aspire to the

complexity of their parents racial-ethnic identity increase (i.e. hyphenation or multiple

identities, diasporic). However the coefficient for father's identity is not significant at t_{father}

= 1.851.

The addition of respondent racial-ethnic identity at wave 2 does not increase the

ability of the model to explain variance in respondent aspirations over the model that

includes parental identity. For the second wave of the data, the unique contribution of

respondents' racial-ethnic identity is not significant. $t_{respondent}$ = 1.075. This value of t

signifies that for every 1 year increase in immigrant youth aspirations in wave two of the data there is an equivalent increase in the complexity of their racial-ethnic identity. The model is still a good fit, with R squared = .020 and F = 9.280, which is greater than the critical value of F = 3.500464 at the level p = .05.

Table 12. Regression of aspirations at Wave 2 on basic demographic measures of sample, parents racial-ethnic identity and respondent racial-ethnic identity

Gender	2.271*
Age	-.230*
Citizenship Status	-1.060
Length of time in United States	-1.167*
Mother's racial-ethnic identity	.022*
father's racial-ethnic identity	.020
Respondent's racial-ethnic identity	.016

*p < .05, unstandardized coefficients presented

Respondents' racial-ethnic identity is one of the primary variables in the research model. The fact that it is not uniquely contributing to the model is predictable when one examines the assumptions of the model, particularly over time, and hypotheses of the research. Regressions of respondent racial-ethnic identity by the variables parental racial-ethnic identity and discrimination indicate that at wave 2, the model is a good fit, with a F value of 8.209, which is greater than the critical value of F = 2.102554. With an R squared value of .021, it explains about 2.1% of the differences in respondent identity that we see in the sample. Thus the impact of these variables on aspirations is mediated through respondents' racial-ethnic as originally indicated by the model.

Table 13. Regression of aspirations at Wave 2 on basic demographic measures of sample, parents racial-ethnic identity, respondent racial-ethnic identity and awareness of racial inequalities

Gender	2.543*
Age	-.212
Citizenship Status	-1.799*
Length of time in United States	-.992*
Mother's racial-ethnic identity	.019*
father's racial-ethnic identity	.040
Respondent's racial-ethnic identity	.031
Experience discrimination by teachers	-.032*
Experience discrimination by students	-1.265*
Experience discrimination by counselors	.134*
Experience discrimination by white Americans	.707*
Experience discrimination by African Americans	.269*
Experience discrimination by Latinos	-.961*
Experience discrimination no matter education	-.023*
There is racial discrimination in U.S. generally	.656*

*p < .05, unstandardized coefficients presented

The model that includes variables measuring immigrant youths' experiences and understandings of discrimination explains 3% of the variance in aspiration within the sample. For this model, R squared = .030 and F = 3.721. This is greater than the critical value of F = 2.35223 at the level p = .05. The unique contributions of the discrimination variables are each significant in explaining the variance in aspirations among respondents in the second wave of the sample.

Hypothesis II: Comparisons of Immigrant and Non-Immigrant Youth

Analysis of the descriptive statistics for the study sample variables of interest indicates that at both Wave 1 and Wave 2 respondents' aspirations would definitely be considered ambitious. Respondents' at Wave 1 had a mean level aspirations of $\mu = 4.93$, indicating that respondents' aspire to and believe realistically that they will obtain a college degree. At Wave 2 respondents' had a mean level of aspirations of $\mu = 4.43$,

meaning that by the time they finished high school or engaged in some college on average respondents' aspire to and believe realistically that they will complete some college. This difference in mean level of aspirations from Wave 1 to Wave 2, over a 4 year time lapse, is significant with $p = .000$.

The second hypothesis was that this research would show that the aspirations of 1.5 and second generation immigrant youth are more in line with the aspirations of non-immigrant native born U.S. youth, even for those with a more diasporic or transnational identity. Table 3A shows the demographic breakdown of aspirations for U.S. adolescents by racial-ethnic identification and gender (Fermin, 2006).

Table 14: Educational Aspirations of U.S. Non-Immigrant Youth by Gender and Racial-Ethnic Identification

Demographic Group	Mean Aspiration
Asian/Pacific Islander	5.667
Latina/o	4.565
Other	4.741
Black	4.896
White	4.853
Female	4.872
Male	4.850

*Table Adapted from Fermin, 2006.

Table 3B and 3C compiled from the analysis of the present study, shows the mean level of aspirations for CILS respondents by racial-ethnic identification and gender. As you review the tables it can be seen that at Wave 1 the mean level of aspirations that respondents' in the CILS data sample aspire to are slightly, yet not significantly, higher than the aspirations of non-immigrant youth in the U.S. whom are similar in age, grade level, gender and racial-ethnic identification. At Wave 2 however, the mean level of aspirations of CILS respondents' are moderately lower than their non-immigrant peers.

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Table 15: Educational Aspirations of CILS Youth Respondents by Gender and Racial-Ethnic Identification at Wave 1

Demographic Group	Mean Aspiration
Cuban	4.827
Other Caribbean	4.893
Other Latin American	4.889
Other Asian/Pacific Islands	4.761
Mexico	4.562
Philippines	4.599
Vietnam	4.827
Laos	4.429
Nicaragua	4.615
Colombia	4.564
Asian	4.718
Black	4.806
Female	4.888
Male	4.862

Table 16: Educational Aspirations of CILS Youth Respondents by Gender and Racial-Ethnic Identification at Wave 2

Demographic Group	Mean Aspiration
Cuban	4.482
Other Caribbean	4.387
Other Latin American	4.639
Other Asian/Pacific Islands	4.341
Mexico	4.132
Philippines	4.149
Vietnam	4.497
Laos	4.139
Nicaragua	4.185
Colombia	4.344
Asian	4.438
Black	4.326
Female	4.667
Male	4.502

Although the changes in mean aspirations within the CILS sample from Wave 1 to

Wave 2 are significant, the differences in mean aspirations between the CILS sample

(at both Waves) and their non-immigrant peers (Fermin, 2006) are *not* significantly

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different. Thus, the aspirations of 1.5 and second generation youth are statistically similar to those of non-immigrant U.S. youth.

Hypothesis III: Predicting Aspirations over Time

The final hypothesis was that second and 1.5 generation youth's racial-ethnic identity is a mitigating factor that shapes (tempers or inflates) their aspirations for their future. Analysis indicates that the model predictors can help us understand aspirations across time. The model that regresses aspirations for wave 2 by wave 1 demographics and the model predictors explains about 10% of the variation in aspirations at wave 2 with an R square of .091. The wave 1 predictors included in the model were those included in the model for the study parental racial-ethnic identity, respondent racial-ethnic identity, and awareness of discrimination, and aspirations at wave 1. The model is a good fit with $F = 34.219$, which is greater than the critical value of $F = 1.833446$.

Table 17. Regression of aspirations at Wave 2 on basic demographic measures, parental racial-ethnic status, respondent racial-ethnic status and aspirations at Wave 1

|	
Gender	1.902*
Age	-1.121*
Citizenship Status	-.620
National Origin	.015
Length of time in United States	-.755*
Mother's racial-ethnic identity	-.019
father's racial-ethnic identity	-.013
Respondent's racial-ethnic identity	.025
Awareness of Discrimination	-1.022
Aspirations (at Wave 1)	.236*
Constant	39.477
N	3,443
R^2	.091

*p < .05, unstandardized coefficients presented

The model predictors that emerge as significant at the $p \leq .05$ level in the analysis that regresses wave 2 aspirations by wave 1 variables are respondent's age, sex, length of time in the U.S., and respondents' aspirations at wave 1. As we unravel the ways that each of these variables impact the model we can see that the older the respondent was at wave 1, the lower their aspirations at wave 2. The unstandardized coefficient in the model is -1.121, with the value of t_{rage} = -4.126, $p < .05$. In regards to respondent sex, sex is inversely related to aspirations. Respondents identified as female at wave 1 had higher aspirations at wave 2 than those who identified as male at wave 1 as indicated by a value of t_{rsex} = -4.126, $p < .05$. The proxy for generation status was respondents' identified length of time in the U.S. at wave 1, was also inversely related to aspirations at wave 2, with an unstandardized coefficient of .015. The longer the respondent had been in the United States at wave 1, the lower their aspirations at wave 2. This was significant result, with a t value of $t_{generation}$ = -2.146, $p < .05$ and an unstandardized coefficient of -.755. As one might expect, the strongest impact on aspirations at wave 2 are respondent aspirations at wave 1. In this model, the value of $t_{aspirations}1$ = 15.401, $p <.05$, indicating that the higher respondents' aspirations are at wave 1, the higher respondents' aspirations at wave 2.

STUDY MODEL: UNDERSTANDING IMAPCTS ON ASPIRATIONS

The conceptual model that guided the study and was tested in analysis is illustrated in Figure 2. The model consists of the following major components: 1) Youth Aspirations, which serves as the dependent variable of the study; 2) Parental Racial Ethnic Identity, which act as An important variable influencing youth aspirations via the

primary independent variable; 3) Respondent Racial-Ethnic identity. The framework of

the model presented also incorporates social domains such as 4) Discrimination and 5)

Racial Equality Awareness, both exogenous variables which influence the respondents'

racial-ethnic identity.

FIGURE 2: MODEL TESTED FOR THIS STUDY
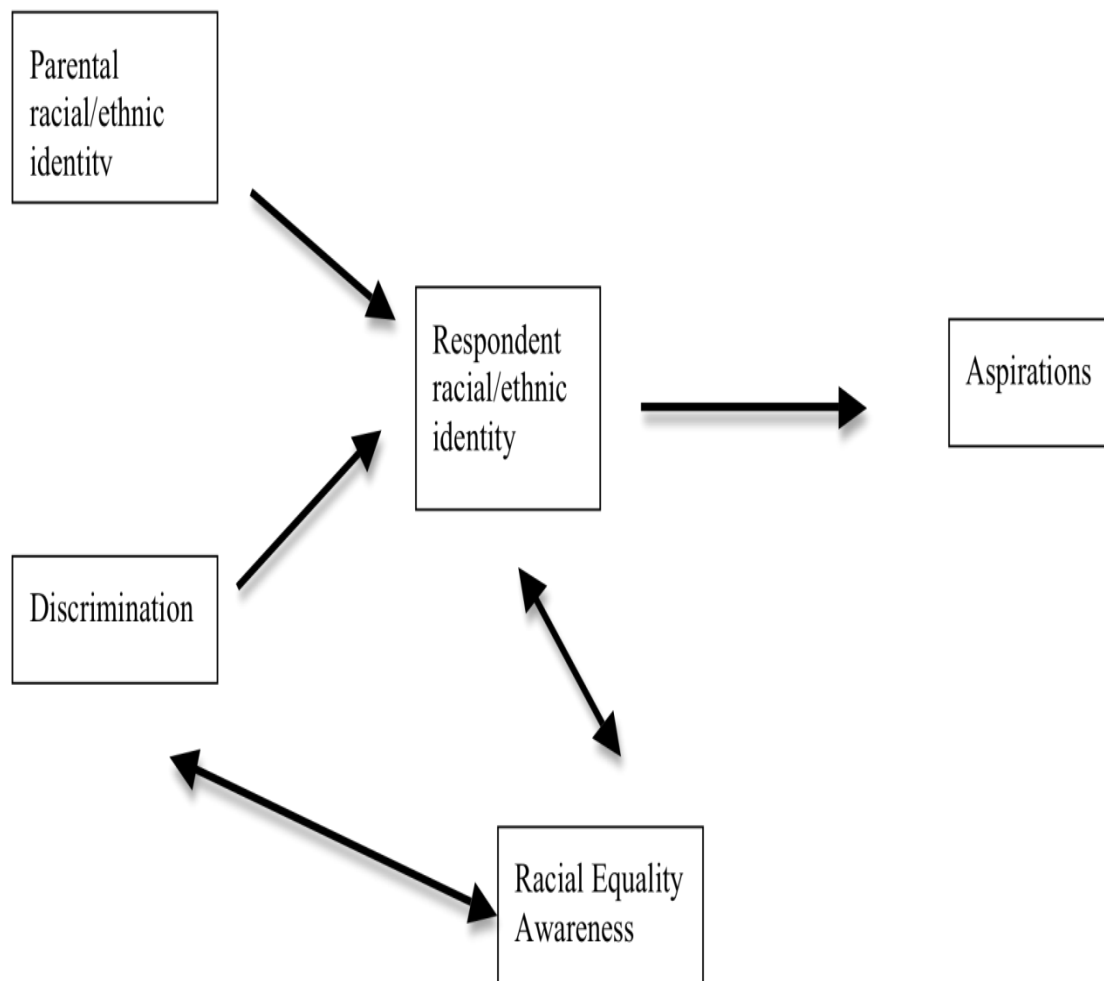
As you review the model from left to right, the foundational concepts are that the racial/ethnic identities of young people are shaped (a) by the racial/ethnic identities of their caregivers (Stevenson, 1995; Ogbu, 1979; McHale, Crouter, Kim, and Burton, 2006), particularly their primary caregivers or parents, through enculturation and socialization processes, and (b) by experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination that they observe and/or experience (Feagin, 1992; Wallace, 2008; Vandiver, Fhagen-Smith, and Cokley, 2001). Moreover, the awareness that these young people possess of racial (in)equality in the U.S., in concert with and independent of experienced or observed discrimination, also shapes their own racial/ethnic identity (Feagin,1992). What this study sought to demonstrate is the robustness of the final relationship in the model: a young person's racial/ethnic identity directly conditions the contours of their aspirations.

The results of the analyses demonstrate that the model predictors contribute uniquely and significantly to the model in most of the ways that the research hypotheses predicted. The regression analyses indicated that respondent racial-ethnic identification did not consistently contribute uniquely or significantly to the study model as the literature would lead us to predict. This was a predictable potentiality when the research was proposed; since, based on the conceptual framework of the present study it is believed that respondent racial ethnic identity is a mitigating variable through which the forces of parental racial-ethnic identity and experiences with discrimination are processed and funneled.

FIGURE 3: RESEARCH MODEL WITH STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS
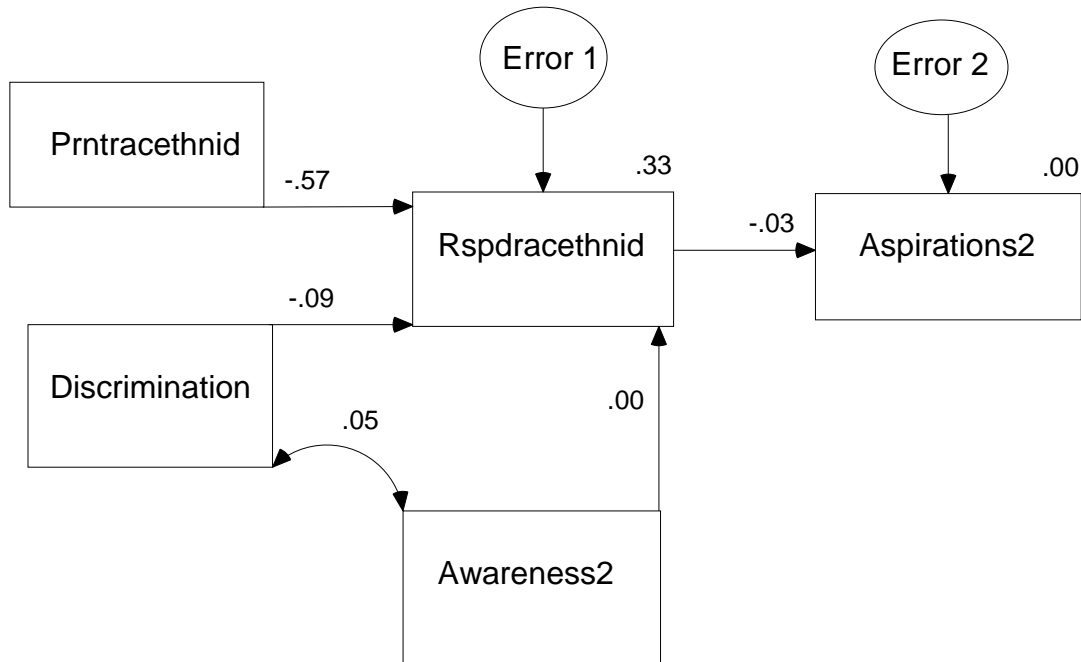
The results from AMOS analysis of the proposed model, including the path

coefficients, are displayed above in Figure 3. The analyses indicated that the model is a

good fit and that the minimum saturation is achieved with the model as initially

proposed. For this model the path coefficient for the relationship between the

exogenous variable parental racial-ethnic identity and endogenous variable respondent

racial-ethnic identity is -.57, indicating an inverse relationship between parental racial-

ethnic identity and respondent racial-ethnic identity. The path coefficient for the

relationship between the other primary exogenous variable discrimination and the

endogenous variable respondent racial-ethnic identity is -.09, also indicating an inverse

relationship between these model predictors. The relationship between the two

exogenous variables Awareness and Discrimination is positive, measuring at .05. The

relationship between the endogenous, and hypothesized mitigating, model predictor

respondent racial-ethnic identity and the dependent variable Aspirations (at wave 2) is an inverse one, measuring -.03. This relationship, along with the similar relationship between discrimination and respondent racial-ethnic identity, warranted a follow-up analysis using AMOS to determine exactly how much the contribution of parental racial-ethnic identity is mitigating via respondent's racial-ethnic identity.

Secondary AMOS analysis indicated that the standardized indirect effect of the relationship between parental racial-ethnic identity and Aspirations (at Wave 2) is positive, measuring at .20. The secondary analysis also revealed that the standardized indirect effect of the relationship between the other primary exogenous variable, Discrimination, and Aspirations (at Wave 2) is positive, measuring at .09. The exogenous variable Awareness2 has a standardized indirect effect of .003 on the primary exogenous variable Discrimination; while the effect of Discrimination on respondents' racial-ethnic identification remains the same in the secondary analysis, measuring -.09. The relationship between respondents' racial-ethnic identity and Aspirations (at Wave 2) also remained stable in the secondary analysis. Through the secondary AMOS analysis the model remains a good fit, with saturation and significance thresholds achieved, as seen in the figure on the next page.

FIGURE 4: SATURATED MODEL WITH STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS
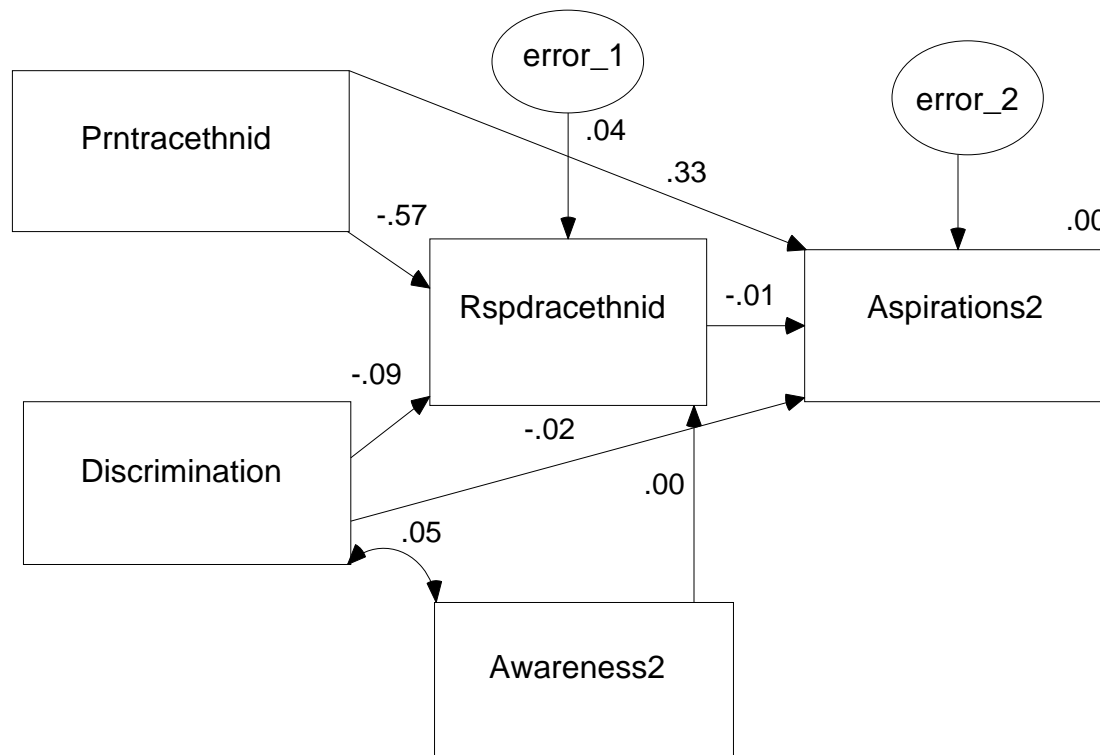
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This study examined a very common milestone for young people, constructing

and pursuing educational and occupational goals for their futures. This research sought

to expand our conceptual and theoretical thinking on the integration of the social and

structural elements of race in young people's navigations of social structure. This

dissertation explored the very real empirical impacts of this longstanding, yet enigmatic,

non-material aspect of our culture on the activities and decisions of young folks

creating, maintaining and pursuing their aspirations.

There are three important generalized findings from this investigation. The first is

that the aspirations of immigrant youth are sensitive to demographic variables in similar

ways to the aspirations of domestic U.S. youth. The simple model that includes the

basic demographic variables explains nearly three percent of the variation in aspirations

among the sample. Secondly, the aspirations of 1.5 and second generation youth are

statistically similar to those of non-immigrant U.S. youth. Although there is a significant difference in the aspirations of 1.5 and second generation youth over time, this is similar and statistically on par with their U.S. counterparts, accounting for age, race and gender. Lastly, the present investigation was able to demonstrate that for second and 1.5 generation youth racial-ethnic identity is a mitigating factor that shapes (tempers or inflates) their aspirations for their future. The results indicate very strongly that race as a social construct is much more than something that one encounters and must deal with or take on; it is an aspect of culture that is intertwined among the social mechanisms young people use to make decisions that impact the trajectory of their lives.

Analysis indicates that at both wave 1 and wave 2 the aspirations of immigrant youth are sensitive to demographic variables in ways similar to the aspirations of domestic U.S. youth. All demographic variables contribute uniquely and significantly to the model except respondent's citizenship status. This is a crucially poignant element to highlight, because citizenship status is an impassioned topic amidst academic and political circles.

The most relevant of these issues as it concerns the contributions of the present study is what this research foreshadows for adaptation. At the core of deliberations on segmented assimilation, is the idea that differential modes of incorporation and resultant variations in adaptation impact the perceived worth 1.5 and second generation immigrants attach to their position in the social structure. This understanding of social position is conceived to impact identity, and in particular racial-ethnic identity, the essential substance of this project. However, citizenship – the official granting of status as a *real* American – is not significant.

It can be extrapolated from this finding that the socio-cognitive understanding of opportunity, bias and racialized structures is applied and lived despite formal norms of belonging. So, regardless of citizenship status 1.5 and second generation immigrant adolescents and emerging adults see themselves and their experiences with race, racial-ethnic identification and discrimination as par for the course living as residents of the U.S. This could be apprehended as an ironic double edged sword signaling belonging in the U.S. context as well as the end of a social era that exocticizes non-white foreigners.

Or, it could be a social marker indicating an entrenched negative stigma for the United States. Adolescent and emerging adult 1.5 and second generation young people internalize that the U.S. structure is racialized and biased to everyone, even non-immigrant youth of color. So these young people do not perceive it as a matter of their foreign-nature. They could quite possibly reflexively integrate the socio-structural map of the U.S. as a discriminatory and racialized one that is difficult to navigate; one that actually signals its acceptance of who you understand yourself to be with discrimination and racialized unequal opportunities.

This contradictory aspect of acceptance then diminishes citizenship status and propels the salience of racial-ethnic identity forward. As such, measurements of experiences with discrimination and awareness of racial (in)equality may actually be indicative of adaption, assimilation and increasingly developed identity; rather than tools leading to maladaptive and disassimilative behaviors that thwart identity development. This theoretical speculation is afforded by the findings of the present study. It is a

poignant contribution to the scholarly and political conversations that frame the significance of this research.

Notably citizenship, and the comforts it affords, was not significantly salient. Particularly for young people like those in the CILS study, immigrant youth and youth whom are the children of immigrants, programs or policies that would address the different issues that impact young people's aspirations based on differences in gender and age, rather than citizenship status, may be more productive. In this study's basic model for the second wave of data all demographic variables contribute uniquely and significantly to the model except citizenship. Compared to wave 1, gender at wave 2 has a larger contribution to variance in aspirations. Moreover, the age of respondents at wave 2 has a smaller unique contribution. Both the variables age and gender remain significant in explaining the variance in aspirations among immigrant youth.

As we unravel the ways that each of these variables impact the model we can see that the older the respondent was at wave 1, the lower their aspirations at wave 2 with the value of t_{rage} = -4.126, p < .05. In regards to respondent gender, gender is inversely related to aspirations. Respondents that identified as female at wave 1 had higher aspirations at wave 2 than those who identified as male at wave 1 as indicated by a value of t_{rsex} = -4.126, p < .05. This is predictable and on par with the respondents' U.S. counterparts. Females tend to have higher aspirations than males and older adolescents have less ambitious aspirations than younger adolescents. Age is a pivotal aspect of understanding young people's aspirations, because as they begin to understand the specific educational and training commitments of certain occupations they may very well decide to adjust their goals. Thus, the sample in the present study

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showed no significant differences from what we already know of native born U.S. adolescents gives us confidence that changes we see in aspirations over time in the study's sample are a consequence of the variables and predictors included in the model. In light of these findings, it is more than a possibility that the continued use of assimilation, even if it is conceptually and theoretically revised may be empirically limiting our ability to create appropriate and operational concepts and theories.

The model and hypotheses of the present study, expected respondents' racial ethnic identity to contribute, even if only slight, in its own right to the aspirations that immigrant youth in the sample had for their future. In wave 1 of the data, the unique contribution of respondent's ethnic identity to the model in this study is significant. Thus, for every one year increase in aspirations, respondent self-identification becomes increasing complex (i.e. hyphenation and/or multiple identities, diasporic). Adding discrimination variables increases the model's ability to explain variance in immigrant youth's aspirations. Although adding in measurements of immigrant youth's experiences with discrimination increases the model's ability to explain variance in aspirations among these youth, the unique contribution of the discrimination variables is not significant.

This is not surprising, nor is it problematic. The model for this research presents youth experiences and understandings of discrimination as an aspect of social reality that is mediated through their racial-ethnic identity. The assumption of the model was that discrimination variables would *not* contribute directly to the variance in the aspirations of immigrant youth but would be mediated through racial-ethnic identity. However, this is contrary to the understandings presented by the framework of

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segmented assimilation, which proposes that identity influences group affinity and behaviors that increase stigmatization and/or discrimination - meaning experiences with discrimination mediate racial-ethnic identity.

This research demonstrates that the impact experiences with discrimination may have on aspirations is heavily mediated by the racial-ethnic identity of 1.5 and second generation youth. Consequently, we can conclude that this dampens the strength of segmented assimilation to rely on descriptions of oppositional culture, or the lack of resiliency, to explain low ambitions or the lack of upward social mobility or status attainment. This has significant implications for scholars of race, as well as scholars of assimilation, including segmented assimilation.

This investigation demonstrated that variance in the racial-ethnic identity of 1.5 and 2nd generation youth is sensitive to the racial-ethnic identification of their parents and that respondents' racial-ethnic identities are sensitive to their experiences with discrimination. Thus the impact of these variables on aspirations is mediated through respondents' racial-ethnic identity as indicated by the model.

Although racial-ethnic identification among the sample's youth does not operate the way that segmented assimilation depicts, there is definitely still an impact on aspirations from both the structural and social aspects of racial-ethnic identity. This research indicated that second and 1.5 generation immigrant youth's racial-ethnic identity is a mitigating factor that shapes (often tempering) their aspirations for their future. Adding respondents' ethnic identity to the model only slightly increases the ability of the model to explain the variance in aspirations. This is as the researcher expected, since aspirations between non-immigrant racial-ethnic groups differ only

slightly, yet there is consistently some amount of significant influence on aspirations

from young people's racial-ethnic identity. Moreover, youth racial-ethnic identity,

particularly for non-white (e.g. non-majority, non-mainstream) youth, is heavily

influenced by incidences of racial socialization. Whether implicit or explicit these youth

receive social cues and lessons from their caregivers and other agents of socialization

(i.e. teachers, counselors, coaches, etc.) concerning mechanisms of social identity, in-

and out-group norms and even social distancing.

The results of the analyses demonstrate that the model predictors contribute

uniquely and significantly to the model in most of the ways that the research hypotheses

predicted. Respondent racial-ethnic identification does not consistently contribute

uniquely or significantly to the study model as the literature would lead us to predict.

This was a predictable research result, as based on the conceptual framework of the

present study it is believed that respondent racial ethnic identity is a mitigating variable

through which the forces of parental racial-ethnic identity and experiences with

discrimination are processed and funneled. Some might conclude that this makes a

young person some sort of black box in which social and structural components of race-

ethnicity are filtered into and then emerge from when decisions are made and structures

must be navigated. However, the present study's model and conceptual underpinnings

suggest otherwise.

The initial model for the study (pictured again below) indicated that the

racial/ethnic identities of young people are shaped (a) by the racial/ethnic identities of

their caregivers, particularly their primary caregivers or parents, through enculturation

and socialization processes, and (b) by experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination that

they observe and/or experience. Furthermore, the awareness that these young people possess of racial (in)equality in the U.S., in concert with and independent of experienced or observed discrimination, also shapes their own racial/ethnic identity. What the present study sought to demonstrate is the robustness of the final relationship in the model: a young person's racial/ethnic identity directly conditions the contours of their aspirations.

Original CILS research indicated similarly; there is a strong dampening effect on aspirations with increasing acculturation (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; 2006). However, the focus, from the perspective of segmented assimilation, is that young immigrants of color are placed in a position as victims of social structure, rather than agents experiencing and navigating structure. From the theoretical framework of segmented assimilation inequalities or challenges that immigrant youth or the children of immigrants face concerning structural incorporation, racism, discrimination, or class position are understood as external barriers that youth must overcome. This model is classically sociological in nature; yet the empirical evidence from the present inquiry indicate that a multi-disciplinary approach more firmly rooted in social psychology may better serve our scholarly interests. This is the primary difference between the model in the present study and previous models.

FIGURE 5: THE ORIGINAL RESEARCH MODEL FOR THE PRESENT STUDY
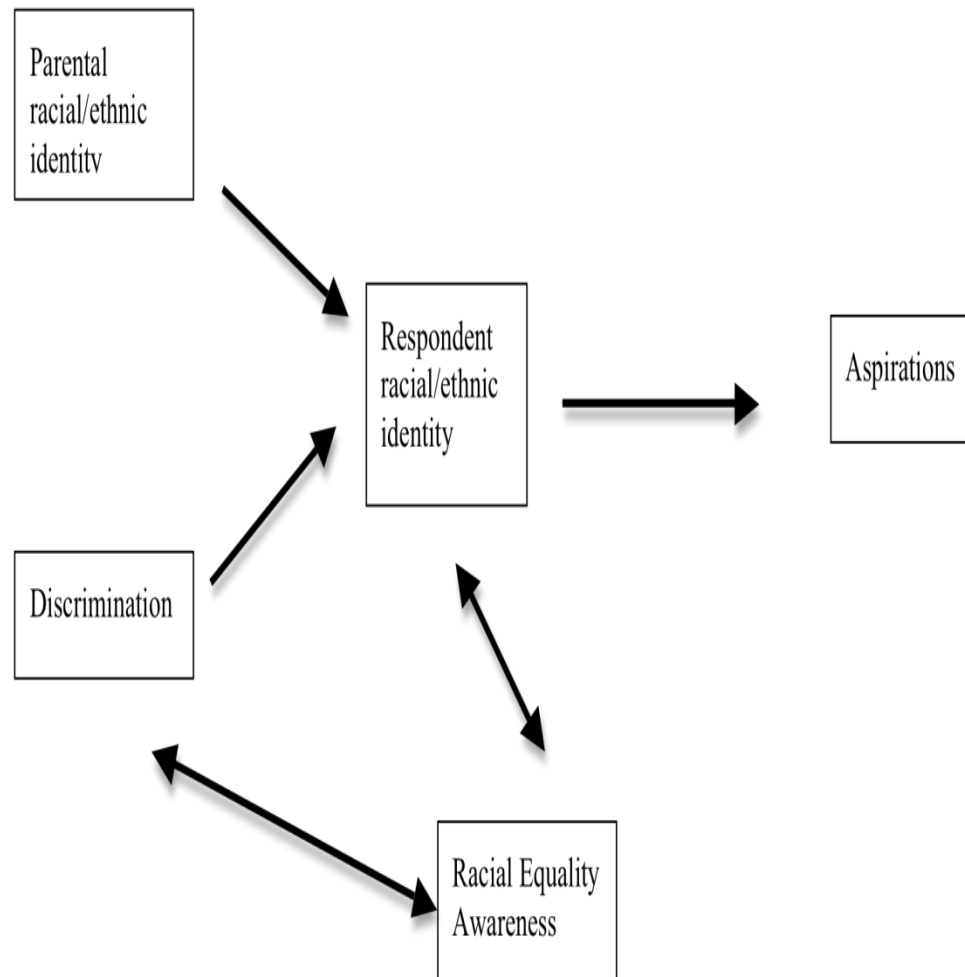
The present study not only confirms that there is a dampening impact of acculturation. It goes further and indicates the level at which racial-ethnic identity, as well as experiences with and an understanding of the racial-ethnic structure of the United States contributes to the temperance of aspirations. Figure 2 shows that the findings of this investigation confirm the robustness of this relationship.

Likewise, analysis demonstrated that diasporic and transnational aspects of racial-ethnic identity, such as group incorporation and structural context are also pivotal

in the models ability to *fully* explain how a respondents' racial-ethnic identity is critical to

the model's ability to explain the variance in aspirations, yet not consistently significant

in it's unique contribution to the model. The ability of conceptual tools from diasporic

and transnational studies to expand our understanding of the social mechanisms that

impact decision making in goal setting and future planning for immigrant youth is

demonstrated by the secondary analysis using the saturated model for the study (shown

in Figure 6 below).

Figure 6: SATURATED MODEL OF RESULTS WITH STANDARDIZED
COEFFICIENTS
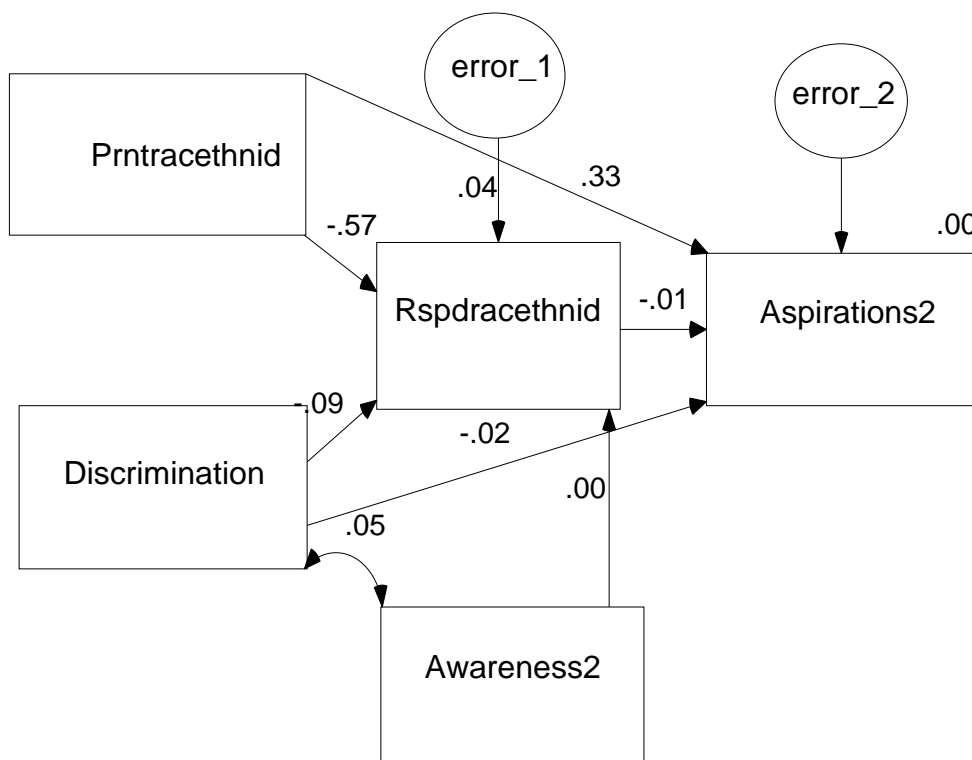
Ethnicity is a product of the dialect between continuities of cultural behavior and

social constructions that are defined or reinforced by a particular nation-state. Pre-

migration ethnicity is an important if overlooked aspect of post-migration-ethnicity. This is especially so among subgroups who were ethnic minorities in the country of origin, such as the Armenian (Christian), Jewish, and Bahai ethno-religious minorities from Iran, in contrast to the dominant Muslim majority group (Rumbaut, 1997). Understanding the ability of immigrant youth to make decisions requiring the assessment of goals and life chances, necessitates that researchers have the ability to explain and comprehend the manner in which these same young folks are processing their social and economic incorporation. This requires the consideration of historical and cultural factors that are encompassed in the frameworks of diaspora, as well as transnational. Ideas of transnationalism and diaspora are similar in the consequences these social arrangements have for identity and globalization. However, they differ in the criterion necessary for participation in these social arrangements.

Although the discussions in the literature are conceptually interesting, there are debates that could make the understanding of identities that are diasporic or transnational muddy. Accounting for theory, as well as the particulars of the CILS data, for the present study operationalized diasporic identity and transnational identity in a very specific manner. CILS participants whose responses to survey items indicated a participation in and/or an awareness of the importance of their family's (or communities') participation in traditionally transnational behaviors and activities were considered to have a transnational identity if their responses to items concerning racial-ethnic identity indicated a historical or political awareness of importance of the racial-ethnic identity they chose and its relationship to the identity of their parents and other community or group members. If they engaged in these transnational behaviors without this type of

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awareness also being indicated in their survey responses they were not considered to have a transnational identity for this study.

As it concerns respondents considered to have a diasporic identity for this study, those participants whose survey responses indicated a historical or socio-cultural awareness of the racial-ethnic identity they chose and its relationship to the identity of their parents and other community or group members, yet did not describe participation or were not aware of traditionally understood transnational behaviors or activities as described above were categorized as having a diasporic identity. This was a necessary distinction operationally, however it should be highlighted that this is not the way that transnationalism and disaporic identities are typically understood or discussed conceptually. Theoretically, the two can and are understood to be parts of the same conceptually cloth, with many descriptions parsing out transnationalism as a state of identity that not all diasporas, by the nature of their definitive creation, have the privilege of claiming despite how they feel about transnational activities. The decision regarding how to make the conceptual distinction for the present study ultimately rested upon the theoretical fact that the primary distinctions between diaspora and transnationalism in the literature bound diasporic understanding as geo-social and transnational understandings as geo-political.

Diaspora and transnationalism expand our understanding in the social sciences of ethnicity and immigration in an era where the identity and socio-cultural activities of migrants are not limited by the territorial boundaries of a single nation-state. The ideas of history, structure, incorporation, mobility and hierarchical hegemony are the critical components of diaspora and transnationalism and are represented in the model via the

predictor variables identity (both of the parents and of the respondent), discrimination and awareness. The present model for this study (as shown in Figure 6) is built upon the assumptions that there are both direct and indirect impacts of each of the predictor variables and that the unique contribution of each predictor variable is sensitive to the unique contribution of the other predictor variables in the model. Secondary analysis of the model indicates that the social mechanisms of race are not merely a hurdle or added obstacle to an already complex structural journey of decisions about one's future. The social mechanisms of race are inextricable from the entire process. Secondary analysis indicated that there are positive indirect effects between parental racial-ethnic identity and Aspirations (at Wave 2); as well as positive indirect effects between the other primary exogenous variable, Discrimination, and Aspirations (at Wave 2) and awareness of racism and racialization and experiences with discrimination.

CONCLUSION

The idea that social understandings of race and racialization, along with structural discrimination impact how folks decide to interact and navigate social structure may not be earth shattering. It may only be confirmation of what the discipline already knows and society already suspects concerning ideas of race in a society that intensely desires to move in the direction of a post-racial society. However, what is poignant, and possibly heartbreaking, about this idea as confirmed by the present study is that this mechanism works the same for young people who are new to the social context in which these types of racial mechanisms are operating. It is tragic that racialization and structures that operate unequally as a consequence of the social mechanism of race are either so ubiquitous or so prodigious that it is understood as inescapable, even when one changes national contexts. This is what immigrant children and the children of immigrants seemingly come to know.

This research has contributed to the scholarship on aspirations, race and assimilation (segmented and otherwise). From the results of the research we can

conclude that race has several social aspects that impact the way that young people make decisions about their future: 1) identity; 2) racial equality awareness or racialization; and 3) discrimination. When it comes to understanding how race impacts decisions and decision making processes this study has highlighted that young people integrate the concept of race into their lives by employing it to understand who they are, who society sees them as and where they fit into the structural processes of society, and what opportunities they understand as available or unavailable to those who have similar racial-ethnic identities.

This is a different understanding of race as applied to young people, particularly immigrant youth. Often immigrant youth are depicted as taking on a racial-ethnic identity, something that can and is used instrumentally or symbolically. Or, they are understood to take on a group identity and race is seen as something outside of them, inside the group, and something that they as a part of the group must overcome. This research shows that race is much more socio-cognitively integrated into the social processes, self-concepts and life-chances of immigrant youth.

One of the ideas explored with this project was that although the aspirations of young people native to the U.S. with no foreign-parentage and the aspirations of 1.5 and second generation young people operated in very similar ways, their understandings of racialiazation, discrimination and racial (in)equality awareness operate somewhat differently. Moreover, I wanted to highlight some of the ways that this may be different as a means of provoking intellectual curiosity, as well as possible areas of theoretical and empirical work. Specifically what developed is that results of the

present study demonstrated that the 1.5 and second generation respondents in the CILS data possessed a global understanding of race and ethnicity.

A global understanding of race and ethnicity is a cognitive apprehension that racialized and/or discriminatory social and political mechanisms operate in a nation-states yet differ as one moves between geo-political spaces. Folks that possess this outlook on racial-ethnic relations understand that one can move to and between places with differing relations, yet there is no escaping the social trappings of race and ethnicity as a result of migration. This understanding gives them a social awareness that mechanisms of race and ethnicity are globally ubiquitous, yet how these structures operate and why they are in place differs. Thus their own racial-ethnic identity and racialized actions and behaviors can be as fluid as their actual global movement.

The research also contribute uniquely to the scholarship on aspirations. The future goals that adolescents and young adults have for education and work is intricately connected to the social aspects of their self-concept: how they think others see them; how they see themselves integrated into various aspects of society; and the position they understand they hold presently and can hold in the future. This research indicated that the aspirations immigrant youth create and possess for their futures are sensitive. They are sensitive to the social aspects of race (identity, racialization and discrimination) included in the study. This research reiterates in many ways that aspirations must be understood as a cognitive construct that is inflated (grown, encouraged) or tempered (discouraged, decreased); however it demonstrates the shared onus of influence among structural, cultural and personal social mechanisms.

The aspirations literature demonstrates repeatedly that throughout adolescence and young adulthood aspirations have minimal sensitivity to aspects of social class. For decades the literature has demonstrated that aspirations are remarkably high for ALL young people in spite of what may predict intuitively based on sociological understandings of social class and social reproduction (Schnieder & Stevenson, 1999; MacLeod, 1995; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970; Bourdieu, 2000). Moreover, it has been illustrated empirically that observed differences in aspirations between young people of various social classes are often related to a reflexive understanding of (their) social position (MacLeod, 1995; Patillo,1999; Willis, 1981; Wilson, 1990). This is to say that among aspirational differences in young people of different social classes or observable differences in aspirations over time between young people of different social classes it has more to do with how they understand themselves to be socially perceived because of their social class, than actually directly because of their social class.

This complex illustration of social class is explored extensively in the literature concerning achievement, yet has remained enigmatic in the empirical exploration of aspirations. Much of the literature on young people that illustrates how social class works and the ways in which it is relevant does so through the empirical work on achievement, not on aspirations. This may in part be due to the imbalance the current literature has concerning work that investigates achievement as opposed to work that focuses on aspirations.

Research has long established and consistently demonstrated that the best predictor of a young person's ultimate level of educational and occupational achievement is the aspirations they possess as adolescents. This has contributed to the

development of empirical work that explores and utilizes aspirations. It has also led to aspirations being conferred the status of an independent variable, one that is rarely explored without pairing it with the concept of achievement. This is limiting.

The literature could benefit from increased theoretical, conceptual and empirical explorations that evaluate and consider aspirations as an outcome in and of itself. There is seldom a case in the literature that achievement outcomes are considered to emerge a priori goals and intentions. Consequently, it is prudent to acknowledge aspirations as something other than an inconsequential pass through or a benign black box.

As it stands, for the model presented in this research, the manner in which social class works to influence aspirations is not considered separate from the manner in which social class shapes racial-ethnic identity, experiences with discrimination or the way that young people become aware of racial-ethnic (in)equality. Much of the current literature illustrates the varied means through which social class sets the tenor for how we experience race, education, discrimination, work and socialization. This may be an imperfect assumption, yet it is the primary assumption of much of the literature at this time and of the present study.

This assumption definitely highlights an empirical frontier that will serve many arenas of sociology well when explored. Had the present study attempted to parse out social class, access to resources based on social class and other issues like socialization and school/college readiness based on social class the dissertation would have taken a completely different direction. The decision was made to build the models included in the dissertation with the current and extensively accepted assumption that

understanding of social class are intertwined in how folks see their experiences and identity, yet aspirations are stable despite differences in social class.

Aspirations are often understood as rigid sets of ideas that are produced solely as a result of the social position young people hold. Once again without assigning agency to young people, and thus understanding unfulfilled aspirations as succumbing to strong structural pull or overwhelming group think. Meanwhile fulfilled aspirations are understood as a birthright to some and to others a social feat that is an unexpected accomplishment. This research illuminates the ways that young people, even immigrant youth with less human capital than non-foreign parentage youth, use sophisticated logic and agency to navigate and demonstrate savvy decision making as it concerns their future.

As it concerns assimilation, and segmented assimilation in particular, the study illuminated that we may very well be at the frontier of our understanding of the process of incorporation as it concerns the idea. Assimilation itself may not be what we contemporarily observe. It may not be entirely useful to continue applying theories of assimilation to new empirical observations, even if the theoretical suppositions are adjusted slightly. This study has demonstrated that development we highlight new understandings with fresh analytical lenses that add the perspectives of diaspora and transnationalism, and layers the lenses of identity, discrimination, racialization, aspirations and adolescent development.

With these fresh perspectives, the results of this research indicate that the models for this study are stable and robust and worth exploring further. They indicate that the knowledge we can glean from theories that go beyond the frontiers of

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assimilation and segmented assimilation are eye opening and highlight sophisticated nuances in the activities and behaviors of 1.5 and second generation adolescents and young adults. As groundbreaking as assimilation and segmented assimilation have been in increasing our knowledge and sharpening our scientific tools, this study highlights that it may very well be time to begin to break new ground.

The research described herein contributes to our present understanding of immigrant youth and identity in several ways. First, it provides an understanding of the way that identity is integrated and used by youth to make decisions about their lives. Several studies to date have worked to create typologies of identity formation among the immigrant children and the children of immigrants. However, these studies have stopped short of investigating the impact of identity on the goals and aspirations of its possessor. The present investigation took this next step, demonstrating the reflexive mechanisms of racial-ethnic identity and structural processes.

Secondly, this study illuminates how identity changes over time for immigrant youth and the ways these changes are related to changes in aspirations. Additionally, this study demonstrated the various aspects of aspirations by placing a focus on what these young people actually hope for in their lives and how these hopes and goals change as they gain information about the opportunity structures they are navigating, as well as how they are understood, and wish, to fit within the structure. This work has highlighted the changes in aspirations that occur over time and the social processes and factors related to these changes.

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