

# Immigration and Identities: Race and Ethnicity in a Changing United States

Edited By

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In the last half century, the United States has undergone a profound demographic transformation in the wake of a massive inflow of immigrants. In 2014, immigrants represented approximately 13 percent of the U.S. population; together with their U.S. born children the figure was nearly 25 percent, a remarkable 80 million people. This growth in immigration, mainly from Latin America, Asia, and the Caribbean, has altered the racial and ethnic composition of the nation. The non-Hispanic white population in the United States declined from 83 to 62 percent between 1970 and 2014, while the Hispanic population grew from 4 to 17 percent in the same period. Asians, less than one percent of the U.S. population in 1970, are now slightly more than five percent. Indeed, Asians are currently the fastest-growing immigrant group. The number of black immigrants (from Africa and the Caribbean) has also increased, with approximately one out of ten blacks in the United States now foreign-born. What is also notable in recent years is the geographic spread of immigrants away from traditional receiving states to new gateways, especially in the southern and midwestern United States. The result has been greater racial and ethnic diversity in a wide swath of urban and rural neighborhoods across the country.

In seeking to understand the effects of the changing ethnic, racial, and immigrant-origin composition of the U.S. population and the growing racial/ethnic diversity throughout the country, this issue of *RSF* puts the spotlight on shifts in ethnic, racial and national identities, including the nature of these shifts and their implications. It has a three-pronged focus: (1) how those of immigrant origin as well as long-established natives have come to identify themselves in terms of race, ethnicity, and nationality; (2) how members of each group are viewed and categorized by others in terms of ethnicity and race; and (3) the impact of these identity processes on interactions among members of different ethnoracial groups. We invite proposals from scholars across a wide variety of social science disciplines, including anthropology, economics, geography, political science, psychology, sociology, and urban studies. We also welcome contributions based on qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches, as well as large-scale national and/or small-scale studies. In addition, we are interested in proposals that bring together insights from, and aim to bridge the sometimes separate, existing literatures on race, ethnicity, and immigration.

Below is a list of topics and questions that proposals might address. The list is not exhaustive. It is designed to be suggestive about the nature and role of changing ethnic and racial identities among the native- as well as foreign-born in response to the inflow of immigrants in communities throughout the United States.

### **Identities: Formation, Definition, and Change**

\*How do immigrants define and reconceptualize their ethnic, racial and national identities as they make new lives in American society? Are native-born Americans also redefining themselves in ethnic or racial terms in light of demographic changes related to immigration?

\*What structural features and inequalities, political dynamics, cultural patterns, and psychological processes underlie the ethnic and racial identities that have developed among different immigrant-origin groups?

\*How do generation, gender, class, and legal status affect the formation of racial and ethnic identities among individuals in different immigrant-origin groups? Do types of immigrant geographic locations make a difference in patterns of identity formation in, for instance, new urban and rural gateways vs. traditional destinations?

\*Intermarriage is critical in understanding the impact of immigration on ethnoracial identities. How does intermarriage affect the ethnic and racial identities of both partners and, perhaps most importantly, the multiethnic and multiracial children from these unions? How do these identity effects of intermarriage differ for Asians, Latinos, and blacks as well as for immigrants of different national origin within these broad categories?

\* Panethnicity may develop when a number of previously discrete ethnic groups join together, often in reaction to the dominant group's tendency to homogenize them. What factors promote or discourage panethnic identities and attachments?

\* To what extent have Latino and Asian panethnic categories become part of the identities of immigrants in different groups?

\*To what extent do immigrants of African ancestry and their children find common ground with African Americans in a panethnic black identity?

### **Identities: In the Eyes of the Beholders**

\*How are those of immigrant origin identified, in racial and ethnic terms, by others in their own immigrant group? by immigrants in other national-origin groups? by long-established native minorities and whites? In what ways do these views vary by local context, including different urban settings and "new" vs. "traditional" destinations, and what factors might account for these variations (e.g., local attitudes, media depictions, demographics of the community)?

\*Are there differences in how immigrants are viewed, compared to the second and third generation members of the same immigrant origin group? If so, what factors help explain the differences?

\* How do a range of social and economic characteristics, such as gender, class, religion, and legal status, interact with race and ethnicity in shaping how different ethnoracial and immigrant-origin groups are categorized by others? Are these other defining characteristics important to consider both in terms of those making the judgments as well as those who are targets of the judgments?

\* Do the identity categories used by immigrants themselves correspond to the categories applied to them by long-term U.S. residents?

\*Has the large-scale immigration of the last half century altered the social construction of blackness and whiteness?

\*To what extent are the children of mixed unions constrained in their identity options by racial and ethnic categorizations in the wider society?

### **Identities and Intergroup Relations**

\*To what extent do racial and ethnic identities affect patterns of interaction between members of various immigrant groups and between immigrants and native minorities and whites? In what ways, and under what circumstances, do these identities influence political engagement and participation? Can superordinate identities, such as American, outweigh ethnic and racial identities in certain interactions? If so, under what circumstances?

\*It is commonplace to say that ethnic identity is situational and fluid, but what does this actually mean among different immigrant groups? How are these shifts tied to self-presentation concerns with various audiences and social contexts?

\*Do patterns of intergroup interaction and their links to identity formation vary across different types of immigrant gateways, for example, new destinations vs. traditional gateway cities?

\*What is the role of racial and ethnic identities in intergenerational relations between immigrant parents and their U.S. born children? Are discrepancies in identity claims a source of generational conflict?

\*Under what conditions are the identities of native minorities and immigrants likely to coalesce around shared economic and political interests? Under what conditions do they lead to conflict?

\*How does differential treatment and experience with discrimination affect the ways in which identity is expressed by immigrants in intergroup settings? How do intergroup

interactions relate to a sense of belonging to a community, trust in authorities, and political engagement? How does legal status influence these processes?

\*If racially and ethnically mixed unions have an impact on the identities of partners and their offspring, do these identities, in turn, have an effect on relations between those in different ethnoracial groups within family and kinship networks as well as in other contexts?

\*What are the consequences of panethnic identities for intergroup relations in communities and local institutions as well as for political participation and organization? What factors promote the salience of panethnic identities in particular situations and relations? How is panethnicity expressed on behalf of the broader ethnic grouping?

### **Anticipated Timeline**

Prospective contributors should submit a CV and an abstract (up to two pages in length, single or double spaced) of their study along with up to two pages of supporting material (e.g. tables, figures, pictures, etc) no later than **5 PM EST on May 2, 2016** to:

**<https://rsfjournal.onlineapplicationportal.com>**

All submissions must be original work that has not been previously published in part or in full. Only abstracts submitted to <https://rsfjournal.onlineapplicationportal.com> will be considered. Each paper will receive a \$1,000 honorarium when the issue is published. The journal issue is being edited by Kay Deaux, Distinguished Professor Emerita at CUNY Graduate Center and Visiting Research Scholar, New York University; Katharine M. Donato, Professor of Sociology at Vanderbilt University; and Nancy Foner, Distinguished Professor of Sociology at Hunter College and the CUNY Graduate Center. All questions regarding this issue should be directed to Suzanne Nichols, Director of Publications, at [journals@rsage.org](mailto:journals@rsage.org) and not to the email addresses of the editors of the special issue.

A conference will take place at RSF in New York City on **February 17, 2017**. The selected contributors will gather for a one-day workshop to present draft papers (due on 1/17/17, a month prior to the conference) and receive feedback from the other contributors and editors. Travel costs, food, and lodging will be covered by the foundation. Papers will be circulated before the conference. After the conference, the authors will submit their final drafts on or before April 28, 2017. The papers will then be sent out to two additional scholars for peer review. Having received feedback from reviewers and the RSF board, authors will revise their papers before August 1, 2017. The full and final issue will be published in the spring of 2018. Papers will be published open access on the RSF website as well as in several digital repositories, including JSTOR and UPCC/Muse.