

PART 6

Applied Issues in
Identity Development

Identities, Cultures, and Schooling: How Students Navigate Racial-Ethnic, Indigenous, Immigrant, Social Class, and Gender Identities on Their Pathways Through School

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Abstract

How can racial-ethnic minority, immigrant, Indigenous, and low-income youth navigate pathways through school without losing their cultural identities? In this chapter, we draw on writings of Erikson and Tajfel on the development of personal and social group identities across contexts to consider roots and remedies for the *academic pipeline problem*, a global issue of identities and schooling in multicultural societies. We extend these analyses with early interdisciplinary models and recent advances in understanding how *social capital*, *alienation*, and *challenge* shape students' capacities to integrate academic and racial-ethnic identities on their pathways through school. We focus on variation within racial-ethnic groups in the meanings and impact of intragroup discrimination for identities and schooling, highlighting experiences of African American and Indigenous Mexican immigrant youth. Finally, we consider how aligning multilevel theories and tools can support integrating students' academic and racial-ethnic identities; opening academic pipelines; and advancing cycles of research, practice, and policies.

Key Words: schooling, race-ethnicity, Indigenous, immigration, social class, gender, policy, Erikson, social capital, alienation/belonging

The developmental pathways of youth through school can be seen as moving through *academic pipelines* from early childhood to their adult career, family, cultural, and civic identities (Cooper, 2011; Gándara, Larson, Mehan, & Rumberger, 1998; Swail, Cabrera, Lee, & Williams, 2005). Many nations hold ideals that their children will have equal access to schooling and advance through their merits. In reality, for each cohort of children that starts school, the numbers of racial-ethnic minority, immigrant, Indigenous, and low-income youth who graduate from high school, enroll in college, transfer from community college to universities, and complete undergraduate and graduate degrees shrink at each of these transitions—leading to their label as “underrepresented minorities” (URM) (Bowen, Chingos, & McPherson, 2009; Cooper, 2011). For example, in 2010, 88 percent

of European Americans had graduated from high school and 30 percent had graduated from college, compared to 63 percent and 14 percent for Latinos, 77 percent and 13 percent for Native Americans, 84 percent and 20 percent for African Americans, and 89 percent and 52 percent for Asian Americans, respectively (US Census Bureau, 2012). Gender gaps also appear; for example, among European Americans, 47 percent and 53 percent of undergraduates under age 24 are males and females, respectively, compared to 42 percent and 58 percent for Latinos, and 41 percent and 59 percent for African Americans (American Council on Education, 2010). This *academic pipeline problem* makes college enrollments and college-based professions unrepresentative of their broader communities, and its significance is intensifying worldwide as low-income, immigrant, racial-ethnic minority,

and Indigenous youth make up growing segments of primary school enrollments.

Of course, a college education is not the only definition of success, and schooling extends only to primary schools in some regions and to universities in others. But in each cultural group and region worldwide, education is strongly linked to lifelong opportunities. Those alienated from education are at higher risk for marginalized life pathways that are costly for them and their communities. The academic pipeline problem is motivating researchers, educators, and policymakers to consider new approaches to its roots and remedies. Increasingly, these approaches center on the interplay among academic, racial-ethnic, and institutional identities.

Academic and Racial-Ethnic Identities and the Academic Pipeline Problem

Throughout the history of the United States, the price of school success for racial-ethnic minority, immigrant, and Indigenous youth has been for them to “become American” and relinquish their cultures and languages. Parallel dilemmas occur worldwide. In the United States and Canada, now-discredited policies sent Indigenous and immigrant children away from their families to boarding schools that allowed only English to be spoken, consistent with widespread views that schools should assimilate these children (Dewey, 1916). However, in recent years, educators, researchers, and policymakers, along with students, families, and community leaders, have asked how ethnically diverse students can integrate their *academic identities*—seen in making good grades, aspiring to attend college, and pursuing college-based careers—with their *social identities* or sense of belonging to their racial-ethnic, immigrant, Indigenous, gender, and social class groups (Phinney & Alipuria, 1996; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998).

The language and definitions of race, ethnicity, immigration, and culture have been evolving over the history of the United States, along with persisting issues of racism, exclusion, and moral superiority of higher status racial, ethnic, immigrant, and social class groups. Rumbaut (2009) has recounted Benjamin Franklin’s writing with alarm in 1751 about the impossibility of “alien” German newcomers ever integrating with British-descent citizens of Pennsylvania. The enduring complexities of these issues to the present day can be heard when Black, Native American, Latino, and Asian American youth with strong academic identities

are teased for being an “Oreo” (chocolate cookie with white filling), apple, coconut, or “Twinkie” (yellow cake with white filling), respectively. In this chapter, we examine how and in what contexts students’ identities intersect—and for some, become integrated—on their pathways through school.

Chapter Overview

We set the foundation of our chapter in writings about personal and social identities in context by Erikson (1950, 1968a) and Tajfel (1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). To extend our understanding of the developmental contexts of identity development, we then consider early models and recent advances about how three forces—*social capital*, *alienation*, and *challenge*—shape students’ academic and racial-ethnic identities on their pathways through school (Cooper, 2011). First, in his theory of *social capital*, French sociologist Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1986) pointed to the continuity or *cultural reproduction* in social class hierarchies across family generations; recent work has asked how low-income and ethnic minority families and students can disrupt such cultural reproduction by helping children “move up” to a better life. Second, in his pioneering writings on alienation and schooling, educational anthropologist Ogbu, an immigrant from Nigeria to the United States, traced how low-income, ethnic minority, and immigrant parents often hold high aspirations for their children’s education but that discrimination and poor schools dim these hopes and lead children to develop *oppositional identities* and disengage from school (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu & Simons, 1988). We consider recent research on the roles of discrimination and stereotyping in the academic and racial-ethnic identities of African American and Indigenous Mexican immigrant youth. Third, early writings on identity and resiliency marked the paradoxical interplay of challenges and resources (Erikson, 1968; Werner, 1993); we consider recent work asking when discrimination, poverty, and other challenges can foster identity development and motivate youth to succeed on behalf of their families and communities (Cooper, 2011; Kumar, Seay, & Warnke, 2012; Phelan, Davidson, & Yu, 1998). Here, we also examine how institutional identities of schools and universities can support students’ academic and racial-ethnic identities and open academic pipelines. Finally, we look ahead to next steps and close with an invitation.

In this chapter, we hope to make four distinctive contributions. First, we seek to align concepts of identities, cultures, and schooling with Erikson's and Tajfel's theories, as well as with new and converging theoretical work across the social sciences, to advance research, practice, and policies on the academic pipeline problem (Syed & Mitchell, 2013). Second, because we view racial-ethnic, Indigenous, social class, immigrant, gender, and other identities as comprising youth's multifaceted cultural identities, we examine how, as social actors, youth construct intersecting and sometimes integrated meanings of these identities from demographic labels and stereotypes and from continuities and changes in the values and practices across their cultural worlds (Cooper, 2011; Phelan et al., 1998; Way & Rogers, this volume). We ground our approach in the individual, social, and historical nature of concepts of race and ethnicity, the longstanding racialization of ethnicity (Rumbaut, 2009), and in how children and adults intertwine racial, ethnic, gender, and other identity labels and their meanings. Third, we highlight variations in meanings of identities and schooling within groups and both similarities and differences across groups (Sue & Sue, 1987); this approach contrasts with more common between-group or "race-comparative" designs that can foster deficit thinking about ethnic minority youth (Cooper, Garcia Coll, Thorne, & Orellana, 2005; McLoyd, 2005). Finally, we foreground the importance of cultural contexts in identity development across domains, including families, peers, communities, school, and work. Taken together, we hope these perspectives will spark productive debate on the issues encompassed by this volume.

Erikson's Theory of Identity Development: "Identity Won in Action"

For Erik H. Erikson (born Erik Salomonson), a German immigrant to the United States, a complex family history led to identity becoming both a personal and professional focus. His mother was a Danish-born Jew and his biological father, also Danish. Although renamed Erik Homburger after his adoption by his mother's second husband, perhaps because of teasing from public school peers for being Jewish and from Jewish religious school peers for his Nordic appearance, he later named himself Erik H. Erikson. Erikson conceptualized identity development as a lifelong intergenerational project that reaches across the histories of individuals, families, cultural communities, and societies (1950, 1968a; see also Cooper, Behrens, & Trinh, 2009).

For Erikson and those who built on his work, identity reflects both personal and group-level domains that are valued in cultural communities, such as education, careers, religion, politics, gender roles, and family and peer relations (Adams, 2010; Grotevant & Cooper, 1981, 1998; Marcia, 1966, 2013). According to Erikson, as we actively construct our identities, we have the potential for a growing sense of personal and historical integration across our past, present, and future.

Erikson proposed that identity develops as a series of challenges or crises: their resolutions can lead infants to experience themselves as distinctive persons and to trust their caregivers; young children to feel both autonomy and connections with caregivers; and school-aged children to value or doubt their skills—especially those in school—through the eyes of their families, peers, and teachers. Adolescents' cognitive growth offers them skills to consider their future education, careers, and relationships, and middle adulthood offers the capacity to "give back" or pass on wisdom to younger generations. Mature identity is attained if adults can see their lives with a sense of personal and cultural integration.

In his analyses of personal agency and cultural communities in identity development, Erikson wrote eloquently about constraints and opportunities that stem from poverty, racism, and political and economic forces, including schooling (1950, 1968a, b). He highlighted these in studies of African American youth confronting racism, privileged youth working in the civil rights movement, and Native American youth from Dakota Sioux and California Yurok communities struggling with assimilation (see stories by Kurtz [2009, 2010] of how a Yurok girl attends the university and returns to her community as a teacher of the Yurok language). Although many researchers assume youth have unrestricted opportunities for identity exploration, this chapter reinstates Erikson's focus on both resources and challenges for identity development in individual, social, community, and institutional contexts (Cooper, 2011; Syed, 2012).

Tajfel and Social Identity Theory: A Sense of Group Belonging

Henri Tajfel (born Hersz Mordche), a Polish Jew who immigrated to France and ultimately to Great Britain, became interested in prejudice and inter-group relations from his experiences during World War II as a French prisoner of war, from losing his family during the Nazi Holocaust, and from his postwar work with Jewish refugee children. Tajfel

defined social group identities in terms of the interplay of group affiliations and intergroup conflicts that shape self-esteem as well as intergroup prejudice (1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Further studies by social and developmental psychologists have supported the importance of social identities, showing how children and adults categorize and recategorize their social identities to maintain their self-esteem (Ruble et al., 2004). Our motivation to claim and express particular social identities depends on needs for both uniqueness and inclusion. In turn, such expressions lead to intergroup conflict, prejudice, and discrimination, as well as to cooperation.

Children's early social identities reflect gender and race (marked by socially recognized features) compared to later emerging identities based on social class, religion, or immigrant status. With increasing age, children choose more social identity labels for themselves (Cooper et al., 2009; Ruble et al., 2004). Evidence of adolescents recategorizing their social identities can be seen when immigrant youth shift from using national labels such as *Vietnamese* or *Mexican* to describing themselves with more inclusive pan-ethnic labels such as *Asian* or *Latino* (Rumbaut, 2005). Along their developmental pathways, youth learn what settings are safe or risky for revealing their complex or potentially stigmatized social identities, such as being an undocumented immigrant or being a "schoolboy" when among gang-identified peers.

Some developmental and social psychologists have worked to align the viewpoints of Erikson and Tajfel in their measures of cognitive, behavioral, and emotional dimensions of identity development. For example, the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM-R; Phinney & Ong, 2007) taps Erikson's focus on *personal identity exploration* with items such as, "I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs," and Tajfel's focus on *group belonging and pride*, with items such as, "I have a strong sense of belonging to my ethnic group." Similarly, the Ethnic Identity Scale (Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bámaca-Gómez, 2004) assesses ethnic identity *exploration*, *resolution* (called *commitment* by Phinney & Ong, 2007), and *affirmation*. Scholars continue to draw on the writings of Erikson and Tajfel in refining definitions and measures of identities (Cross, 1991; Syed & Mitchell, 2013) while also drawing from across the social sciences in mapping the role of social and institutional contexts in identity development.

New Views of Social Capital: Children from Low-Income Families and Communities of Color "Moving Up"

In their early writings on social capital theory, sociologists Bourdieu and Passeron (1986) defined social capital in terms of families' social class, often measured by families' education, occupation, and income, and by their social ties and everyday practices or *habitus*, through which families connect with one another and build such ties. Current research documents how, worldwide, children of college-educated parents are most likely to develop college-based career identities or, as commonly stated, "the rich stay rich and the poor stay poor" (Mehan, 2012). This pattern has too often led to defining low-income families and families of color as holding low aspirations for their children's education (Valencia & Black, 2002) and designing interventions to raise their aspirations.

In recent years, however, scholars have asked how cultural reproduction can be disrupted so that children from low-income and ethnic minority families can "move up" to college and college-based careers. To address this question, Yosso (2005) proposed the Community Cultural Wealth framework to map the assets used by communities of color in the United States, including African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders, and Latinos, to support students' school pathways in ways that may not be evident when social capital is defined solely by parents' formal education and job status (Kao & Rutherford, 2007). Yosso (2005) proposed six resources for upward mobility. *Social capital* is defined by networks of social and community resources. *Familial capital* refers to cultural knowledge nurtured among families that carries a sense of community, history, memory, and cultural intuition. *Linguistic capital* includes intellectual and social skills gained by communicating in more than one language or style. *Navigational capital* includes skills in maneuvering among social institutions. *Resistant capital* refers to knowledge and skills that challenge inequality and resist subordination, and *aspirational capital* refers to the ability to maintain dreams for the future despite real or perceived barriers.

In a longitudinal study of fifteen Chicana PhD students in education in California, Burciaga investigated how these students used community cultural wealth strategies to persist from preschool through graduate school and how cultural values of *educación*—respect, integrity, and communal responsibility—related to their strategies (Burciaga,

2008, cited in Cooper & Burciaga, 2011; see also Burciaga & Erbstein, 2012). Burciaga used *testimonio*, a narrative interview approach developed in Latin America that draws on political, social, and cultural histories that shape personal life experiences. She asked students about their aspirations from childhood to beyond the doctorate, classes they had taken in school, their families' schooling, and people who influenced their lives and persistence through school.

All fifteen students linked their aspirations beyond the PhD to how their career identities could "give back" resources to families and communities. Many sought to address problems of schools tracking underrepresented students away from college-prep classes; all had experiences or observations of tracking. Vitoria described being one of few students of color or low-income students in her high school honors courses "where the White kids were.... Kids with houses took honors classes and kids in apartments didn't. That's the way it broke down at our school." Vitoria was pursuing a PhD in education because she felt there were too few people in positions of power who advocated for students, "not... to be a superintendent or use it as a stepping stone but because I really want to enact reform and make it better for kids and for futures."

With few exceptions, all six community cultural wealth strategies were evident in each student's interview. Here we highlight examples of aspirational, familial, and social capital. Soledad described aspirational capital when she recalled that, as a child, "I didn't know exactly what [college] was and neither did my parents, but I knew it was a place I was going." Despite her immigrant parents not knowing the path to higher education in the United States, they supported her aspirations to go to college. Familial capital was most often evident in families' stories of hardships and perseverance fueling students' desires to persist to the PhD. Cristina recounted her grandfather's emotionally wrenching stories about immigrating to the United States. He and her grandmother found a home near the packing plant where he worked that was close to a school, so his children could have more opportunities than they had in Mexico. With regard to social capital, students reported developing strongest ties with teachers, professors, and program staff or *institutional agents* (Stanton-Salazar, 2004) who shared their cultural values of respect, integrity, and communal responsibility and helped bridge families and school.

Thus, students' strategies for persisting through school defined their families as resources who

motivated their aspirations and integration of their academic, career, and cultural identities. Such agency, illustrating Erikson's "identity won in action," is a resource that can be overlooked when social capital is measured only by formal education or job status.

Future Directions

Recent research has revealed how cultural reproduction takes place but also how the actions of students, families, teachers, and others can foster upward social mobility, transmit community cultural wealth and thus create social capital to support students' aspirations and identities and community values of mutual support (Mehan, 2012; Rios-Aguilar, Kiyama, Gravitt, & Moll, 2011). We have much more to learn about how community cultural wealth is transmitted and expanded, particularly across generations. An important example involves the revival of Indigenous languages and cultural practices that support students' schooling. In one case, Hare (2012) found that Indigenous children in Canada who were learning about their Aboriginal culture and language were teaching it to their parents. Many parents had been removed from their homes as children and sent to residential schools as part of Canada's now-discredited policy of cultural assimilation of Indigenous children. Likewise, among Native Hawaiian children, heritage-language instruction, conducted with families as part of reviving the Hawaiian language, has been shown to enhance students' personal and collective esteem and their academic pathways (Yamauchi, Lau-Smith, & Luning, 2008).

New Views of Alienation and Belonging: Within-Group Discrimination and Students' Ethnic and Academic Identities

Early research on alienation and schooling focused on how intergroup discrimination and stereotyping can derail minority families' and students' academic aspirations as well as shape their ethnic and academic identities (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Phinney, Madden, & Santos, 2008; Tajfel, 1982). However, new evidence suggests within-group conflict among ethnic peers can also lead to alienation and shape racial-ethnic and academic identities (Carter, 2006; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). In this section, we continue our focus on variation within cultural groups by examining the role of discrimination and stereotyping among African American and Indigenous Mexican immigrant youth in their sense

of alienation/belonging and the intersections of their racial-ethnic, academic, and gender identities (Gonzalez, 2013; Wilson, 2013).

“Acting White”: Racial-Ethnic and Academic Identities Among African American Youth

As they defend against experiences of discrimination, both across and within racial-ethnic groups, youth may disengage from school to affirm their racial-ethnic identities (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Mehan, 2012; Portes & Fernández-Kelly, 2008; Solórzano, 1998; Vigil, 2004). As one African American high school girl explained:

They basically ask me, ‘Why aren’t you true to your color?’ And I’m like, ‘Well, how am I not true?’ I’m sorry if I’m smart, you know. I’m not going to sit there and hold myself back just so you can have this feeling that I am being black. I’m being black whether I’m smart, dumb, stupid, or whatever.
(Bergin & Cooks, 2002, p. 121)

For ethnic minority youth, one of their most salient social identities involves their race-ethnicity. However, pressure from ethnic peers to affirm their racial-ethnic identity may mean internalizing and conforming to racial-ethnic stereotypes. Indeed, as Way and Rogers discuss in this volume, youth often use (or resist) common racial-ethnic stereotypes as a basis for their own racial and ethnic identity development. Students who do not conform to these stereotypes and cultural scripts of what it means to be African American may be accused of “acting white.”

There has been much debate on “acting white,” particularly concerning its role in academic achievement (Bergin & Cooks, 2002; Tyson, Darity, & Castellino, 2005). We begin by tracing its historical basis and its role in black boys and girls’ school achievement and then consider current debates and evidence about this hypothesis.

What Does It Mean to “Act White?”

Accusations of “acting white” in the African American community can be traced back to the times of slavery—what Ogbu (2004) called “involuntary immigration”—when African slaves were forced to give up their cultural traditions and adopt white customs, culture, behaviors, and speech. In response to this forced assimilation, they created their own cultural traditions and English dialect, remnants of which persist in present-day African American culture. After their emancipation from slavery, when African Americans began to have

opportunities for upward mobility, adopting the behaviors and speech of white culture was required for educational success and acceptance by the white people who acted as gatekeepers for such mobility.

Although “acting white” could lead to opportunities for success in white society, people who displayed such behaviors were seen by black peers as denouncing their black identity. Historically, “acting white” included “being more inhibited, more formal, or lacking soul” (McArdle & Young, 1970, cited in Bergin & Cooks, 2002, p. 113). Fordham and Ogbu (1986) found that among African American high school students, “acting white” included “speaking Standard English, listening to white music, working hard to get good grades in school, getting good grades in school” (p. 186). In recent years, reports of these indicators have remained remarkably consistent, with African American high school students including using “proper” speech, listening to classical music, dressing “preppy,” getting good grades, and having white friends (Bergin & Cooks, 2002; Carter, 2006; Worrell, this volume).

Across studies, many features of “acting white,” including speaking Standard English and getting good grades, are also seen as important for success in US schools and mainstream society. This link holds implications for understanding how students’ resisting behaviors considered “acting white” can translate to poor academic performance. Still, despite consensus about what defines “acting white,” findings diverge on its effects on youth, especially in school.

Evolving Debates on “Acting White” (or Resisting “Acting White”) and Schooling

Numerous studies have sought to identify the roots of achievement gaps between ethnic minority and majority youth. One early explanation that gained widespread recognition is Fordham and Ogbu’s (1986) hypothesis that black students fear being accused that their academic success marks them “acting white” and thus disloyal to their black identity. According to this hypothesis, black students adopt different strategies for “coping with the burden of acting White,” including complete assimilation by adopting the behaviors and speech styles of white Americans (what Fordham and Ogbu call *cultural and linguistic assimilation*); code switching between black and white cultural behaviors depending on the context (*accommodation without assimilation*; see also Carter, 2006, 2012; Gibson & Bejinez, 2002); and knowing the benefits of adopting white

cultural behaviors for school and work success but not believing this will increase social mobility because students are still black (*ambivalence*). The strategy drawing the most attention is *resistance* or *opposition*. According to Fordham and Ogbu, because school achievement is seen as a stereotypical identity domain for white students, black students may adopt an *oppositional cultural frame of reference* by avoiding behaviors that promote school success.

What factors contribute to variation among African American students in their adopting these strategies? Recent studies reveal intersections of gender and racial-ethnic stereotypes, so that ethnic minority boys who succeed in school face more ridicule from peers than ethnic minority girls who do so (see Saenz, 2009, for parallel analyses of Latino males). For this reason, feelings of belonging to their racial-ethnic group may hold more importance for academic success for racial-ethnic minority boys than girls (Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2003).

Scholars have mapped how skin tone appears to play a particularly important role in ethnic minority boys' experiences with these issues (Harvey, LaBeach, Pridgen, & Gocial, 2005). Oyserman, Brickman, Bybee, and Celious (2006) studied relations among skin tone, academic self-efficacy, and school engagement of Latino and African American high school boys. They predicted that African American boys who lacked typical physical markers of their racial group—"markers of belonging"—would seek to prove their ingroup status in ways that could undermine their school success, such as with aggression and disengaging from school (Cousins, 1999). Consistent with these predictions, African American high school boys with lighter skin tones felt less accepted by their ethnic peers than those with darker or medium skin tones. Lighter-skinned boys also reported lower academic self-efficacy than did medium-skinned boys. In this sample, darker skin tones seemed to serve as a protective factor because boys with darker skin did not fear being teased by peers if they were academically successful. In contrast, the lighter-skinned boys felt they should prove their ethnic identity, even at the cost of academic success. This study illustrates Fordham and Ogbu's *resistance* or *opposition* coping, as well as individual variation in susceptibility to disengaging from school.

Although Fordham and Ogbu reported a variety of ways that African American youth cope with accusations of "acting white," current debates focus on the *oppositional cultural frame of reference*, although doing so implies that black culture is

homogeneous. Scholars continue to report variation in African American students' views and that many African American students and parents place high value on school success (Bergin & Cooks, 2002; Ogbu, 2003; Sohn, 2011). Still, because racial achievement gaps persist, scholars examine under what conditions fears of "acting white" may or may not undermine school performance.

Such conditions include schools' racial-ethnic composition and cultural practices. Fordham and Ogbu conducted their original work in a predominantly African American high school in Washington, DC. However, just as black students' identities are heterogeneous, so too are the racial composition and cultural values and practices of schools and hence the experiences of black students with being accused of "acting white." To compare racially integrated and racially homogenous schools, Bergin and Cooks (2002) investigated links between "acting white" and school performance among African American and Mexican American high-achieving high school students in the Midwest. Students of color at predominantly black schools were more likely to be accused of "acting white" for their speech styles, music preferences, peer groups, or dress, but not necessarily for achieving academically. This parallels Carter's (2006) finding that high achieving African American students at predominantly African American schools in New York were considered cool and popular.

Bergin and Cooks also found that students of color at predominantly white schools were less likely to be accused of "acting white" because there were so few students of color, although they might be teased in their neighborhoods. Bergin and Cooks proposed that white students might not notice "acting white" among ethnic minority youth because they might see "white" behaviors as the norm. Finally, students of color in racially balanced schools were more likely to be accused of "acting white" if they were taking advanced classes with many white peers. These black students were more likely to have white friends and were accused of denouncing their ethnic identity by their black peers, although they denied such accusations.

These findings are valuable in showing that the costs of "acting white" for academic achievement depend on the school context. Students in one school may face ridicule for taking advanced classes and having only white peers, but students taking the same classes in a different school might feel support for their academic success. Discrimination among African Americans may be more likely in

predominantly black schools, where within-group contrasts are more salient. However, where African American youth are in the minority, comparisons with white students may be more salient than intra-group differences, and within-group bonds are strengthened.

Thus, in designing programs or interventions addressing intragroup discrimination, it appears important to differentiate racially homogenous from racially heterogeneous school settings. Interventions at racially homogenous schools should address within-group discrimination, which is more likely to occur in these settings. Racially heterogeneous schools should focus on intergroup contact and cooperation (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, as well as on creating inclusive and accepting climates for all students.

Future Directions

Most research about the effects of “acting white” or resisting “acting white” on academic achievement involves high school students. Further research is needed to understand earlier and later developmental pathways, including the college years (Wyche-Hall, 2011). Adolescence may appear to be an optimal time to study how youth develop racial and academic identities, but children as young as six know about ethnic and gender stereotypes about their group and often endorse these stereotypes (Bigler & Liben, 2007). For example, children whose behavior and appearance conform to gender stereotypes are more likely to hold strict stereotypes of acceptable gender role behavior in others (Martin, Ruble, & Szkrybalo, 2002). Future research should explore whether a similar relationship between conforming to racial-ethnic stereotypes and expectations for racial-ethnic behavior in others occurs among racial-ethnic minority children. This would provide opportunities to intervene before adolescence, when students’ academic self-efficacy may already have been constrained by such alienating experiences.

Because children and adolescents draw on stereotypes of their racial-ethnic and gender groups, among other sources, in developing their own identities (Way, Hernandez, Rogers, & Hughes, 2013), students’ developing awareness of these stereotypes about academic pathways is an important topic for further investigation. In a study conducted in a university–community partnership with Mexican American middle and high school students (Wilson & Cooper, 2011), we asked students to offer their own explanations for the

gaps in college attendance between ethnic minorities and European Americans, as well as between Latina/o girls and boys. Students were more likely to give external reasons for ethnic differences (such as access to resources or encouragement) and internal reasons for gender differences (such as intelligence or motivation). One seventh-grader wrote: “I think because girls are smarter than boys. More girls want to go to college and fewer boys don’t. The girls look ahead and the boys just think about [being] cool and not a nerd.” Essentialist explanations of gender differences (based on innate factors) are common because of salient biological features of men and women (Heyman & Giles, 2006). Such thinking is common among young children, but ethnic minority children and adolescents also understand the social constructions of race and ethnic differences (Quintana, 1998). In the activities of our university–community partnership, students discussed racial-ethnic gaps in college going but had not discussed gender gaps. This may help explain the students attributing racial-ethnic differences but not gender differences to external factors.

In sum, racial, ethnic, and gender patterns in schooling do not go unnoticed by children and adolescents. To progress in opening academic pipelines among ethnic minority boys and girls, we need to address how youth make their meanings of racial-ethnic, gender, and other stereotypes as they seek to integrate their multiple cultural identities along successful pathways through school to adulthood.

Discrimination, Intersecting Identities, and School Engagement Among Indigenous Mexican Immigrant Youth

Similar patterns of within-group discrimination and stereotyping as reported among African American students have also been found among Mexican immigrants (Castillo, Conoley, Brossart, & Quiros, 2007; Mendez, Bauman, & Guillory, 2012; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). Although tensions among African American youth about their racial-ethnic and academic identities often involve issues of “acting white,” those among Mexican adolescents center on immigration, assimilation, language, and indigeneity (Córdova & Cervantes, 2010; Mendez et al., 2012). For example, interviews with high school students attending a predominantly Latino public school in the state of Washington revealed that Mexican American students born in the United States, because they spoke

English better and had legal status, felt superior to recently immigrated and undocumented Mexican immigrant students (Mendez et al., 2012).

The growing numbers of Indigenous Mexican immigrants in the United States have drawn attention to ethnic heterogeneity among Mexican immigrants and cultural tensions between *mestizo* (those from both Spanish and Indigenous heritage who speak Spanish only) and Indigenous Mexicans. Indigenous Mexican migrants engage in cultural practices such as *tequios* (community work projects), *quezas* (mutual assistance), and languages that pre-date Spanish colonization. These cultural practices, interpreted with stereotypes about what it means to be Indigenous, can mark Indigenous people as primitive, stupid, short, and dirty (Barillas-Chón, 2010; Fox & Rivera-Salgado, 2004; Stephen, 2007). Next, we examine how Indigenous Mexican youth construct their ethnic and academic identities in the context of within-group discrimination and stereotypes about Indigenous people. We also examine how gender roles in Indigenous families that define women as vulnerable and at risk of single motherhood and men as strong and capable of self-protection can shape engagement in school and community settings. We offer suggestions on what schools, communities, and universities can do to address these challenges.

Indigenous Mexican Migrants

The racial hierarchy that dominates Mexico relegates Indigenous people to its lowest rungs (Menchaca, 1993). Although the Mexican government traditionally based Indigenous status on language, Indigenous organizations persuaded the officials designing the 2000 Census to include a question on ethnic self-identification independent of language use; this revealed an Indigenous population of 12.7 million or 13 percent of the Mexican population. In 2010, 6 million people (6.7 percent) spoke one of the eighty-five identified Indigenous languages (Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geográfica de Informática of Mexico [INEG], 2010). More than half of the Indigenous population lives in poverty, compared to 21 percent of the general population (INEG, 2010). Compared to *mestizo* peers, Indigenous Mexican youth score lower on high school entrance exams and are more likely to attend teacher training colleges and technical institutions than universities (Florez-Crespo, 2007). The state of Oaxaca, where 35 percent speak an Indigenous language, has one of the largest Indigenous populations (INEG, 2010). The stereotype that being from

Oaxaca is synonymous with being dark-skinned, of short stature, and *indio/a* is reflected in the use of the derogatory racial term *Oaxaquita* (Barillas-Chón, 2010; Batalla, 1996; Fox & Rivera-Salgado, 2004; Stephen, 2007).

Most Mexican immigrants to the United States have been *mestizos* from the states of Guanajuato, Jalisco, and Michoacán, but since the 1980s, poverty, sociopolitical marginalization, and discrimination by the *mestizo* population have contributed to growing numbers of Indigenous people emigrating, particularly from the states of Oaxaca, Puebla, and Chiapas (Fox & Rivera-Salgado, 2004). Attracted by jobs in agriculture, California has been a primary receiving state; an estimated 165,000 Indigenous Mexican adults and their children live in rural California (Marcelli & Cornelius, 2001; Mines, Nichols, & Runsten, 2010).

Agricultural areas in California, such as Greenfield on the central coast, have become sites of culture clashes between Indigenous and *mestizo* Mexican immigrants (Esquivel, 2012). Local newspapers reported growing hostility toward Zapoteco and Mixteco migrants from Oaxaca and Guerrero (Wozniacka, 2011). *Mestizo* immigrants and long-term Mexican-American residents have blamed Indigenous migrants for growing crime in their communities and marginalized them because of their cultural practices and language. These tensions provide evidence that the racial hierarchy that relegates Indigenous people to the lowest level in Mexico is being reproduced in Mexican immigrant communities in the United States.

Discrimination and Indigenous Identity

Although the research literature is small, scholars have begun to examine both discrimination against Indigenous Mexican youth and possible resources for their pathways through school. Barillas-Chón (2010) observed and interviewed four Oaxaqueño immigrant high school students living in California, three of whom spoke an Indigenous language. He examined what he called “unwelcoming” and “welcoming” school practices that either constrained or facilitated students’ school adjustment. The most salient unwelcoming practice was discrimination from Spanish-speaking Mexican-American students and second-generation Latino students. Oaxaqueño students described being called *Oaxaquito/a* and ridiculed by both Spanish- and English-speaking students for speaking their Indigenous language, with many assuming that they did not speak Spanish well or did not speak it at all.

Such discrimination can lead Indigenous youth to reject or conceal their identity. In studies of Indigenous Mexican high school students in the central coast region of California (Ruiz & Barajas, 2012) and San Diego (Kovats, 2010), youth reported denying they were Indigenous and refusing to speak their Indigenous language for fear of discrimination. One student explained:

So at school they would make fun of us because we didn't speak Spanish well. I remember I used to say *la mapa* [the map] and they would say, 'It's not *la mapa*, it's *el mapa*.' So they gave me the nickname of *la mapa*. So in that moment you feel ashamed for being, I don't know, because you are Mixteco, because you speak Mixteco you don't learn the other language well. So you get embarrassed and you say, well, 'No, we aren't Mixtecos.'

(Kovats, 2010, p. 50)

These accounts are consistent with tenets of social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) that individuals who experience discrimination try to maintain their self-esteem and group membership by separating from their marginalized group and/or emphasizing positive aspects of their group. Although less common, embracing one's marginalized identity and emphasizing its positive aspects have been found among politically active Indigenous youth. Ramos Arco (2012) interviewed twelve first- and second-generation young adults who were active in the Binational Front of Indigenous Organizations, based in California and Oaxaca. Political and ethnic socialization from organization members and from elders in the Indigenous community contributed to young adults' involvement in the organization and embracing their Indigenous heritage. There appear to be gender differences in the level of involvement in these organizations. For example, research with Oaxaqueño young adults in Fresno, California revealed that parents allowed young men more freedom to participate in these activities while frowning on young women's participation, although young women still asserted their participation in community organizing (Mendoza, Martínez, & Mendoza, 2013). We also need to learn how and in what settings such affirmation occurs among youth who are not politically active.

Discrimination and Academic Integration

In addition to influencing their racial-ethnic identities, discrimination, stereotypes, and gender role expectations challenge Indigenous students' social integration when their schools are primarily

comprised of *mestizo* students. Barillas-Chon (2010) found that three Oaxaqueño/a students whom he interviewed spent most of their in- and out-of-class time in the newcomers' classroom (for immigrant students) with Spanish-speaking peers and teachers.

The most salient welcoming practices, provided by their teachers and other Spanish-speaking staff, gave them access to the Migrant Education Program office, the library, and the newcomers' classroom during lunch or after school. In these "safe spaces," students felt comfortable talking with peers and teachers in Spanish and found peers with whom they could belong and identify. However, the same "safe spaces" that helped Oaxaqueño students feel welcome could also isolate them from bilingual and English-only-speaking students.

Gibson and Hidalgo (2009) documented similar welcoming practices in their four-year ethnographic study of 160 migrant students at a public high school in California. Migrant youth, who move between Mexico and the United States as their parents follow agricultural labor opportunities, are at high risk of dropping out of high school. The US Department of Education's Office of Migrant Education estimated that 45–50 percent of migrant youth graduate from high school. The students in this study received academic support and medical assistance from the federal Migrant Education Program at their high school. These migrant students saw their migrant program teachers, many from migrant families themselves, as mentors, counselors, and role models who connected them with resources and networks that helped them navigate successfully through high school. In 2002, 80 percent of migrant youth graduated from this high school.

Indigenous students' social integration at school also reflects gender role expectations in their Indigenous communities (Fox, 2013). Indigenous parents allow girls more freedom in school than in community activities. Parents worry about their daughters' physical safety and their becoming single mothers, so girls have more freedom with chaperones, in "safe places" such as school, and when monitored by frequent phone calls. Such gender role expectations help explain why girls participate in school club activities more than boys (Mendoza et al., 2013).

Speaking an Indigenous language presents migrants with institutional barriers in US schools (Kovats, 2010; Ruiz & Barajas, 2012). US schools often do not have staff to translate or give instruction in the native language of Indigenous Mexican children and their parents who want to learn

Spanish and English while also keeping their cultural and linguistic identities (Machado-Casas, 2009; Ruiz & Barajas, 2012). Although immigrant students, including Indigenous youth, may encounter welcoming spaces and teachers who link them to institutional resources and networks, school staff and teachers must also serve as *institutional agents* (Stanton-Salazar, 2004) or *cultural brokers* (Cooper, 2011) to connect these youth with both English-only and bilingual students and adults to ensure their full integration. Barillas-Chon (2010) cautioned against a “presently-absent” immigrant student body, in which students are physically present at school but not represented in school clubs and cultural events such as Cinco de Mayo celebrations. More needs to be learned about how the integration of immigrant students—and Indigenous students in particular—proceeds as students interact with mainstream peers in and beyond “safe spaces.”

Future Directions

As we have noted throughout this chapter, identity development begins in childhood, extends beyond adolescence, and can be retriggered during college. In a longitudinal study of 100 ethnically diverse students who were the first in their families to attend college (Azmitia & Sumabat-Estrada, 2013; Azmitia, Syed, & Radmacher, 2008; Syed & Azmitia, 2009), both challenges and resources prompted students to redefine and integrate their identities. In their first year at the university, many saw their academic identities (college major and career goals) and ethnic identities as disconnected, but by their senior year, racism and discrimination, consciousness-raising classes, and extracurricular activities had provoked changes and integration of their academic identities and their racial-ethnic, social class, and gender identities. These important findings merit further investigation.

Most research on Indigenous immigrant youth has involved adolescents, but young Indigenous adults redefine their identities as they get older and enter new settings. A young Oaxaqueña attending college in San Diego described this *positive identity shift*:

I started meeting other people that were nicer and then college... I think that when I was like really proud to be from Oaxaca. I don't know, it's like, I have an identity and I can say that I'm from here and I'm proud to say it. I remember how ashamed I was. How foolish could I have been to be ashamed of the place that I was born? It makes me feel mad

in a way that I was ashamed but then again, I guess, I was forced to be.

(Kovats, 2010, p. 61)

This student attributed her reidentifying with her Indigenous culture and language to support from her university professors and classmates. For the first time, her Indigenous culture was valued, and the experiences that had made her feel shame for being Indigenous were explained in her social science classes. The cultural awareness and respect for Mexico's Indigenous cultures seem to be in part a result of a multicultural college curriculum. As one University of California (UCLA) graduate described:

My indigenous identity was definitely as a result of my politicization and educational experience in college [...] I majored in Sociology and Labor Studies so I took many Latino study courses that focused on inequality, the history of minorities in the U.S. and other Latin American Studies courses which made me aware of my history as an indigenous woman.

(Nicolás, 2011, p. 105)

We need to learn more about how multicultural curricula—in college and earlier—can help students critically re-examine, renegotiate, and redefine their ethnic and academic identities (Patton, 2010). But what happens to youth who do not attend college? When and where do they experience positive identity shifts? Are there community contexts where they can connect with their cultures and learn about the conditions that made them reject or conceal their ethnic identities and find or create settings that can affirm their claiming their identities? We need further research to address these questions, especially about how community organizations can prompt positive identity shifts for young adults who are not in college. In one such case, the Pan Valley Institute in Fresno, California has provided resources for Indigenous Oaxaqueño youth to make video narratives of their pathways of racial-ethnic, Indigenous, academic, and gender identity development (<https://afsc.org/office/fresno-ca>).

Public schools also have the power to address discrimination experienced by Indigenous youth and thereby foster positive identity shifts. One example comes from the Oxnard Unified School District in California. In early 2012, the Mixteco/Indígena Community Organizing Project (MICOP) led the *No Me Llames Oaxaquita/Don't Call Me Oaxaquita* campaign in Oxnard (Esquivel,

2012). The campaign proposed a resolution asking the school district to prohibit the use of “Oaxaquita” and “indio”. In May 2012, the district unanimously approved the resolution and agreed to create an antibullying committee and prohibit the use of these derogatory terms on school grounds. Although it is too early to detect changes in youth identity, MICOP continues to help the district educate students and teachers about Indigenous Mexican culture and history.

These reports provide important examples of how community organizations and schools can create programs and partnerships that address issues faced by their students. More broadly, it is critical for researchers to work in ethnically heterogeneous communities to address issues identified by youth, school and community leaders, and researchers.

New Views of Challenges and Resources on Pathways Through School: “The Good Burden”

Building on early writings on the challenges of immigration, poverty, and discrimination for identity development and resiliency (Erikson, 1968b; Werner, 1993), recent research has clarified Erikson’s concept of “identity won in action.” As a young Somali immigrant woman attending college in Australia wrote, “The challenges I face put me down sometimes but most of the time I overcome them and I always look (for) something to push myself. . . . Overall, those challenges are what keep me going all the time” (Booker & Lawrence, 2013, p. 108).

New research asks how students access both personal resources and those across their cultural worlds, so that their challenges can motivate them to succeed in school and careers on behalf of their families, peers, and cultural communities, particularly those who may not have had these opportunities (Cooper, 2011; LaFromboise, Hoyt, Oliver, & Whitbeck, 2006; Syed, 2010, 2012; Syed & Mitchell, 2013). This sense of purpose, grounded in feelings of cultural belonging, can be heard as an African American female engineering student explained: “Money is important, but it is not the issue. We have a burden—and it’s a good burden—of helping our people” (Cooper, Jackson, Azmitia, Lopez, & Dunbar, 1995, p. 11).

Bridging Multiple Worlds: Navigating Resources and Challenges on Pathways to College

Bridging Multiple Worlds theory draws on writings of Erikson (1950, 1968a, b), of Phelan et al., (1998), and on related work to trace how youth build pathways to their identities in college, career, and cultural domains as they navigate challenges and resources across their cultural worlds (Cooper, 2011; Cooper, Cooper, Trinh, Wilson, & Gonzalez, 2013a; Syed, Azmitia, & Cooper, 2011). As illustrated in Figure 19.1, this multilevel theory maps the interplay of five dimensions over time: *demographics* of culturally diverse families and youth on their pathways through school; youth *aspirations and identities* in college, career, and cultural domains; their math and language *academic pathways* through

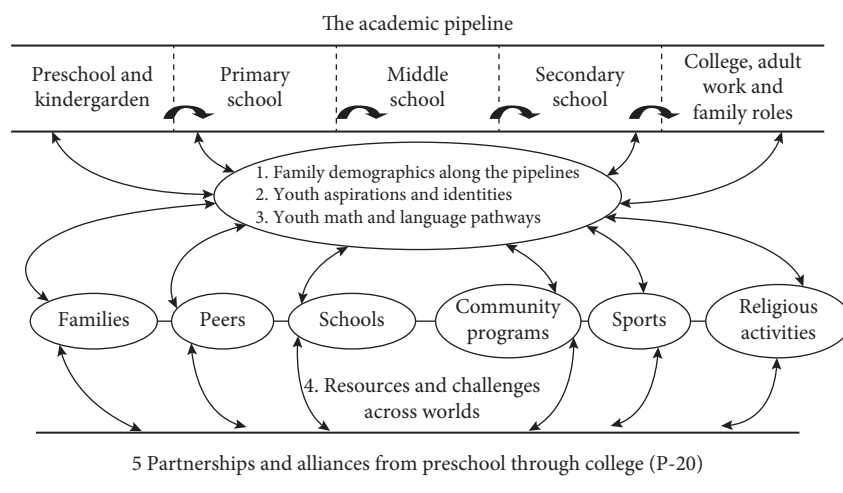


Fig. 19.1 The Bridging Multiple Worlds model. From Cooper, C. R. (2011). *Bridging multiple worlds: Cultures, identities, and pathways to college*. With permission of Oxford University Press.

school; *challenges and resources* across their cultural worlds of families, peers, schools, and communities; and *university–community partnerships* from preschool through college (known as P–20 partnerships) that boost resources youth can draw from their worlds and open academic pipelines. Studies of this theory have been conducted with children, youth, and families from Native American, Latino, African American, Japanese, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and working-class European American communities, as well as with multiethnic youth (Cooper, 2011).

To illustrate key findings with this theory, we draw on studies with Mexican immigrant youth and their families, the largest immigrant group in the United States. Recent studies with Latino youth (e.g., Phinney & Baldelomar, 2011) call into question earlier descriptions of their identity development as foreclosed—making commitments without exploration—because of deference to cultural expectations to obey parents (Abraham, 1986). Scholars also question assumptions that all youth have opportunities for identity exploration, particularly when ethnic minority, low-income, and rural students attend underresourced schools that constrain such opportunities (Grotevant & Cooper, 1988; Yoder, 2000).

One line of research addressing these issues has been conducted in a long-term university–community partnership with a precollege program in California. The program serves more than 500 students, with scholarships and support for youth from low-income, mostly Mexican immigrant families (both *mestizo* and Indigenous) from sixth grade to college (Cooper, 2011; Cooper, Gonzalez, & Wilson, 2013b). The partnership collects responses to surveys and open-ended questions, school transcripts, and program observations, from program entry at age twelve through follow-up of program alumni. We now highlight key findings aligned with the five dimensions of the theory.

With respect to *demographics* of students in the program, their parents' formal education, usually in rural Mexico, was typically less than high school and, for many, elementary level or less. Most parents worked picking strawberries, mushrooms, or lettuce; on cannery or factory assembly lines; or cleaning houses and hotels, and sometimes more than one of these jobs.

Regarding students' *educational and career aspirations and identities*, on their program application essays, most students described their aspirations for college and college-based careers. Each year, at the

program's annual summer institute, students were asked, "What is your #1, #2, and #3 job goal?" From the start to the close of the institute and over the course of two years, students' first career choices were remarkably stable (90 percent), such as to become a doctor or firefighter. In contrast, their second choices reflected more identity exploration (with 79 percent changing), such as from doctor to police officer or from mechanic to chef. These shifts may have been sparked by summer institute classes, in which students explored careers in public health, public safety, and culinary arts and the "career ladders" in each field that require progressively greater levels of education (Cooper et al., 2013b).

Students' *academic pathways* diverged early: Compared to students with lower grades, sixth-graders with higher math grades more often passed algebra 1 in ninth grade and later entered universities directly from high school. Still, some alumni who completed algebra 1 in later grades had also graduated from universities by age twenty-five, showing there is more than one pathway to college. Students' early aspirations were not always matched by their mastering the academic skills required to reach these dreams, but some moved up "career ladders" by taking jobs in their chosen field requiring less education while earning credentials toward higher-level careers. In our current research, we are tracing *second chances* pathways of youth who left school because of early parenthood, prison, military service, or to earn money to support their families and then returned to school. Thus, some skills may take more time to develop; however, once mastered, they can still lead to college and careers so that, despite initial failures, students can build viable pathways.

When we asked students in the program about their challenges and resources ("What do your families/ friends/teachers do that cause you difficulties/help you?"), students consistently reported experiencing both challenges and resources from each of their worlds (Cooper et al., 2013b). For example, about their families, students described challenges: "Not letting you go away (to college)," and resources: "They say to not do drugs and to study hard to graduate from college." About peers, students wrote, "They tell me they are not going to go to college. That makes me want to blend in with them," but also "Some friends encourage me to not listen to my bad friends. They help me reach my goal because they have the same goals as me." And about teachers, students wrote, "They are racist sometimes. They don't treat everyone the same," but

also “They encourage me to follow my dreams and go to college.”

From childhood into young adulthood, students reported that their immigrant parents remained central to their staying on track through college, not in spite of their modest educations but because of them. Students became *cultural and college brokers* themselves by guiding siblings, cousins, friends, and even parents toward college. Over time, students reported growth and differentiation in resources within each world: 61 percent reported larger school networks, from listing only teachers helping them go to college to listing both teachers and counselors, and 44 percent reported larger program networks, from listing only the director to listing both the director and program tutors. Alumni participated as tutors, mentors, and even donors to the program.

Finally, this *university–community partnership* strengthened the program with institutional changes that open the academic pipeline. Each fall, students participate as researchers to review the previous summer’s findings, suggest program improvements, and ask new questions. After students learned that more girls than boys and more younger than older students attended the summer institute, they made suggestions that have engaged more boys and high school students (Yonezawa & Jones, 2011). And in longitudinal case studies from sixth grade through college developed in collaboration with the program director and university students, some students’ pathways reflected cultural reproduction of social capital by reproducing parents’ educational levels; others reflected alienation by disengaging from school to claim gang identities and underground occupations; and others reflected challenge and resiliency by interpreting obstacles as motivation to succeed on behalf of families, peers, and communities and “prove the gatekeeper wrong” (Cooper, 2011). These findings point to converging roles of capital, alienation, and challenge in identity development. As one university student researcher said, “I used to be on the alienation pathway, but now I’m on the challenge pathway.”

Bridging Multiple Worlds Alliance: A Common Language for Research, Practice, and Policy

Studies of Bridging Multiple Worlds theory, conducted in long-term university–community partnerships, have illuminated multiple pathways of ethnically diverse youth through school while forging connections across research, practice, and policy (Cooper, 2011). The Bridging Multiple

Worlds Alliance (BMWA; www.bridgingworlds.org) is a growing network of US and international partners that offers tools to build a common language by aligning concepts and evidence about cultures, identities, and pathways through school, with qualitative and quantitative measures, activities for schools and programs, and templates for graphing trajectories and longitudinal case studies. Materials about college in nineteen languages support youth and families in integrating cultural, college, and career identities.

In one partnership, BMWA members worked in a team of scholars from education, sociology, anthropology, law, and psychology from the ten campuses of the University of California to identify critical conditions for education partners to foster equity in students’ access to college (Oakes, 2003). These “college-going conditions” include creating a *college-going school culture*, increasing *academic rigor*, cultivating *qualified teachers*, providing *intensive academic and social supports*, providing opportunities for students to develop *multicultural college-going identities*, and building *family-neighborhood-school connections*.

To measure progress in fostering college-going conditions, educators developed and use the School Self-Assessment Rubric (SSAR; California GEAR UP, 2012). Partners can assess providing opportunities for students to develop multicultural college-going identities when:

Students see college going as integral to their identities; have confidence and skills to negotiate college without sacrificing their own identities and connections with their home communities. They recognize college is a pathway to careers that are valued in their families, peer groups, and local communities.

(California GEAR UP, 2012, p. 1)

To assess one aspect of this dimension, first-generation students’ college preparation, partners rate their school at phase 1 when “there is no cultural support to deal with first generation and historically low college attendance issues and few students from underrepresented populations are enrolled in classes leading to college preparatory classes in high school”; phases 2, 3, or 4 when such support and enrollment can be seen among some, most, or all staff and students, respectively; or phase 5 when “this is a strength we can share with other sites and organizations.”

BMWA members have used the SSAR with school district partners in setting priorities for

improving and sustaining the college-going conditions. In one partnership, five school district teams used the SSAR to map priorities and develop plans for sustaining their college-going cultures as a federal grant to their districts to launch college-going cultures was ending.

Future Directions: Aligning Resources to Support Individual and Institutional Identities

In a second example of aligning concepts to open the academic pipeline, BMWA researchers are aligning students' academic and racial-ethnic identities with institutional identities to help one university become a Hispanic-Serving Institution, as part of the Minority-Serving Institutions initiative of the US Department of Education (Benitez & DeAro, 2004; Contreras, Malcom, & Bensimon, 2008; Hurtado & Ruiz, 2012; Santiago, 2008). Student researchers worked with the BMWA to interview Latino/a second-year students in biology, economics, and psychology about their racial-ethnic and academic identities and their challenges and resources building a sense of belonging to their campus and cultural communities, entering their majors, and graduating (Cooper, Bandera, & Macias, 2014). Most had doubted their abilities in mathematics, and many failed their first college math class, yet underutilized class and campus resources. Still, those who took action with these challenges, showing agency and educational resilience (Cabrera & Padilla, 2004), entered their majors and drew resources within and beyond their racial-ethnic groups (reflecting Erikson's "identities won in action"). Latino students with a lower sense of belonging to the campus were more likely to leave during their first two years. University staff, faculty, and students are working to strengthen and unify resources for students facing these challenges (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008; Pérez, Cortés, Ramos, & Coronado, 2010; Yeado, 2013).

More generally, scholars and educators have begun to map ethnically diverse college students' realities involving capital, alienation/belonging, and challenge across their worlds, including classes, extracurricular activities, cultural centers, and ethnic student organizations, as well as families and home-town peers (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006; Patton, 2010). These findings point to how successful college pathways are fostered by students' educational resilience, academic self-efficacy, and skills navigating cultural worlds that help integrate their racial-ethnic, social class, and gender

identities with a sense of belonging (Azmitia & Sumabat-Estrada, 2013; Nasir, 2012). Such progress will help researchers, practitioners, and policy investors understand students' realities and how institutions can support them and their identity development (Laird, Bridges, Morelon-Quainoo, Williams, & Holmes, 2007).

Next Steps and an Invitation

In this chapter, we have considered evidence that opening academic pipelines rests on integrating multiple identities—not only students' academic and racial-ethnic identities across their cultural worlds of families, peers, teachers, and community members, but also institutional identities of schools and universities in supporting pathways from childhood through college.

Looking ahead, we need further progress in three key areas. The first lies in greater interdisciplinary understanding of intersections and gaps across individual, relationship, and institutional identities, including their ongoing constraints and opportunities and how issues of cultures, economics, and histories thread through them all (Dietrich, Parker, & Salmela-Aro, 2012; Mehan, 2012). This alignment will build a much-needed common language for research, practice, and policies (Ignatowski, 2013). Private and public leaders are linking short-term interventions into sustainable alliances among educational systems, community organizations, families, and youth from preschool through graduate school. Aligning measures of individual and institutional identities with students' learning, retention, and graduation is helping to advance this work (Hurtado, Cuellar, & Guillermo-Wann, 2011; University of California, 2008).

Our next steps will also be increasingly international and transnational. Scholars with interests in identities and schooling are working to advance research, practice, and policies in multicultural nations worldwide with histories of inequities in access to schooling; they are mapping variations within nations and both parallels and differences across them (Cooper, 2011; Crul, Schneider, & Lelie, 2012; Seginer, 2009). In South Africa and the United States, Carter (2012) found that educational inequities continue despite policies to promote racial inclusiveness, but that students who could cross cultural boundaries in their academic and extracurricular activities were more likely to thrive in their academic and racial-ethnic identities and their schoolwork. In Europe and the United States, policy investments in "second chances"

programs for re-entering school through community colleges are important options for immigrant youth and young adults (Crul et al., 2012). Thus, students' academic and racial-ethnic identities and institutional identities reflect social capital, alienation/belonging, and challenge, with striking parallels across cultural communities (Florez-Gonzales, 2002; Fuligni, Witkow, & Garcia, 2005; Waters, 1996).

Finally, our next steps will be increasingly intergenerational. In this chapter, we have seen how identities and schooling develop in partnerships in which youth experience safety and respect as students, research participants, and researchers, and how students also serve as cultural brokers through their tutoring and mentoring younger students, peers, and adults, including their parents. We have more to learn about how bridging cultural identities among college faculty, staff, and students can foster climates in which underrepresented students graduate and become productive members of multicultural societies (Hurtado & Ruiz, 2012; Reid, 2013).

In closing, we invite readers to contribute to advancing research, practice, and policy that engage racial-ethnic minority, immigrant, Indigenous, and low-income youth and adults in opening the educational systems of their nations. Building on work from many cultural communities will foster greater understanding of identities, cultures, and schooling in the multicultural societies of which we are all a part.

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