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Review of "Trends in Ethnic Identification among Second-Generation Haitian Immigrants in New York City"

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clusion, of course, gives undue weight to the rhetorical presidency, my major criticism of the book.

Pauley’s research in various presidential libraries and in the secondary literature is impressive. Absent, however, are the complete texts of the four speeches, which should have been included in an appendix. Moreover, the book is marred by occasional jargon, the frequent use of colons in place of semicolons and periods, and the lengthy conclusions after each chapter followed by a conclusion at the end of the book, only the latter of which was necessary. In short, this study smacks too much of the doctoral dissertation that it originally was.

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This book is an ethnographically rich account of issues of acculturation and identity faced by the children of Haitian immigrants and refugees in New York City. It is based on approximately 125 in-depth interviews. About one-third of the interviews were with first-generation Haitian parents, schoolteachers, and counselors. A little less than one-third were with high school and college-aged individuals who had been born in the United States or arrived before adolescence (i.e., the second and 1.5 generations). A little more than a third of the interviews were with high school and college-aged individuals who were relatively recent immigrants from Haiti. Most of the research, which also included some participant observation in schools and community settings, took place in Brooklyn.

Chapter 1 introduces the research question (the nature of ethnic identification in the Haitian second generation), describes research methods and sample, and gives background on historical patterns and geographic distribution of Haitian immigrants to the United States (including 14 full pages of tables and maps). Chapter 2 (Theories of Ethnicity and Population Shifts) reviews historical theories and research on immigration and ethnicity, emphasizing the disparity between theories of assimilation and the experiences of a variety of non-white groups. This chapter is broad in its coverage, and the relevance of material summarized from other sources is not always clear. It devotes only two pages, at the end of the chapter, to the theory and research most relevant to the study at hand: the theory of segmented assimilation (Portes and Zhou, 1993) and empirical research on second-generation Black immigrant identities in New York.
Chapter 3 (Haitianness in the Second Generation) examines differences between the ways in which United States-socialized youth and recently-immigrated youth conceive of Haitianness. Chapter 4 (The Undercover Phenomenon: Anything but Haitian) documents the rejection of Haitian identity and the adoption of American identities by some members of the 1.5 and second generations, particularly those from lower socio-economic status backgrounds. While hiding immigrant origins helps individuals to avoid the stigma of Haitian roots, the American identity available to Haitians—being African American—can carry with it other stigmas. Chapter 5 (Relationships between First- and Second-Generation Haitian Immigrants) documents the conflictual nature of relationships between these generations. These conflicts—common to virtually all immigrant groups—are exacerbated for many Haitians because of the tendency for lower-income, second-generation Haitian youth to acculturate to inner-city, oppositional African American youth identities. The oppositional beliefs and practices associated with such identities are directly at odds with immigrant ideologies of socio-economic mobility.

Chapter 6 (Educational Issues with Second-Generation Immigrants) documents the cultural, linguistic, and financial obstacles to school success faced by the second generation, and school accommodations, to the presence of Haitian students, particularly in the form of bilingual education. Chapter 7 (Second-Generation Haitian Immigrants in American Society) emphasizes the multiple forms that second-generation identity can take, depending on personal, family, community, and larger structural factors. A finding that would be of greater interest, if it did not merely duplicate that of Mary Waters is that members of the second generation from families of higher socio-economic status are more likely than their lower socio-economic status peers to retain a Haitian ethnic identity (as opposed to adopting an African-American racial one) in the second generation.

The strengths of the book are a) its extensive use of longer quotes from informants, which allows first- and second-generation Haitians to tell their stories in their own vivid words, b) its emphasis on the complexity and multiplicity of identity issues faced by the second generation, and c) its refreshingly passionate critique of the United States social and economic structures that hinder Haitian immigrants’ achievement of material well-being and ethnic/racial pride.

On the other hand, while ethnographically valuable, the book does not make a novel theoretical contribution to our understanding of race, immigration, or ethnicity. From a social scientific perspective, the distinctive feature of Haitian immigrants is their Blackness in a racist society, but this is not a theoretical focus of the book. The book, for example, does not explicitly compare Haitian experiences to those of other African-descent immigrant groups—e.g., Anglophone West Indians, Caribbean Hispanics, Brazilians, and Africans—to help make visible racial meanings, structures, and formation processes. And
while it is an in-depth case study of a non-white, post-1965, second-generation immigrant group, it does not systematically engage the questions and theories regarding the “new second generation” set forth by Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou, Herbert Gans, Mary Waters, and Rubén Rumbaut (1997), among others.

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