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ABSTRACT

This paper uses data on earnings and education from the 1971 Current Population Survey to test three hypotheses of ethnic achievement and assimilation. The evidence does not support the hypothesis that differences among European ethnic groups have melted away during the three generations since the end of the second wave of immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe. Statistically significant differences in both education and earnings persist. The differences in earnings have definitely been narrowing over time. However, the differences in earnings do not disappear when ethnic differences in education, location, age, and marital status are taken into account.

However, the differences that persist are not those that the melting pot hypothesis, or other theories of social mobility, would predict. The second wave groups, the more recent arrivals from supposedly inferior cultures, in many cases have higher average earnings with and without adjusting for other factors than the first wave groups. Russians have the highest earnings and education of all the groups; Italians and Poles on average earn more than the Irish, Germans, and French. Although differences in education and earnings persist among European ethnic groups, contrary to the melting pot hypothesis, these differences completely contradict theories that predict that later groups or Southern and Eastern European groups should do worse than earlier or Northern and Western European groups.

These findings, at least for Italians and Poles, are in contradiction to the results reported by Blau and Duncan (1967) and Featherman (1971). It is not clear what explains the residual differences in earnings among the European groups. Ethnic discrimination seems

unlikely. Differences in the quality of education, psychological motivation, and location are all plausible. Unfortunately, the CPS contains no information at all on the first two factors, and no precise information on location.

Evidence on whether the melting pot is working for black and brown groups is mixed. Blacks and Chicanos have steadily narrowed educational differences between themselves and the European groups over the last two generations. However, large and significant differences in earnings still exist, both with and without holding education, location, age, and marital status constant, between almost all the Latin and black groups and almost all the European groups. Labor market discrimination seems to exist against most of the Latin groups as well as against blacks. It is not clear whether this discrimination is abating over time.

HAS THE MELTING POT WORKED?

I. Introduction

During the last decade, considerable research has been done on differences in education and earnings between blacks and whites. More recently, there has been a resurgence of ethnic identities and awareness among European and Latin American ethnic groups as well. This rise in consciousness has created doubts about the melting pot theory of assimilation. Important cultural distinctions and divisions do persist, it is claimed, several generations after the original immigration.

Contemporary writers view these differences as adding to the richness of American life, and seldom assume that they result in differences in economic and social status. However, it is certainly possible that social and economic differences as well as cultural differences among European ethnic groups are still important, not to mention differences between them and Latin groups and blacks. This paper will examine achievement differences among seven European ethnic groups, six Spanish surname groups, and blacks, and will attempt to test several specific hypotheses concerning assimilation and achievement.

Previous work in this area varies considerably in groups studied, so comparisons of findings are difficult. However, all have found substantial differences among ethnic and religious groups in achievement. Duncan and Duncan (1968) and Nam (1959) found large differences in occupation among ethnic groups but little difference in mobility, after controlling for family background and education. Rosen (1959) found a correlation between achievement and motivation among ethnic groups. Gockel (1969) and Goldstein (1969) reported that ethnic differences in

occupation and family income were narrowed but not completely eliminated by holding education and other factors constant. Featherman (1971) and Duncan and Featherman (1972) both found that psychological factors help explain ethnic differences in educational attainment. Holding education constant, ethnicity but not motivation still accounted for some differences in occupation and income. Finally, Fogel (1966) and Lyle (1973) both found differences between Anglos and Latin American groups, holding education constant.

II. Theories of Assimilation and Mobility

Until recently, the general consensus about assimilation and ethnicity has held that America has been a large melting pot. All ethnic differences gradually disappeared, either blending together or being absorbed by the dominant culture derived from Britain. The melting pot theory holds that immigrant groups have usually entered American society at the bottom, with less education and less experience in skilled occupations and in market economies than native workers.

Many of the immigrants were illiterate or nearly so when they arrived. Except for the Irish and the British they were rarely able to speak English. Most of them came from peasant societies which emphasized very different values and skills. These people had learned how to maximize output on tiny farms on bad ground in small communities that were virtually economically self-sufficient. Whatever nonagricultural skills they had were also suited to production in a pre-industrial setting. Although these skills might have been difficult to learn they were not very useful to immigrants in large industrial cities.

Furthermore, language difficulties and cultural differences often prevented immigrants from benefiting fully from the education and experience that they did have. Success in capitalist America depends partly on a type of competitive and aggressive individualism that peasant societies do not encourage. Obedience to authority, strong ties to the extended family, and a fatalism about the future do not lead to rising from day laborer to foreman to contractor. Thus for a variety of reasons, the first generation of immigrants has usually been near the bottom of the new society.

The second generation children of the immigrants, according to the melting pot theory, should have an easier time than their parents, but still may not be on equal footing with men from ethnic groups who have been in this country longer. The second generation as children often spoke the language of their parents at home instead of English, and may have had other holdovers from the mother country unsuited for social and economic success in America.

By the third generation, some differences among ethnic groups may persist, but they should have only a small impact on achievement. Different groups may celebrate holidays slightly differently, or may celebrate different holidays. Intermarriage may be less common than among groups who have been here longer, and identity with the group may still be strong. However, if the melting pot theory is right, the grandchildren of the original immigrants will have assimilated enough so that no important differences in achievement between them and the great great grandchildren of earlier immigrants should exist.

This theory is in contrast to at least two other possibilities. First, the newer ethnic groups may be significantly different from the older groups in a way that keeps them from social and economic equality no matter how long they live in America. Fifty years ago, many social scientists thought that the immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe were culturally and even genetically so different from older British, German, and Irish immigrants that they would never be able to assimilate.[1] Similar views have been held toward Chicanos.[2]

Even today some believe that blacks may be genetically less intelligent than whites, and therefore presumably will never achieve economic and social equality. Other, less racist arguments hold that the melting pot is not working for blacks the way it did for earlier immigrants to northern cities. Some of these arguments also apply to other recent immigrant groups such as Chicanos and Puerto Ricans.

First, it is held, blacks are more visible than, for instance, the Irish and the Italians were, and therefore it is easier to discriminate against them and harder to forgive them for being different. Second, the economy has changed. There are no longer as many jobs for the unskilled and the poorly educated as when the European ethnics came to northern cities. Therefore blacks and the Spanish groups have a harder time finding jobs when they first arrive in cities and a harder time moving up to slightly better jobs.

Other elements of the argument emphasize that blacks and perhaps Chicanos are more different from the dominant culture than were the earlier European ethnic groups. These differences are not only of skin color, but also in family stability, ability to learn in white-oriented schools, motivation, and even in time horizons and ability to postpone

gratification. If these arguments are right, then black-white and Chicano-Anglo differences in achievement may not be narrowing over time. If the earlier arguments about immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe were right, then clearly the melting pot theory is wrong for them as well.

Another argument against the melting pot is based on the findings of Blau and Duncan (1967) that achievement depends on the social class of one's parents. The first generation, the immigrants themselves, may have special disadvantages compared to other workers because of language problems and other cultural differences. The second generation will not have these handicaps, but they will still be the children of poorly educated, low status parents, and therefore will obtain less education, lower paying jobs, and lower occupational status than the children of higher status parents. Unless there is greater upward mobility for the chidren of immigrants than for the children of natives, the melting pot theory will be wrong. Except for the first generation, differences among ethnic groups will not narrow over time. After an adjustment period of perhaps one generation, relative achievement of various groups should be the same, with the earliest groups on top.

To specify these three theories more clearly, let us define A_t as the average achievement of all men in time period t, and A_t^m and A_t^n as the average achievement of men in older and newer ethnic groups respectively. Then

$$A_t = \frac{n_t^m A_t^m + n_t^n A_t^n}{n_t^m + n_t^n}$$

where n_t^m and n_t^n are the numbers of men in the older and newer ethnic groups.

Next, define

$$R_t^m = \frac{A_t^m}{A_t} \quad \text{and} \quad R_t^n = \frac{A_t^n}{A_t},$$

and let ΔR_t^n be the change in relative achievement from the previous period to period t. Clearly, if n_t^m/n_t^n remains constant, then if ΔR_t^n is positive, ΔR_t^m must be negative.

Both the nonassimilationsist and the equal mobility theories would be disproved by finding $R_t^n = 1 = R_t^m$. However, the melting pot theory would not be disproved by finding the opposite, that R_t^n continues to be less than unity. The first two theories predict that inequality persists, but the melting pot theory does not predict that all inequality will have disappeared within two or three generations. However, the melting pot theory does predict that $\Delta R_t^n > 0$ until equality is achieved, whereas the other two theories predict that at most only ΔR_2^n, the change from the first to the second generation, will be positive.

To test the melting pot hypothesis, I will first present evidence on what differences in achievement do exist, using both years of formal education and annual earnings as measures of achievement. Then the hypothesis that these differences have been narrowing over time will be tested. Finally, I will examine how much of the differences in earnings that remain are explained by differences in education, location, age, and marital status, and how much must be attributed to other differences among ethnic groups, including discrimination.

III. Data

The data for this study come from the 1971 Current Population Survey (CPS), conducted in March 1971 by the U.S. Census Bureau. This is a randomly selected national sample of the entire population, with

individual weights which can be summed to estimate the number of people in the nation within a specified category. The survey includes over 100,000 persons over 18, and over 30,000 working men between 18 and 65.

In addition to questions on family structure, age, sex, education, employment, and income during 1970, CPS respondents were asked what their origin or descent was. They were allowed to choose from a list that included British (English, Scot, Welsh), Irish, German, French, Russian, Polish, Italian, Chicano (Mexican), Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, Other Spanish, Negro (black), "Other," and "Don't Know." There are more than 1,000 men in the sample for all of the European groups but one, though the numbers are considerably lower for some of the Latin American groups.

Over 30 percent of the men classified themselves as "Other" or "Don't Know." Census reports on rates of immigration and on ethnic origin indicate that many of these men come from ethnic groups not listed by the CPS, including Norwegians, Swedes, Danes, Greeks, Austrians, Hungarians, Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos, and American Indians.[3] However, most of the "Other" and "Don't Know" are probably mixtures of specified groups, or must have no ethnic identity at all. In the discussion below, these men, both the unspecified groups--most of whom arrived just before World War I--and the others who have been here long enough to intermarry and forget their ancestry, are lumped together in a miscellaneous group.

IV. Patterns of Immigration

The ethnic group that on average has been in this country the longest is the blacks, since few of them have come here since 1820. A very

small number of Africans came here between 1820 and 1860, and a few more blacks from the West Indies have come since World War II. However, the ancestors of the overwhelming majority of blacks in the U.S. have been here for at least one hundred and fifty years and eight generations.

The next oldest group, the British, were already here in large numbers when immigration statistics were first collected in 1820. Fifty-six percent of British immigrants arriving since that data came before 1890. However, probably two-thirds of the 9.8 million people in the U.S. in 1820 were British, far more than the 4.8 million British immigrants since that date. Thus even though the British have continued coming here in fairly large numbers throughout our history, the majority of the British ethnic group have had relatives here far longer than other white groups.

Of the remaining groups of the "first wave" of immigration from Northern and Western Europe, the Irish and the Germans, 73 percent and 64 percent respectively, immigrated before 1890. The heaviest Irish immigration came between 1847 and 1854, while the heaviest German immigration came during 1852 to 1854 and later from 1881 to 1892.

The French have also been included with the first wave groups, though their position is somewhat ambiguous. Immigration statistics are not kept separately for France and French Canada, but decennial census data indicate that about 70 percent of the French in this survey probably came to this country via Canada rather than directly from France. Although their families have been on this continent for many generations, they have been in this country mostly since 1880.[4]

The second wave of immigration started around 1890 and came primarily from Southern and Eastern Europe. World War I interrupted the massive flow of people, and soon after it resumed, it was permanently stopped by restrictive immigration laws in 1924. Between 1890 and 1914, 88 percent of all Russian immigrants entered this country. Although born in Russia, most of these immigrants spoke Yiddish as their mother tongue, and almost all of them were Jewish.[5] There are very few White Russians in this country, and most of the other immigrants from Russia consider themselves Finns, Ukrainians, Latvians, Lithuanians, but certainly not Russians.

For instance, the families of the vast majority of people identifying themselves as Polish in the CPS arrived here between 1880 and 1914. However, since Poland did not exist as a country during these years, most Polish immigrants were listed as coming from Austria-Hungary, Germany, or Russia. Total Polish immigration for all years since 1820 is therefore reported at 488,000, but over one million persons listed Poland as their country of birth in 1920 and in 1930. Intermarriage rates with Russians in 1971 suggest that as many as 20 percent of these may be Jews.[6]

The final second-wave group included in this study is the Italians. Eighty-one percent of Italian immigrants came between 1890 and 1924, with an additional 12 percent since then. Since 1960, more immigrants have come here from Italy than from any countries excluding Canada and Mexico, but the half million or so who have come since World War II are about one-ninth the number that came before the war.

The remaining groups are what might be called the third wave of immigration. Although the Immigration Act of 1924 closed our doors to

most Europeans, it continued to permit immigration from this hemisphere. The first among the Latin groups to come were the Mexicans, with 96 percent arriving since 1910 and 69 percent since 1924. However, in 1970, 75 percent of Chicanos were children of native-born Americans.[7] The number of Chicanos living in the Southwest at the time of the Mexican War was very small. Descendants of these people do not account for a significant proportion of modern Chicanos. Furthermore, many of them probably identify themselves as "Other Spanish" rather than the more working class "Chicano." Most of the adults of the other Latin groups are immigrants themselves. In 1969, 56 percent of Puerto Ricans, 82 percent of Cubans, and 64 percent of the Central and South Americans were born abroad.[8] Since this includes children, the percentages for men over 18 are much higher.

V. Differences in Education and Earnings Today

If the melting pot hypothesis is right, we should expect achievement by both our measures, education and annual earnings, to be highest for the oldest groups, with little or no difference between them and more recent but still long established groups. However, larger differences would be predicted between the earlier groups and the most recent immigrants and their children. If the other two theories are right, then differences between first-wave and second-wave groups as well as between them and third-wave Latin groups will be large.

Table 1 presents the evidence. The ethnic groups are listed in the order of their arrival in this country (except for blacks) with mean earnings and years of school shown in columns 3 and 4. To test which of

TABLE 1

Average Earnings and Education by Ethnic Group

Group	National Number (in thousands)	Number in CPS	Average Earnings (in dollars)	Average Years Completed
British	6362	4736	9750	12.5
Irish	3331	2471	8851	11.8
German	5803	4359	9215	12.1
French	1064	789	8568	11.3
Russian	478	357	12647	13.8
Polish	1220	902	9462	11.7
Italian	2071	1541	9539	11.6
Mexican, Chicano	901	670	6193	8.8
Puerto Rican	230	170	6421	8.3
Cuban	154	117	7032	10.4
Central or South American	115	84	7075	11.3
Other Spanish	251	187	7956	10.8
Black	3326	2303	5910	9.9
Other & Don't Know	14960	11075	8810	11.8
All Men	41360	30566	8795	11.7

Source: Computed from the 1971 Current Population Survey.

the differences among groups in the two measures of achievement were statistically significant, "t" statistics were calculated, equal to the difference in means for each pair of groups, divided by the square root of the sum of the variances of the sample means. Among European groups, all differences in earnings greater than $300 and in education greater than 0.2 years of school were significant at the 5 percent level. Because of fewer men in the sample, only differences in earnings greater than $1,000 and in education greater than one year were significant at the 5 percent level for Latins and blacks.

The results only vaguely support the melting pot hypothesis, though they completely refute the other theories of assimilation. All the first-wave and second-wave European groups had higher earnings and education than all the brown and black groups, significantly so in all but a few cases. And the differences among European groups were generally much smaller than the differences between them and the brown and black groups. This is what the melting pot hypothesis, but not the other theories, would predict.

However, differences among Europeans were often the opposite of what all the theories, including the melting pot hypothesis, would suggest. None of the theories predicts that second wave groups should do better than first wave groups. Yet both the earnings and the education of Russians substantially and significantly exceed those of any other group. The differences are not so large for Italians and Poles, and their earnings are higher than those of German, Irish, and French men, significantly so except between Poles and Germans. These statistics for Italians and Poles hardly bear out their images in recent jokes,

nor do they lend any support at all to theories claiming that immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe and their descendants were too different to achieve economic and social success in America.

Another, somewhat ambiguous, refutation of the melting pot hypothesis comes from the achievement of the miscellaneous group. Most of the men in this group are the products of the ultimate step in assimilation, intermarriage. If America really is a melting pot, and ethnic cultural differences are penalized, then these assimilated men should do better than men who retain their ethnic identities. The fact that the miscellaneous group has significantly lower earnings than all the second-wave groups and two of the four first-wave groups does tend to contradict the melting pot hypothesis. Of course it is possible that the average achievement for the miscellaneous group is brought down by low earnings among the unassimilated groups not specified by the survey.

Among the Latins, the groups with the highest earnings and education are not always the groups that have been here longest. The Cubans and Central or South Americans are both first generation, while the Chicanos are often second or third generation. Previously, immigrants to America came from the bottom of their societies. They were often illiterate, almost always poorly educated, displaced peasants. This is still true for Chicanos and Puerto Ricans, but the other Latin groups come instead from the tops of their societies. Although they may have trouble transferring their educations and skills to their new jobs in this country, they nevertheless may be at an advantage compared to children or grandchildren of illiterate peasant immigrants.

Blacks certainly have not been part of any melting pot during the centuries they have been in slavery and peonage in the rural South. Until the last decade, discrimination against them was institutionalized in law as well as in custom. If the melting pot has begun to work for blacks as well as for Europeans, it is only during the last generation, since blacks have migrated in large numbers to northern and southern cities. These data are insufficient to test whether this migration has produced any improvement in the relative position of blacks. However, they do have the lowest earnings of any group, significantly below all but Puerto Ricans and Chicanos. Their average education is third lowest.

VI. Changes Over Three Generations

The second part of the melting pot hypothesis, the part that sets it off from the other theories of assimilation, holds that differences among ethnic groups are narrowing over time. There might be large differences between first generation Italians, Russians, and Poles on the one hand, and British, Irish, and Germans whose families have been in this country for several generations. But if there is assimilation and upward mobility, then the difference between third generation Italians and sixth generation British should be small, if not nonexistent. ΔR_t^n should be positive for all t, or until $R_t^n = 1$, and ΔR_t^m should be negative.

Unfortunately, the CPS does not contain information on generations. However, by comparing ethnic group averages by age with the averages of all men by age, it should be possible to obtain some indication concerning mobility. The families of the first-wave British, Irish, and Germans, in general, came to this country several decades earlier than the

Eastern and Southern European groups. While these Northern and Western European immigrants have continued coming to America since the periods of peak immigration, most men of these ethnic groups are probably at least sixth generation Americans.

Peak immigration for the second-wave Italians, Poles, and Russians was between 1890 and 1914. Men of these ethnic groups who were 55 to 64 in 1971, born between 1907 and 1916, were thus usually the children of immigrants, if not immigrants as small children themselves. Men from these groups who were under 35 in 1971, the children or grandchildren of the older men, were therefore third or fourth generation Americans. Among the Latin ethnic groups, only the older Chicano men are primarily immigrants themselves, though the number of first generation Americans is large for all ages. Most of the men under 35, born since 1936, are probably second generation. However, almost all men of all ages from the other Latin groups are themselves first generation.

Thus if we compare older Italians to older Germans, on average we are comparing first and second generation Americans with third or fourth generation ones. And if we look at the younger age groups, we are comparing the third and fourth generations with the sixth generation. If differences between the newly arrived ethnic groups and the older groups are narrowing with increasing generations, then the ratio of the Italians to the group average should rise with age, but the ratio of Germans or the British should fall with age. Younger Italians should be higher, relative to all other men, than their grandfathers, but younger Germans should be lower.

Education is a better measure of mobility in this case than earnings for the following reason. The earnings of all age groups are for 1970, whereas the education was completed as long ago as 1920. If discrimination against ethnic groups has decreased since 1920, in schools and in labor markets, then education will reflect discrimination of that year directly, but earnings of 1970 will reflect it only indirectly through the effects of education and work experience. This will also be true if differences in education and earnings between groups are the result of differences in language and custom. If these differences have narrowed during the last fifty years, for individuals as well as for groups, then 1970 earnings will not show the differences that existed fifty years ago, but education will. Furthermore, earnings difference will reflect life cycle differences as well as changes in differences by cohort. See Welch (1973).

To see if ethnic differences in education have been declining over time, the ratio of average education for each ethnic group to the average of all men was calculated for five age categories, 25 to 34, 35 to 44, 45 to 54, 55 to 64, and 65 and over. Men 18 to 24 were not included because so many of them were still in school, especially for those groups with high average education. Table 2 presents the results.

If the melting pot hypothesis--that differences in achievement among ethnic groups are narrowing over time--is right, then the relative education of the earliest groups, those at the top of Table 2, should decline with age, and the relative education of the newer groups should rise. In fact this is more or less the pattern that Table 2 shows. The education of British men has declined from 112 percent among men 25 to 34, while the relative educations of Russians, Poles, and Italians have all increased. Although three of the first-wave groups show no change in relative education, this evidence does indicate smaller differences between third and sixth generation Americans than between first and third.

TABLE 2

Relative Schooling of Ethnic Groups, By Age Group

	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
British	1.04	1.05	1.04	1.08	1.12
Irish	1.00	.99	.96	.97	1.01
German	1.02	1.01	1.01	1.02	1.01
French	.95	.95	.95	.85	.92
Russian	1.20	1.16	1.16	1.17	1.07
Polish	1.02	1.02	.97	.95	.82
Italian	1.00	.98	.97	.91	.71
Mexican, Chicano	.78	.68	.58	.43	.40
Puerto Rican	.68	.67	.66	.61	.59
Cuban	.85	.88	.82	.93	1.18
Central or South American	.86	1.00	.94	1.00	1.80
Other Spanish	.89	.89	.86	.81	.71
Black	.87	.82	.77	.67	.61
Other and Don't Know	.99	.99	.98	.97	.97
Average Years of School for All Men	12.7	12.7	11.5	10.6	9.0

NOTE: The columns of this table are the ratios of average years of school completed for the men of each ethnic group with an age category to the average for all men within the age category. Computed from CPS data.

Among the Latin groups, only the younger Chicanos have received their educations in this country. Any change in relative education or lack of it among the other groups thus does not indicate anything about the melting pot. However both Chicanos and blacks show a sharp improvement in their relative educations. If blacks can be considered in effect recent immigrants to cities, then this is evidence that the melting pot may be working for black and brown groups today just as it seems to have been for European groups a generation ago. It remains to be seen whether the improvement in relative education can be translated into improvements in relative earnings and occupational status, however.

To test statistically whether differences in relative education have been narrowing over time, variances of group means were calculated for each age group. The four Latin groups not educated in this country, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Central and South Americans, and Other Spanish, were not included. Since we are interested in differences among groups rather than among individuals, it is the variance of group means that is the appropriate measure, not the variance of individual achievement. "F" statistics, shown in Table 3, were then calculated to test if the variances among ethnic groups were higher for the older age groups than for the younger ones. The tests indicate that the variances for men 55 to 64 and men 65 and over were significantly larger than for men 25 to 34 at the 5 percent level, and significantly larger than for men 35 to 44 at the 10 percent level. Thus, differences among ethnic groups have been narrowing over time, and this aspect of the melting pot hypothesis is confirmed.

VII. Residual Differences in Earnings

The previous two sections have presented evidence at least partially confirming two aspects of the melting pot hypothesis. Average earnings

TABLE 3

F Tests of Narrowing of Ethnic Differences in Education

	25-34	35-44	45-54	54-64
35-44	1.421			
45-54	2.301	1.619		
55-64	3.757	2.643	1.632	
65+	4.329	3.046	1.881	1.152

$F(9,9) = 3.18$ is significant at the 5 percent level.

$F(9,9) = 2.44$ is significant at the 10 percent level.

$F(9,9) = 1.59$ is significant at the 25 percent level.

and education tended to be higher for the oldest ethnic groups and lowest for the most recent groups, though exceptions were perhaps more frequent than the rule. And differences in educational achievement do seem to be narrowing over time, though the differences between black and brown groups and the white, European groups continue to be large for all ages. Substantial differences among ethnic groups also exist in location, marital status, and even in age. This section examines how much of the earnings differences can be explained by the four variables, education, age, marital status, and location, and how much must be attributed to other factors such as labor market discrimination.

The melting pot hypothesis does not have strong implications concerning the effect of ethnic origin net of education. It is a hypothesis about differences in levels of achievement, not about mediating influences on those levels. Explaining achievement in terms of high levels of schooling in some sense begs the basic question of why one ethnic group rather than another has been able to use education as a means to economic success. What characteristics of the successful group, or of the treatment the group received from earlier arrivals, permitted the group to attend school longer, or to benefit more from the longer years after leaving school?

There is a weak implication of the melting pot hypothesis, however, that even after taking account of differences in schooling, the newer ethnic groups might earn less than the older ones. The most recent immigrants are likely to be the most different culturally from the mainstream. If they are entering the society at the bottom, and seem to be competing with other groups for housing and employment, their cultural differences may be viewed negatively, and prejudice against them will develop. This

prejudice will lead to labor market discrimination based solely on physical features or cultural differences that have no effect on productivity. Over time, however, as the cultural differences decline, the prejudice against them may decline as well.

If this is actually the pattern, there should be no significant differences in earnings for assimilated groups, but perhaps large differences, even after holding education constant, for more recent groups. Thus we might expect that once differences in education and other factors were accounted for, no significant differences would remain among first-wave and second-wave groups, but substantial differences might exist between them and blacks and Latins.

This need not be the case, of course. For one thing, discrimination has persisted against blacks in the rural South for generations. It is hardly obvious that simply moving north, going to school longer, and waiting a generation will change the pattern, for blacks or for various brown groups. Furthermore, even if explicitly racial labor market discrimination disappears, class discrimination may persist. Two men completely equal in abilities, looking for work in the same labor market, but from different classes, will on average have different earnings. The son of rich parents will usually earn more than the son of poor parents, even if the two sons are equal in all respects related to work ability, including years of school and achievement as measured by standardized tests.[9] Because the average class background (as indicated by average occupation, education, and earnings of parents) differs widely among ethnic groups, we might expect differences in earnings to remain after accounting for differences in education, etc.

To see how much differences in earnings among individuals could be accounted for by differences in age, education, marital status, and location, and how much was explained by ethnic group, I ran two similar regressions. The first had earnings in dollars as the dependent variable and the second had the log of earnings. The independent variables included years of school completed, and dummy variables for living in the South, in metropolitan areas, for being married spouse present, for four age categories (18 to 24, 25 to 34, 35 to 44, and 45 to 54) and for the thirteen ethnic groups. The reference group consisted of unmarried men of the miscellaneous ethnic category, between 55 and 64, living outside the South and outside metropolitan areas.

Independent variables for South and SMSA locations were included in the regressions because wage rates for similar jobs are lower in the former and higher in the latter than elsewhere. Marital status is an often used proxy for motivation, and age affects earnings through on-the-job training, physical and mental ability, and social custom. Because of the hill-shaped relation between age and earnings, dummy age variables instead of a continuous term were used.

Although the data on education included all men over 25, the sample used for estimating earnings differences has been limited to nonstudent men between 18 and 65. The earnings of other groups are dominated not by their ability to earn but by their labor force participation decisions. For instance, a highly educated graduate student has low earnings because he is still in school. His actual earnings are a very poor indication of what he could make if he chose to work full time.

Men with negative earnings have also been excluded, because for them one year's measured income is a completely worthless indication of their normal earnings. Earnings for a longer period than one year would of course be a better measure for all men, but for men with negative earnings the one year measure is especially bad. Men with zero incomes were also excluded, because they probably were not able to work because of physical or mental disabilities. These disabilities are not caused by education, but rather are occasionally the cause of low education. Including these men would tend to understate the earnings of working men with little schooling, and thus to overstate the effects of education.

Table 4 presents the results of the two earnings regressions. In column 1 are the coefficients of the ethnic dummy variables from the regression with earnings as the dependent variable, in column 2 from the regression with the log of earnings as the dependent variable. These coefficients represent the difference in average earnings of each ethnic group from the miscellaneous category, not from any average of all men. The coefficients in column 1 can be interpreted as dollar differences in earnings among ethnic groups, after holding constant other differences. The antilogs of the coefficients in column 2 are percentage differences in earnings among ethnic groups. The results from the two regressions are essentially the same, though occasionally a coefficient from the log regression is significant while the linear coefficient is not. Table 4 indicates which differences among these coefficients are statistically significant.

In general, as with the unadjusted mean earnings, the results support the melting pot hypothesis. Differences between Latin groups and

TABLE 4

Ethnic Differences in Adjusted Earnings

	(1)	(2)
British	303.3*	.049*
Irish	-101.3	-.004
German	35.8	-.003
French	25.7	.020
Russian	1793.2*	.127*
Polish	117.5	.056*
Italian	178.3	.056*
Mexican, Chicano	-838.0	-.143*
Puerto Rican	-190.3	-.058
Cuban	-1805.2*	-.247*
Central or South American	-1631.4*	-.228*
Other Spanish	-337.7	-.010
Black	-1548.1*	-.232*
Other and Don't Know	R	R

*$t > 2$.

R = Reference Group

blacks on the one hand, and first-wave and second-wave European groups on the other, are almost always large and significant. These differences are in most cases about half the size of the unadjusted differences, though there are many exceptions. Differences in school quality, language problems, and unmeasured differences in location or in interactions between age, education, and location may contribute to these residual differences between third world and European groups. Nevertheless, these findings are strong evidence of racial discrimination in labor markets against the several Latin groups as well as against blacks.

These results also indicate that labor market discrimination against blacks is significantly greater than against the two largest Latin groups, Chicanos and Puerto Ricans. As shown in Table 5, the black coefficient is significantly lower than the coefficients of the other two groups. While school quality, social background, or misspecified interactions may explain part of the differences between white and black or brown groups, these factors are not likely to be important in explaining differences between blacks and browns.

The fact that large and significant differences in earnings between European groups and black and Latin groups persist even after holding other factors constant, while differences among European groups are much smaller, does tend to support the melting pot hypothesis. Of course with no data on adjusted earnings over time it is not possible to say whether the melting pot is working as well for blacks and browns as it evidently has for second-wave European groups. Differences in coefficients among European groups, like the differences in unadjusted earnings, confound both the melting pot hypothesis and the nonassimilation theories as well. The second-wave groups from Southern and Eastern

TABLE 5

"t" Statistics of Ethnic Coefficients from Log Earnings Regression

	Irish	German	French	Russian	Polish	Italian	Chicano	PR	Cuban	CSA	Other Spanish	Black	Other
British	2.56	2.84	.97	4.36	.24	.29	5.94	1.82	.42	3.39	1.06	13.07	3.8
Irish		.05	.76	6.36	1.98	2.31	4.10	.91	3.44	2.72	.11	9.58	0.2
German			.77	7.14	2.05	1.62	4.31	.94	3.49	2.75	.13	10.55	0.2
French				3.59	.97	.52	4.06	1.13	3.62	2.91	.49	7.85	0.7
Russian					2.49	2.98	8.39	3.15	5.36	4.34	2.46	16.78	3.2
Polish						0	5.08	1.82	4.13	3.35	1.10	9.32	2.1
Italian							5.54	1.88	4.23	3.41	1.14	10.83	2.7
Chicano								1.32	1.39	.99	2.15	2.59	4.8
Puerto Rican									2.11	1.72	.61	2.90	1.0
Cuban										.18	2.71	.21	3.6
CSA											2.24	.05	2.8
Other Spanish												3.89	0.1
Black													13.4

Europe earn more than all the first-wave groups but the British, even after holding education, location, age, and marital status constant. Although the differences between groups are usually about half the size of the unadjusted differences, in several cases they are nonetheless significant. I do not know to what to attribute these differences. It is certainly hard to believe that there is labor market discrimination against Irish men in favor of Italians and Poles.

VIII. Conclusion

The evidence presented in this paper does not support the hypothesis that differences in achievement among European ethnic groups have melted away during the three generations since the end of the second wave of immigrants from Southern Europe. Statistically significant differences in both earnings and education persist. Though the differences in education have definitely been narrowing over time, the differences in earnings do not disappear when ethnic differences in education, location, age, and marital status are taken into account.

However, the differences that persist are not those that the melting pot hypothesis, or other theories of social mobility, would predict. The second-wave groups, the more recent arrivals from supposedly inferior cultures, in many cases have higher average earnings, with and without adjusting for other factors, than the first-wave groups. Russians have the highest earnings and education of all the groups, and Italians and Poles on average earn more than the Irish, Germans, and French. Although differences in education and earnings persist among European ethnic groups, contrary to the melting pot hypothesis, these differences completely contradict theories that predict that later groups or Southern and Eastern

European groups should do worse than earlier or northern and western European groups.

These findings, at least for Italians and Poles, are in contradiction to the results reported by Blau and Duncan (1967) and Featherman (1971). It is not clear what explains the residual differences in earnings among the European groups. Ethnic discrimination seems unlikely. Differences in the quality of education, psychological motivation, and location are all plausible. Unfortunately, the CPS contains no information at all on the first two factors, and no precise information on location.

Evidence on whether the melting pot is working for black and brown groups is mixed. Blacks and Chicanos have steadily narrowed educational differences between themselves and the European groups over the last two generations. However, large and significant differences in earnings still exist, both with and without holding education, location, age, and marital status constant, between almost all the Latin and black groups and almost all the European groups. Labor market discrimination seems to exist against most of the Latin groups as well as against blacks. It is not clear whether this discrimination is abating over time.

NOTES

1. Feldman (1931).
2. Grebler (1970), p. 379.
3. See Historical Statistics of the United States, Series C 88 to C114 for this and all other immigration data cited below, unless otherwise specified.
4. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1930 Census of Population, Vol. II, p. 269.
5. Ibid., p. 342.
6. CPR, Series P-20, No. 221, Table 4.
7. Computed from the 1970 Census of Population, PC(1)-C(1), Table 86 and CPR, Series P-20, No. 213, Table 2.
8. CPR, Series P-20, No. 213, Tables 2 and 3.
9. See Bowles (1973); Blau and Duncan (1967); Duncan, Featherman, and Duncan (1972); and Gintis (1971), for evidence to this effect concerning occupational achievement as well as income.

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