

Cultural Maintenance

A Pot of Beans on the Stove

Our lives represent, in C. Wright Mills' (1959) phrase, the "intersection of biography and history." While we may be only dimly aware of the historical currents that are shaping our lives, we can rest assured they are.

—Doug McAdam, *Freedom Summer*

Racialization is an ideological process, an historically specific one.

—Michael Omi and Howard Winant,
Racial Formation in the United States

When I arrived at the Benavidas home in the Oakland hills, my respondent's wife, Melissa, gave me a tour of the front portion of the home, saying her husband would join us in a minute. The house was immaculately decorated, boasting art on the walls from Spain, Mexico, and Ecuador, as well as southwestern art hand crafted by Melissa's father. As Melissa ushered me into the kitchen, she laughed, saying tongue in cheek, "Not to be a stereotypical Mexican family or anything, but we've got to get the beans on!" We both laughed. She followed up with, "Well, really, we usually do have a pot of beans in the house."

We already see a contrast between the Rosenberg family and the Benavidas family; the Benavidases are immersed in Latino culture in the form of art decorating the home and the pot of beans on the stove. To complement the last chapter on "thinned attachment," this chapter presents an alternative model of assimilation into U.S. society: "cultural maintenance." In contradistinction to the thinned attachment families, the cultural maintenance families have preserved many elements of Mexican culture while still making

swift adjustments to U.S. culture. While families in both models have assimilated in terms of structure (mainstream schools and occupations), economics, and civic participation, they vary in their levels of adoption of U.S. culture and continued adherence to Mexican culture. This chapter argues that the same factors that influence a thinned attachment outcome—namely, marriage, gender ideologies, and religion—when configured differently, can produce a cultural maintenance outcome. The “cultural maintenance” trajectory of assimilation occurs most often when racial/ethnic in-marriage, Catholicism, and traditional (or transitional) gender ideologies persist in the second generation. Cultural maintenance helps us rethink assimilation theory by adding an understanding of the way retaining cultural values from a sending country can help rather than hinder acclimation to and success in a new national environment.¹

While socioeconomic status does not noticeably vary between the two groups, the thinned attachment and cultural maintenance models diverge in several ways (see table 3.1). Marriage (endogamy versus exogamy) at the second generation is a primary influence, causing families to branch toward either cultural maintenance or thinned attachment. Cultural maintenance families have far higher intramarriage rates, more traditional gender ideologies, and higher rates of participation in civil rights activism, and they are also more often practicing Catholics than their thinned attachment counterparts. Family memory and personal traits also vary: cultural maintenance families display strong adherence to family history, are more often Spanish-surnamed, and possess darker skin tones and more non-European features than do thinned attachment families.²

TABLE 3.1
Points of Divergence

	<i>Thinned Attachment</i>	<i>Cultural Maintenance</i>
Marriage	Exogamous	Endogamous
Gender Ideologies	Transitional/Egalitarian	Traditional/Transitional
Religion	Catholic or Nonpracticing/ Converted	Catholic
Spanish	English monolingual to Bilingual	Bilingual
Personal Traits	Spanish surname or Non- European phenotype or Non	Spanish surname; Non- European phenotype
Social Context (Peers)	Heterogeneous/ White	Heterogeneous/Mexican

This chapter highlights the Lopez family, who experienced the Chicano Movement as a watershed moment wherein racial consciousness peaked, and the Benavidas family, who were committed to their Mexican identity prior to the 1960s. As we shall see, historical context heavily influences the way people understand themselves racially. First-generation immigrants confronted Americanization, deportation, and recruitment programs whereas the second and third generations experienced the civil rights movement and the affirmative action eras, respectively.

The Importance of Historical Era in Biography and Identity

First Generation, Juan Lopez:

Americanization, Deportation, and Bracero Programs

The Lopez family illustrates a “bumpy” process of assimilation (Gans 1992a): influenced by the sociopolitical context of their respective adult-hoods, the first generation is assimilationist whereas the second and third generations emphasize cultural maintenance. Juan, the 84-year-old who immigrated with his family as a child in the early 1920s, is staunchly assimilationist in outlook except for his desire for his children to marry coethnics. His 57-year-old son, Marcus, was an avid supporter of the Chicano Movement and disagrees with his father on several political issues because of his generational status and altered racial consciousness. Marcus’s 35-year-old son, Antonio—who goes by “Antonio” at work and “Tony” in social circles—fluidly operates with both Anglos and Mexican Americans as a bilingual county deputy sheriff in Ventura, California.

History bears significantly on the way people choose to express their racial identity. Waves of recruitment and deportation vacillated with the United States’ labor needs. “Americanization programs” (1915–1929) provided vocational and civic training in order to mold immigrants into “good Americans.” These programs targeted Mexican women because, as wives and mothers, they were seen as gateways through which to influence the cultural values of spouses and children (Sanchez 1994). These Americanization programs encouraged immigrants to abandon their natal traditions and conform to the American industrial order (Sanchez 1993). Soon thereafter, the Mexican government established “Mexicanization programs” to invigorate ethnic consciousness and nationalistic fervor, with the goal of enticing Mexican expatriates to return to Mexico. These émigrés had learned new skills in the United States that the Mexican government hoped could be put to use in Mexico if they “won back” these Mexican nationals (Sanchez 1993: 122).

The United States began deportation programs after the stock market crash of 1929. The government forcibly removed the formerly “cheap, mobile labor” during the Great Depression (Sanchez 1993: 213) in a program called “Operation Deportation” that operated from 1930 until 1942 (Almaguer 1994). With economic prosperity fading in the United States, many Mexicans also voluntarily left. The 1920s-1940s was a period of segregation between Anglos and Mexicans. Much like the Jim Crow segregation between blacks and whites in the South, this southwestern segregation was marked by rules regulating contact between Anglos and Mexicans. The division of labor was delineated by race: Anglos were the landholders and Mexicans were the laborers. A racial discourse of Anglo ethnocentrism and an ideology of Mexican racial inferiority supported and rationalized this segregation (Montejano 1987). The Bracero Program (1942–1964), a Mexican contract labor program aimed at filling the wartime labor shortage, again recruited Mexican workers during a time of U.S. labor need. This historical background gives a context to the periods Juan lived through in southern California.³ Juan’s youth and young adulthood took place between the 1920s and the 1950s, a time when assimilation paradigms and labor recruitment and deportation programs ordered the relationship between whites and Mexicans in the United States.

A first-generation immigrant, Juan did not go beyond the second grade in grammar school and never learned to read or write. Juan did manual labor for years and was a security guard for nearly thirty years at a Mexican American cultural center. During World War II, Juan served for the United States in New Guinea for five years. He maintains that he never faced discrimination. His manual labor and security jobs were within his ethnic community, which lessened his subjection to racial discrimination.⁴ Owing to gratitude stemming from this “dual frame of reference” (Ogbu 1994), Juan would not criticize Americans who were affording him opportunity in the United States. As we will see in chapter 5, Juan’s narrative of gratitude and limited criticism is strikingly similar to the perspectives of other first-generation immigrants his age with comparable immigrant, class, and work histories.

While Juan married a Mexican woman, only one of his four children (two boys and two girls) married a Mexican-origin individual. Concerned less with the race of his children’s spouses, he cared more that they “get along.” Juan was nonchalant about what he wished his children and grandchildren to preserve about their Mexican heritage. Juan’s parenting style was fairly assimilationist; he was *laissez-faire* about instructing his offspring in Mexican culture. Juan said that there was “nothing in particular to preserve about Mexican heritage except Spanish . . . but it was up to his family whether or not to speak it.”

Second Generation, Marcus Lopez: The Chicano Movement

Marcus, one of the Lopez family's second-generation sons, married a Mexican American woman⁵ and was highly active in the Chicano Movement. In contrast to Juan, with his lukewarm commitment to Mexican cultural maintenance, Marcus agitated for Mexican American "cultural citizenship" (Flores and Benmayor 1997) during the Chicano Movement. "Cultural citizenship" refers to establishing a space where Latinos can be "both" Latino "and" American, thereby permitting Latino cultural expressions to enrich the country. A Brown Beret⁶ in the 1960s, Marcus experienced a maturation of his racial consciousness due to the social movement that legitimated racial expression and incited mass mobilization for racial justice.

Marcus grew up on a lemon orchard, where his father was a ranch hand and his mother was a lemon picker. One of his jobs as a young boy was to help out his dad in the orchard, getting up before dawn to do the "dirty job" of lighting the "smudge pots" that were used to warm the orchard to avoid frost on the lemons. Another mark of working-class status is Marcus's memory of his mother "drawing lines of nylons on the back of her legs with mascara" to make it appear as if she had on real stockings and was fashionably dressed. Marcus's parents did not impress upon him any reverence for his Mexican heritage. They took a laissez-faire approach to adapting to the United States, neither jettisoning nor preserving their Mexican culture: "They were just happy to have what they had and be where they were. My parents didn't stop it [Mexican culture], but they didn't perpetuate it. Whatever happened happened."

Although Marcus was raised knowing he was Mexican American and did not identify strongly with that background until the late 1960s, others imposed a racial and ethnic identity on him. For example, a racist high school counselor, a gatekeeper of school success, blocked Marcus's educational progress. Only retrospectively did Marcus see as racist his high school counselor's remark that "all [Mexican] people were good for were to be cooks and mechanics." Despite Marcus's mother's desire for him to continue his education, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps at age seventeen and eventually earned his General Education Diploma (GED).

It was in military service that Marcus learned about prejudice from white Texans. He reflects,

I didn't realize there was prejudice. I knew that people didn't like black people, but I didn't know there was prejudice against Hispanics or Mexi-

cans. At the time I thought, “Well, I’m not black, so . . .” But I didn’t realize there were prejudices until I got into the service. . . . My first exposure to prejudices was in the company I was assigned to because I came across [white] Texans. To them I was a bean-burner, a wetback, “come take my boots off, boy,” “did your mom teach you how to make tortillas? Because I like tortillas.” That was the first time I was exposed to actual prejudices and racism. I was kinda hurt by it. “You know, I’m an American.”

Based on this experience of racial hatred in the military, Marcus perceived his high school counselor as a racist. Marcus clearly links his experience of prejudice with becoming politically active and joining the Brown Berets during the Chicano Movement. I asked Marcus, “How did those experiences with the counselor and the Texans in the Marines affect you?” Marcus responded,

It made me very angry. Angry enough that when I got out of the service, I joined the Brown Berets. I wanted to make change. The Brown Berets were equivalent to the Black Panthers. They would do change even if it meant violence. I didn’t know if I could be violent, but I knew I could make change. The person that probably impressed me the most and really solidified how I felt was César Chávez. I met him and I became [one of] his bodyguard[s] . . . when he was in California visiting Cuyama, Nipomo, Santa Barbara, and Bakersfield. I got to know him fairly well. . . . We were his [armed] bodyguards. There was a lot of threats against him, a lot of death threats.

As a Brown Beret, Marcus helped poor migrant Mexican agricultural workers and their families by setting up shelters and clinics that provided food, clothing, and medical care. The California chapter of the Brown Berets with which Marcus worked also organized MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán) at several college and university campuses, as well as set up local community cultural centers.

Marcus’s increased racial pride and confident “presentation of self” (Goffman 1973) is based in part on the civil rights movement:

I know there is a difference between the way you present yourself, the way you carry yourself, no matter if you are Hispanic or not, that perpetuates awareness to somebody else. . . . I learned this in communication class. When you look at someone and you have eye contact with them and you

say, “My name is Marcus Lopez,” they tend to kind of like, “Okay.” There’s a difference between [that and] “my name is Marcus Lopez” [nervous, eyes downcast]. . . . I’ve learned to . . . just project . . . “I know who I am, who are you?” . . . If I detect any kind of a racial thing I just don’t participate in that person’s mind game. . . . The power of presentation is a very powerful thing. I’m not sure if that was a defense mechanism that grew over the years. . . .

Defense mechanism or not, Marcus’s more assertive presentation of self is a consequence of not just a communication class but also a post-civil rights period that allows space for the pride and confidence of ethnic/racial minorities.

Another ramification of the civil rights movement was the creation of multicultural education curriculum in the 1970s (Yamane 2001). Multicultural curriculum legitimated the study of ethnic/racial and gender groups that were previously shunned by disciplinary canons.⁷ This impact of the civil rights movement affects the education of students today. Marcus commented,

I thought [Mexican American art class] was the greatest thing in the world. . . . I didn’t know that the Aztecs really did [discover] astrological things, I didn’t know that the Mayans invented the [concept of zero]. You assume it’s the Chinese or somebody, you know? Mayans and their agriculture, they grew crops with irrigation systems before the Egyptians knew how to irrigate with the Nile. Wow. That really got me going, as far as learning. I even took Black Studies classes to understand black people a little more.

Marcus sees multicultural classes as a way to learn more about himself as well as a way to become acquainted with other groups. Indeed, multicultural education raises levels of understanding across groups and therefore lowers distrust, heightens egalitarianism, and underscores commonalities while encouraging appreciation of differences (Astin 1993; Duster et al. 1991; Giroux 1992; Schoem and Hurtado 2001; Maher and Tetreault 1994; Nieto 1999; Vasquez 2005). In sum, Marcus sees that racial tensions have eased since the 1960s and that “we’re accepted a little more but not quite a part of the mainstream.”

For Marcus, as for many others, a key to Mexican American identity is to “remember who you are and have pride.” He added, “You don’t have to carry a piñata to show you are Mexican.” His definition of Mexican American

identity allows for acculturation and shedding of some traditional Mexican symbols. Similar to thinned attachment families, Marcus's family insisted that "keeping the importance of family" is a keystone of what it means to be Mexican American. More so than other respondents, Marcus emphasized his Mayan and Aztec roots that underlie Mexican culture.

When I asked Marcus how he would respond to his father's claim that he never experienced discrimination, he said that his father "felt he owed the white man loyalty because his life was better here [than in Mexico]." In contrast, Marcus discerned racist joking that went undetected by his father. He used his own consciousness-raising experiences to open his father's eyes. Marcus related a conversation in which he and his father were called "wet-backs" in a grocery store: "They're not laughing because they like you, they're laughing because you are different and you are not what they like."

The Chicano Movement raised Marcus's racial consciousness but did not inspire his father. Juan's relationship to the United States solidified before the Chicano Movement, during a period of Americanization programs and government-sanctioned cycles of Mexican labor recruitment and deportation. Juan was unmoved by the Chicano Movement because he was loathe to criticize a country that had given him upward mobility. Marcus's and his father's perspectives are distinguished by their generation in the United States and their respective relationships to the civil rights fervor of the 1960s. Nativity, generation, and historical era during their "coming of age" largely determined both Juan's and Marcus's relationship to the civil rights movement. Marcus's commentary on his father's indefatigable work ethic sets the stage for a generational difference between him and his father regarding relationship to the United States and racial pride:

I think my dad's biggest accomplishment is living to be eighty-four [chuckle]. 'Cause, he worked hard. All his life. . . . I think all of his fingers had been broken at one time, and still going to work. I don't think I ever remember him being home. He'd go to work sick. . . . I remember one time he smashed all his fingers trying to change a plow apparatus on the tractor. It slipped and the bars came down and smashed his fingers. That happened early in the afternoon, [yet] he worked all afternoon, then he came home and . . . he soaked his hand in ice water, wrapped it up, took some aspirin. Didn't even go to the doctor. The next day he went back to work, he just put tape around his fingers. I knew all his fingers were broken. When he came home his hand was just all crumpled up. I remember him taking his fingers and going like this [he tugs on each finger from the tip, one at a

time] and just straightening them out. I don't know if you noticed, but his hands are all [makes a mangled pose with his hand]. They healed, but they healed deformed.

Marcus proceeded to tell a similarly dreadful tale of the tractor rolling over his father's foot and yet the next day he "wrapped his foot and . . . tied his boot real tight" and limped to work. While Marcus admired his father's work ethic, the two maintained political differences.

Nation of birth, citizenship status, and generation marked Juan's and Marcus's political styles. Marcus reflected on the political philosophy that drove his father's tireless work ethic:

He thought that he owed everything to the white man for what he had. He felt compelled that he had to go to work. . . . He owed them for the life that he had. . . . He felt that the life that he had was better than what life would be in Mexico. I used to tell him, "What are you doing this for? They don't care about you!" So he and I just had big differences. [He and I used to get down into] knock-down drag-out fights about . . . me being a Brown Beret . . . I was "ungrateful" and all of that; "they're just radicals, they don't love this country!" We had big differences.

Juan felt a sense of debt and obligation to the country into which he immigrated whereas Marcus felt that he had a duty to fight for equal rights and representation. The first generation paid its debt of gratitude by means of a robust work ethic whereas the members of the second generation felt their responsibility was to shore up "cultural citizenship," combat subordination, and attain first-class citizenship status.

As argued in the previous and following chapters, marriage is a key element in influencing a thinned attachment or cultural maintenance pathway of incorporation. Keeping in mind that there is a spectrum of incorporation possibilities, most thinned attachment families out-married while most cultural maintenance families in-married. For Marcus, "All of [his] relationships have been with Hispanics" because he desired cultural similarity. Marcus followed the advice of his parents to "stay within [his] own, stay with a Mexican girl," as both his first and second wives were Mexican (mother of his first son, Tony, and his second son, respectively). Marcus's parents advised him, "white girls treat you bad." It is unclear precisely what that means—whether they felt white girls are too independent minded and not subservient enough to be good wives, or whether they conflated race, religion, and culture and

TABLE 3.2
In- and Out-Marriage by Sex and Generation

<i>Female In-Marriage</i>	<i>Female Out-Marriage</i>
G1: 6 (All)	G1: 0
G2: 12	G2: 1
G3: 2	G3: 1
<i>Male In-Marriage</i>	<i>Male Out-Marriage</i>
G1: 2 (All)	G1: 0
G2: 12	G2: 3
G3: 1	G3: 4

Notes:

1. Missing Data: G2: 1; G3: 22
2. "In-marriage" includes all Latino national origin groups.

feared their son might partner with a non-Catholic, non-Mexican woman. This male in-marriage provides a rich gendered contrast to the female out-marriage seen in the previous chapter on thinned attachment. Note that I am *not* making a gendered argument about which sex is more likely to marry endogamously versus exogamously. Table 3.2 demonstrates that there is no clear gender divide regarding who in-marries as opposed to who out-marries. Similar to national data estimates that 65 percent of Hispanics marry endogamously (Kalmijn 1998: 406), even to the fourth generation (Telles and Ortiz 2009: 265), my study found that in-marriage was the most frequent coupling at all three generational levels for the entire sample.

Preference for in-marriage is the chief way Marcus's parents pressed for cultural preservation. While they may not have stressed "Mexican culture" per se, they were committed to promoting intramarriage in their children (although only one of four children actually followed this advice). While Marcus believes it is desirable to have ethnic/racial commonality with a partner, he does not see ethnic matching as a necessary ingredient for a happy marriage: "I've seen mixed marriages where there is a clash of cultures . . . and I've seen mixed marriages where they've blended real well. I've seen both." Although it is not a "deal-breaker," Marcus also prefers that his two sons marry Mexican (or Hispanic) women.

The vast majority of cultural maintenance families are Catholic in all three generations. While Juan and his grandson Tony are Catholics, Marcus professes holding American Indian religious beliefs. Marcus reveres not just

his Mexican predecessors but his Native American and Aztec ancestors. He remembers that Mexicans were born of the Spanish conquest of the Aztec and indigenous civilizations with the arrival of Hernan Cortés in Mexico City (then Tenochtitlán) in 1521.⁸ Marcus's religious beliefs are not so much a departure from Catholicism as they are an attempt to return to belief systems that predated the arrival of the Spanish conquistador's Catholicism in the "New World."

Another factor that distinguishes cultural maintenance families is an emphasis on racial pride. Marcus propounds a racial pride that is not ostentatious but is incorporated into his outlook. Marcus counsels his children to continue feeling this pride: "I tell them . . . to remember who you are and be proud of it." Even given this commitment to Mexican pride and representation, cultural maintenance families are not immune to attenuation of Mexican cultural knowledge that is a byproduct of cultural and socioeconomic adaptation to the United States. As parents—of any generation—invest time and energy in career advancement and socioeconomic achievement in order to increase the life chances of themselves and their children, they have less time to continue cultural traditions. Marcus describes this cultural forgetting:

I think it's important to keep it [Spanish] to ensure that the culture stays. There is a lot of tradition that even I don't know about, that I've forgotten, that my mom and grandma used to teach us and tell us about. [My brother] keeps alive making tamales on Christmas Eve, for the family. [He] does it every year; my mom taught him. Again, it's to get the family together. It took me a long time to get back to that, or to realize that. I got too career oriented.

While Marcus regrets the dearth of time he spent at home, he was frequently away from home in order to secure his family's financial well-being. The household division of labor between Marcus and his first wife was traditional in that he was the breadwinner and his wife was in charge of childrearing and other domestic concerns.

In order to solidify his family's place on a middle rung of the socioeconomic ladder, Marcus worked diligently as a supervisor in a growing corporation. Focusing his effort on his occupation and hopes for integration into the U.S. middle class, Marcus made few attempts to secure cultural knowledge for himself and his children. A gender analysis would indicate that Marcus, as a man, was probably inclined to leave the food, feasts, and festivals to a female spouse because such cultural activities would fall under a woman's

domain within a traditional household division of labor (DeVault 1991; Di Leonardo 1984). “Women are often constructed as the cultural symbols of the collectivity, of its boundaries, as carriers of the collectivity’s ‘honor’ and as its intergenerational reproducers of culture” (Yuval-Davis 1997: 67). In this conception, women carry a particular “burden of representation” (Yuval-Davis 1997: 45) as symbolic bearers of collective identity (Kurien 2003). Women are imagined as mothers of children (or whole families) that they nurture within a national or cultural framework.

This gendered logic that positions women as carriers of culture may have also played into Marcus’s parents’ advice to marry a Mexican woman rather than a (non-Hispanic) white woman. If Marcus married a Mexican woman, under a patriarchal home set-up at least, his wife would be in charge of raising children within their shared Mexican culture. This way, Marcus could continue with his career aspirations and rest assured that his children were receiving cultural instruction from his wife, the implicitly designated carrier of culture. This is one reading of Marcus’s parents’ counsel and his own adult actions that accounts for how his gender influenced his life. Whether deliberate or not, Marcus was active in the public sphere, gaining a financial foothold for his family, until his retirement. In his late fifties, having provided economically for his family, Marcus took early retirement to spend more time at home. Now he can be found baking in his newly remodeled kitchen, awaiting the arrival of his teenage son from high school football practice.

Marcus reflects on how his devotion to his family through dedication to his career allowed for cultural forgetting. Now, in the early days of retirement, he relishes enriching his cultural knowledge. Still, he is somewhat abashed that these are skills he must learn rather than simply intuit. Marcus comments,

You know what the sad part is? . . . I’m taking a cooking class this month to learn how to make salsa. . . . The guy giving the class is a white guy. [Laughs.] . . . I want to learn how to do salsa, how to make a good *carne asada* [flame-grilled beef], a good *chile verde* [green chile stewed pork], a good *chile Colorado* [beef with red chile sauce], good *carnitas* [braised pork].

Marcus is trying to counteract his cultural loss through active learning and practice. Interestingly, since Mexican food has crossed over into American mainstream cuisine (Davis 2000), it is possible for a “white guy” to teach a man named Marcus Lopez how to make salsa.

Third Generation, Tony Lopez: Affirmative Action Era

Tony is second generation on his mother's side (his mother emigrated from Mexico) and third generation on his father's side (his paternal grandparents emigrated from Mexico). Tony's maternal grandparents were extremely influential in his life: "I spent more time with my [maternal] grandparents than with my own parents when I was young. . . . They were pretty much my world."⁹ Thus, a good portion of Tony's cultural knowledge flows directly from Mexican grandparents as well as Mexican intramarried parents.

Tony's maternal grandparents heavily influenced his racial/ethnic identity. His maternal grandfather hailed from Spain and his maternal grandmother was born in Mexico. Both grandparents persistently emphasized that Tony was "Hispanic . . . because 'Mexican' was a dirty word. 'Mexicans' were field workers." This claim, interestingly, focuses on one grandparent from Spain and omits the history of the spouse originally from Mexico. It simultaneously obscures and denigrates the history of Tony's paternal grandfather from Mexico. Tony explains how his maternal grandmother "converted" from "Mexican" to "Spanish": "My grandma was born and raised in Mexico, but she still considered herself Spanish."¹⁰ I think it was . . . because Mexican was a dirty word, a lower caste. . . . My grandmother considered herself educated because she could read and write, so she even considered herself Spanish. . . ." Tony was taught that since they "were supposedly descendents from more educated upper-class, [they] were 'Hispanic.'" To this day, Tony says, he will "even catch myself correcting people: 'You're Mexican?' 'No, I'm Hispanic.'"

Unlike most other cultural maintenance third-generation Mexican Americans, Tony reports that because of his physical appearance (pale skin and dark hair) he is often perceived as white, most often of Italian descent. He feels socially accepted by the mainstream. Reasons for this feeling of inclusion probably include his light skin color and middle-class status. He is an American mainstream cultural insider in that he does not fall into lower-class Hispanic stereotypes such as having a "heavy accent, capped teeth, really bad dentistry, thick dark hair, dressed kind of a mixture, maybe outdated. . . ." Tony has an "ethnic option" (Waters 1990) and can pass because he is phenotypically ambiguous, flawlessly bilingual, middle class, and behaviorally mainstream. In Tony's words, "I have an easier time blending in and I think a lot of it has to do with [the fact] that I don't fit a lot of stereotypes." Tony conflates race and class in this narrative, yet it is in part due to his middle-class

status that he escapes intense discrimination. Social acceptance facilitated by his light skin color, his middle-class status, and his profession as a county deputy sheriff probably shield him from overt discrimination.¹¹

Tony's maternal grandparents emigrated from Mexico due to poverty in the 1920s. They chose to reside in Santa Barbara because a cousin was already living in the area. Tony's maternal grandfather was a carpenter by trade, but because he spoke so little English he could not join the union and practice his skill. He ended up working as a dishwasher at a hospital for over thirty years. Tony's maternal grandmother worked in the same hospital for approximately twenty-five years, cutting vegetables. In a manner similar to that of Maria Montes, profiled in chapter 2, Tony's immigrant grandparents were prudent with their minimum-wage earnings and bought a house at a time when the Santa Barbara housing market was not inflated. Tony marvels at his grandparents' financial success: "I never realized until I turned about fifteen or sixteen . . . that my grandfather was a dishwasher and my grandmother was a vegetable cutter." Around that age Tony inquired as to his grandparents' job responsibilities:

My grandpa said, "I come [to the hospital] every day at four in the morning and I wash all the dishes. I do it for eight hours a day. Five days a week. Till one o'clock in the afternoon." He never referred to himself as a dishwasher; he referred to it as "I help make the hospital run." . . . Without him doing what he did, things would stop. My grandmother would cut the vegetables for the dishes, the soups, the salads. . . . I was so proud of them. I would never be embarrassed to say [they] were just a dishwasher and vegetable cutter. Everyday, it would amaze me, they would iron their uniforms. Every day. Nobody saw them. They wore smocks. They wore the cleanest uniforms and they ironed them every day and they shined their shoes. That just kills me. Talk about taking pride in what you do.

Service industry workers can garner an extra degree of dignity and self-respect by discursively professionalizing their work (Solari 2006). Here, Tony's grandparents made rhetorical and behavioral claims of "making the hospital run," viewing their minimum-wage jobs as integral to the functioning of a professional enterprise.

Tony's maternal grandparents who helped raise him had a traditional household marked by a gendered division of labor: "It was the traditional old-world family: the woman was the housewife and did the inside things and the guy did the outside work." On his father's side of the family this tra-

TABLE 3.3

Spanish Language Ability in Cultural Maintenance Families (18 Families)

	<i>Less Than Conversational</i>	<i>Conversational</i>	<i>Fluent</i>	<i>Number</i>
Gen 1	0	0	100% (n=5)	5
Gen 2	5.2% (n=1)	31.6% (n=6)	63.2% (n=12)	19
Gen 3	22.2% (n=4)	61.1% (n=11)	16.7% (n=3)	18
Total:	11.9% (n=5)	40.5% (n=17)	47.6% (n=20)	n=42

TABLE 3.4

Spanish Language Ability in Thinned Attachment Families (11 Families)

	<i>Less Than Conversational</i>	<i>Conversational</i>	<i>Fluent</i>	<i>Number</i>
Gen 1	0	0	110% (n=3)	3
Gen 2	9.1% (n=1)	36.4% (n=4)	54.5% (n=6)	11
Gen 3	81.8% (n=9)	18.2% (n=2)	0	11
Total:	40% (n=10)	24% (n=6)	36% (n=9)	n=25

TABLE 3.5

Spanish Language Ability in Total Sample (29 Families)

	<i>Less Than Conversational</i>	<i>Conversational</i>	<i>Fluent</i>	<i>Number</i>
Gen 1	0	0	100% (n=8)	8
Gen 2	6.7% (n=2)	33.3% (n=10)	60% (n=18)	30
Gen 3	44.8% (n=13)	44.8% (n=13)	10.3% (n=3)	29
Total:	22.4% (n=15)	34.3% (n=23)	43.3% (n=29)	n=67

ditional gendered division of labor also prevailed, providing Tony a coherent picture of what home life is supposed to look like. Tony adds, “both of my grandmothers were good cooks of Mexican food,” noting the role that women traditionally play in passing on cultural aspects through “feeding the family” (DeVault 1991). These traditional gender ideologies that were comfortable to Tony contributed to his cultural maintenance.

Tony’s Spanish fluency is due in part to his maternal grandparents: “They could speak a little bit [of English], but they always spoke Spanish in the household. So my first language was Spanish, then I transitioned to English when I got into school.” As can be seen in table 3.3 on cultural maintenance families, the majority of third-generation Mexican Americans in this category is conversational in Spanish.

Tony is a fluent Spanish speaker because he grew up speaking Spanish with his grandparents. As a comparison, none of the third-generation Mexican Americans in the thinned attachment category are fluent Spanish speakers and the vast majority are “less than conversational.” Table 3.5 breaks down the Spanish language knowledge of the entire sample by generation. This table shows that, in accordance with literature on native language retention among immigrants, Spanish language knowledge dwindles with each succeeding generation (Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Portes and Zhou 1993; Rumbaut and Portes 2001). In a study located in Los Angeles, California, and San Antonio, Texas, that spanned five generations since immigration, findings reveal that virtually all Mexican Americans are proficient in English in the second generation but that Spanish persists in the fourth generation and only declines sharply in the fifth generation (Telles and Ortiz 2009: 209). Low parental education is associated with Spanish retention (Telles and Ortiz 2009), which could explain my small sample’s rapid English acquisition and loss of Spanish skills, since the vast majority of the second generation (87 percent) achieved at least “some college” education, with some earning a doctoral degree (see table 6.1).

Spanish language ability is both a contributing factor and an outcome of the cultural maintenance category. Spanish language ability is part of a “feedback loop” for the cultural maintenance families: Spanish knowledge leads to the ability to create and maintain social networks and traditions that are Mexican oriented. Because cultural maintenance individuals tend to marry endogamously (arguably as a result of shared language, social networks, ideologies, and traditions), they tend to produce cultural maintenance offspring to whom they teach their shared culture, including Spanish. This “feedback loop” is not as influential for thinned attachment families. In this case, while Spanish language ability at the second generation *does not vary* between the cultural maintenance and thinned attachment families, the third generation’s linguistic proficiency helped to determine the family’s incorporation trajectory. For thinned attachment families, while the second generation is largely conversational or fluent in Spanish, intermarriage with whites at the second generation leads to Spanish loss at the third generation because the non-Hispanic white parent can rarely speak Spanish.

Though occupational discrimination is well documented (Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004; Pager and Quillian 2005), affirmative action has opened up occupations to some members of minority groups since the mass mobilization of the 1960s. Tony was actively recruited to be in the Ventura County

sheriff's department, a fact he attributes to affirmative action policies. Like others who feel they have benefited from affirmative action policies, and as shown in other studies (Macias 2006: 62), Tony quickly justifies his job placement by saying he works hard. Expressing a sentiment unheard of a generation earlier, Tony says he believes that his race has been advantageous to his career:

As far as getting into new jobs, new promotions, new positions, I think because I'm Hispanic and because I'm willing to work hard, I think [my race] has kicked open a lot of doors for me. I think that I've been given a lot of chances based on not just the fact that I'm Hispanic but that I work hard and that I get things done.

Tony believes his Mexican background has been an asset to him on the job because he began his career after policies issuing from the civil rights movement began to take effect and because he lives in a largely Mexican American town. The demographics of the area, at 37 percent Hispanic, insulate him from the harshest of racial obstacles. Tony refers to the mix of Hispanics and whites in the greater Ventura area and how his heritage and Spanish language give him an advantage on the job: "I think right now Hispanics are taking over Ventura, white people are going to be a minority. We [county sheriff's department] teach people who don't speak Spanish; we send them to [Spanish] classes. They pay me extra because I speak Spanish. I look at being Spanish as . . . being ahead." Tony believes that his background and language ability were big "selling points" for him since he can communicate with both white and Hispanic community members in an official capacity.

Like many cultural maintenance third-generation individuals, Tony feels "a lot of pressure" to represent the Hispanic community. Tony, more so than most, is in a job that highlights his bicultural and bilingual skill sets, so he is more obviously a representative of the Mexican community. Some thinned attachment individuals also felt the need to positively represent their Mexican heritage through their successes. For all third-generation individuals, the pressure to achieve academically, financially, and occupationally is a reaction to being identified as Mexican American and the imposition of negative stereotypes that come with that label. Tony explains, "[I am] representing the Hispanic community and [I] just don't want to mess up. . . . I want to be a good role model and be available and help everybody. I want to carry my people up to the next level." Tony continues, referring to the negative stereotypes that he is working against:

I hate being around other deputy sheriffs who immediately label Hispanics as field workers. So I really promote that all they need is a chance. There is always going to be a population of bad or not so good [people]. It's the same with white people. I try to reach out as much as I can. . . . It's important for me to carry myself a certain way and make sure my name [badge] is displayed prominently. . . . Being in uniform I can help a lot.

Tony considers his race and Spanish ability to be an asset on the job. He is both a liaison between the white and Hispanic populations as well an advocate for the latter.

Since Tony secured his job in a post-civil rights era and during a period of affirmative action hiring, his workplace is set up to allow him to maintain his Hispanic culture on the job. A cultural maintenance incorporation trajectory is promoted by Mexican Americans in his community and is more widely accepted by society in the new millennium than it was in his father's and grandfather's young adulthood. Additionally, by financially rewarding his bilingualism, Tony's work structure encourages him to continue on his cultural maintenance pathway rather than divert him toward thinned attachment. Tony's fluency in Spanish is a tool in his "cultural toolkit" (Swidler 1986) that facilitates his claim to a seamless and coherent Hispanic identity.¹²

A cultural maintenance trajectory does not preclude progressive ideals. Tony, like most of his third-generation peers, was frustrated with patriarchy: "I think there is still some old traditional families that are not going with the times and I hate to see the women subservient and speak when spoken to. I don't like that, and I see that a lot, being a deputy sheriff." As interested in preserving and representing his Hispanic heritage as Tony is, he hopes to "equal it out." Disturbed by the enforced subservience of women that persists in some Hispanic homes, Tony strikes a balance between preserving tradition and adopting more egalitarian gender practices. Cultural maintenance does not require entrenchment of tradition to the detriment of gender equality.

Tony is currently unmarried with no children, leaving open the question of how he and a prospective partner will raise their potential children, the fourth generation. While Tony believes keeping Spanish is "extremely important," his openness to exogamy may hamper the possibility of a Spanish-speaking household. Tony considers how important racial matching within a marriage is to him:

I don't have any strong traits that mandate that a Hispanic woman would be the only person that would understand where I'd be coming from.

Personally, I'd like to marry outside the race because I want to learn about that other culture. . . . I wouldn't want to marry somebody based on the fact that she's got to be Hispanic and we've got to share the same traits and keep it going. . . . Yeah, that's nice, but I don't see that as important.

Yet, it's "unbelievably important" to Tony that he pass on Spanish to his potential children, not just as a marker of their heritage but as a linguistic asset in a globalizing world.¹³ Along with most respondents, Tony desires to preserve the importance of family, manners, respect, and food. Tony specifies what he means by Mexican food: "real Mexican food: *menudo*, *tamales*; not *chalupas* or *churros*."

Tony has maintained his Mexican culture for several reasons. First and foremost, he had two parents of Mexican (or Spanish) descent and a close-knit extended family on his maternal side that reinforced his parents' ideologies and cultural teachings. Thus, two family generations—his parents and grandparents—could reinforce other Mexican-oriented elements such as a traditional gender ideology, Catholicism, Spanish, strong family memories, and cultural traditions. Having a strong relationship with his maternal grandparents (and consistent but infrequent contact with his paternal grandparents) also promoted a strong family memory. Hearing stories directly from his grandparents about their lives in Mexico, rather than hearing them indirectly through his parents, enlivened the significance of Mexico to him and his family.

The Civil Rights Movement: The Benavidas Family as a Comparison Case

The civil rights movement did not affect all Mexican American families in the same way or to the same degree. Thinned attachment families were less involved in and affected by the civil rights movement largely because they were less highly identified as Mexican American and did not necessarily perceive the racial politics of the time as a potential benefit to them. However, engagement in the civil rights movement varied even among cultural maintenance families. Another family, the Benavidas family, is an example of a cultural maintenance family who was sympathetic to, but not highly involved in, the movement.

Class position seems to be the primary factor determining whom the civil rights movement incited to race consciousness and whom it did not. A

family's middle-class status at the time of immigration can "afford" the family the opportunity to live out its cultural way of life without the same challenges as lower- or working-class families. In contrast to all other families I interviewed who became middle class in the second generation, the Benavidas family was middle class at the time of immigration. This class privilege granted them the freedom to display cultural and racial pride without heavy scrutiny from their neighbors and peers. While class distinction was not a guarantee against racial prejudice, it was certainly a buffer. Because of the class privilege of a middle-class immigration, the Benavidas family did not partake in the civil rights movement in the same way that their working-class Mexican American brethren, such as the Lopez family, did. The Benavidas family, who were class-distinct from those most involved in the mass mobilization of the 1960s, offers a different view of how the cultural maintenance paradigm can be lived out.

Second-generation Benjamin Benavidas's youth involved the factors that lead to cultural maintenance. He lived in an East Los Angeles ethnic enclave in his childhood, occasionally spent summers in Mexico, was raised Catholic, and was raised speaking Spanish at home and English at school. Residing in an ethnic enclave allowed Benjamin and his natal family to easily maintain cultural distinctions without pressure to assimilate. Marriage is as key a gateway for cultural maintenance families (endogamy) as it is for thinned attachment families (exogamy). As with most of his cultural maintenance second-generation peers, Benjamin married a Mexican American woman.

Catholicism reinforces a cultural maintenance lifestyle. Benjamin commented on the fused nature of Catholicism and Mexican identity: "we would celebrate anything that related to the Catholic Church. . . . The Catholic Church was part of being Mexican. It's inextricable. Mexican traditions . . . went along with what was happening with the Catholic Church." A study of Mexican immigrants in New York City highlights immigrants' devotion to Catholicism—in particular Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico—not only as a religious practice but also as a means to create community and public life in the United States (Galvez 2009).

Parenting style also plays into the racial/ethnic identity formation of the children. Benjamin comments,

We never were pressured to assimilate. . . . My mom is a Mexicana and had maintained dual citizenship. . . . We never really gave in to assimilation. . . . My kids are like that too . . . sort of nonconformist in that we don't go along with the crowd so you can establish your own identity.

Knowledge of family history, or family memory, plays a key role in perpetuating a sense of history, “roots,” family and ethnic pride.

Benjamin uses the term “a child of the Southwest” to describe his identity, incorporating both his and his wife’s family history and sense of place (his wife’s family goes back several generations in Arizona). “A child of the Southwest” is inclusive of racial intermixture and is grounded in a territory that has remained constant beneath national boundary drawing. While Benjamin asserts a Chicano—as well as Mexican—self-title, it is not highly connected with the political content that produced the term in the 1960s.

Benjamin only made one reference to the civil rights movement during our interview. He mentioned it not as a personal watershed moment, as did Marcus and others, but as a historical period of hope. When I asked what he wished for the next generation, Benjamin referred to the hope and promise of the 1960s:

I would like to see the cycle broken where Mexicanos have been beat up for generations and generations and get here [United States] and get beat up more. . . . Be able to lift yourself up and fight back. . . . The only time that I’ve seen that successfully happen is when César Chávez . . . was able to organize people who were powerless and to take on one of the most powerful industries in the country. I saw . . . there was a sense of pride and a sense of dignity. . . . That was a point where I felt things could turn around.

Benjamin experienced the civil rights movement from a different social location than Marcus Lopez. More distanced from the Chicano Movement because of his class privilege, Benjamin saw the 1960s as a time when people hoped to “turn around that whole [terrible] dynamic” of exploitative migrant labor. The civil rights era did not figure prominently in Benjamin’s narrative because his family already possessed a degree of social, financial, and cultural capital for which the movement was agitating. Yet, even while the Benavidas family was not involved in the Chicano Movement, they benefited from the progressive reforms it urged. Like Tony Lopez, third-generation Caitlyn Benavidas thinks that affirmative action policies may assist her in securing a job because she “brings a diverse element” to the workplace. When she ponders whether she was a beneficiary of affirmative action, Caitlyn is quick to note that she also “has a bachelor of arts from University of California–Riverside,” much the same way Tony stresses his job-related qualifications.

Influence of Historical Context across Three Family Generations

All three generations in the Lopez family understood what it meant to be Mexican American slightly differently. For Juan, born in Mexico, his racial/ethnic claim was “Mexican,” without hesitation. For Marcus, suffering racial discrimination in high school and in the U.S. military led him to become a Brown Beret, a Chicano Movement activist. His social activism sprang from his commitment to being treated as a first-class U.S. citizen, equal to his non-Hispanic white peers. Due to gains in equal opportunity employment policies, Tony, the third generation, viewed his biculturalism and bilingualism as an asset rather than a disability. Tony’s self-title of “Hispanic” over more Mexican-oriented options reflects society’s historical legacy of anti-Mexican feeling and his grandparents’ defense mechanism of calling themselves “Spanish.”

Takahashi’s (1997) work regarding Japanese immigrants and their families found that one’s “political style” is a result of political context (particularly racial milieu and discourses) plus biography. Each generation has a particular set of political styles that are patterned reactions to contemporary political climates. Generationally marked political styles reflect transitions in political and racial consciousness. Takahashi discovered that first-generation immigrants from Japan (Issei) embraced conservative race politics and, due to their lack of U.S. citizenship, adopted a defensive political style in their encounters with law and courts (Takahashi 1997: 24, 198). The second-generation Japanese Americans (Nisei) who came of age in the 1920s and 1930s were assimilationist and accommodationist. However, the third-generation Japanese Americans (Sansei) who came of age in the ‘60s and ‘70s, the same coming-of-age period of my second-generation Mexican American respondents, pursued protest politics. Both the Sansei and second-generation Mexican Americans engaged a politics of confrontation and mass action modeled after the Black Power movement. As these studies show, historical period can have a significant and direct impact on a generation’s political strategy, racial awareness, and national identity.

The progression in the Lopez family’s racial/ethnic identity claims, and the content of those claims, was greatly influenced by historical period. Juan, Mexican by birth, was on U.S. soil during the time of Americanization programs that aimed to eliminate cultural dissimilarities between immigrants and natives. He was also present during periods of U.S. government-sponsored recruitment and deportation of Mexican workers, carried out according to the labor needs of the United States. Grateful for a chance at upward mobility, Juan demonstrated his patriotism and reflected the racial discourses of the time by being assimilationist, with a hint of preservationist instinct regarding marriage.

As Marcus demonstrates, the Chicano Movement was a watershed period for many Mexican Americans.¹⁴ The civil rights movement, of which the Chicano Movement was a part, was a critical point that marked a change of course for the racial identity formation and cultural expression of U.S. minority groups. Through raising their own consciousness as well as the awareness of non-Hispanic whites about their presence, rights, and culture, many Mexican Americans more freely expressed their racial identities during and after the civil rights era than before. One does not need to be an activist in a social movement in order to reap its benefits. Nonetheless, activists are more likely than others to remain political as a result of their participation, in part by virtue of their stronger organizational and social network affiliations (McAdam 1988).

The Chicano Movement, as performance, can be viewed as a collective action that “highlights the common official values of the society in which it occurs” and thereby rejuvenates the society’s morality system (Goffman 1973: 35, 69). The social movements of the 1960s reinvigorated racial/ethnic groups’ identity, sense of entitlement, and need for recognition. If culture is performance, as some scholars argue (Bellah 1986; Goffman 1973; Hochschild 1983; Wedeen 1999), the civil rights movement performed the culture of rights and belonging. Individuals establish their sense of self through practice and interaction: “This self itself does not derive from its possessor, but from the whole scene of his action. . . . This self . . . is a *product* of the scene that comes off, and is not a *cause* of it” (Goffman 1973: 252). The Chicano Movement helped shape the self by providing discourses of racial resistance.

It is a credit to the civil rights movement and affirmative action era that Tony feels that his race has boosted his employment opportunities. Unlike his father, whose educational progress was clearly stymied by racial discrimination, a fact that incited his Chicano Movement activism with the Brown Berets, Tony’s prime career-building years followed the civil rights movement.

Marcus’s activism in the Chicano Movement also contributed to Tony’s cultural maintenance inclination. Marcus’s staunch representation of his race/ethnicity informed the principles he taught his son. Further, awareness of his father’s activist history strengthened Tony’s belief in the importance and value of retaining Mexican culture in the United States. This story of activism or outlook in the parent generation being passed to the next generation is representative of a phenomenon present in cultural maintenance families. In all but two cases of second-generation cultural maintenance individuals, the children carried on the ideologies taught to them by their parent(s). Among the five second-generation individuals (one woman and four men)¹⁵

who voluntarily claimed activism in (as opposed to merely sympathy with) the Chicano Movement, all of the children interviewed were living out a culturally aware and highly identified lifestyle.

Sociopolitical era influences self-identification choices. Some Latin Americans emphasize their Spanish roots in order to be closer to whiteness, or at least ally themselves with a country that has a long history of global dominance (Oboler 1995). Others choose to affirm Latin American and indigenous roots and resist official definitions imposed from above (such as by using the self-definition “La Raza,” literally meaning “the race” or “roots,” rather than the government-sanctioned term “Hispanic,” used first in the 1980 U.S. Census). Tony prefers “Hispanic” because it derives from the Iberian Peninsula in Europe and is perceived as superior to other options. The current racial hierarchy is based on a “pigmentocracy.” Highlighting skin pigmentation as the key variable to racial worth, pigmentocracy is the idea that “miscegenation throughout the colonies, racial classifications, social status, and honor evolved into a hierarchical arrangement” based on skin tone (Oboler 1995: 21). In such a system, white skin denotes high status and honor whereas dark skin is associated with physical labor, conquered peoples, and slavery. Therefore, it is strategic to claim a self-title that denotes light skin and connotes racial privilege. Tony’s ethnic/racial claim reflects the profound influence of his maternal grandparents and is incongruous with that of his father, who underscores his Native American and Aztec heritage. This generational contrast in racial/ethnic labels exposes three key elements. First, the calculated use of terms, such as “Spanish” or “Hispanic,” can be a way to access racial privilege. Second, the self-conscious use of political labels, such as “Chicano,” can be a way to claim (nonwhite) racial pride. Third, historically dependent discourses of race, and families’ reactions to those racial politics, shape racial and ethnic self-understandings.

Comparing Thinned Attachment and Cultural Maintenance Families

Like thinned attachment families, cultural maintenance families are upwardly mobile and structurally assimilated into the U.S. mainstream. The difference is that they retain a high degree of cultural affiliation and identification with Mexico and a Mexican American community. Straight-line assimilation theory suggests that cultural assimilation is a gateway to other forms of assimilation, yet upward mobility and a strong Mexican American identity are not mutually exclusive. The concept of “selective acculturation” (Gibson 1988; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Zhou and Bankston 1998), a part of

segmented assimilation theory, does not adequately capture what is happening in these middle-class Mexican-origin families' lives. "Selective acculturation" holds that immigrant parents and their children (either foreign born or U.S. born) undergo a learning process "embedded in a coethnic community of sufficient size and institutional diversity to slow down the cultural shift and promote partial retention of the parents' home language and norms" (Portes and Rumbaut 2001: 54). Cultural maintenance, as seen in this chapter, differs in that most often these families achieved middle-class status and moved out of coethnic communities by the adulthood of the second generation. The examples of selective acculturation are based on research on relatively small ethnic enclaves, such as Sikhs in southern California (Gibson 1988), Vietnamese in New Orleans (Zhou and Bankston 1998) and California (Thai 1999), and the pre-1980 Cuban exile community in southern Florida (Portes and Rumbaut 2001), where highly organized, well-integrated communities create and maintain social networks and institutions. In contrast, my interviewees existed in a middle-class context. This upward mobility often led to out-migration from ethnically homogenous Mexican-origin neighborhoods, meaning that these Mexican American respondents did not have the same density of coethnic social networks as those communities that exhibited "selective acculturation." This class distinction foregrounds socioeconomic status as an important axis of difference among immigrant families. Furthermore, "selective acculturation" theorizes only the first- and second-generation family links, not attempting to explain the cultural allegiance of the third generation, which, as we have seen, can persist.

While thinned attachment and cultural maintenance are archetypes, they are best envisioned as two ends of an incorporation *spectrum*. Factors, or "bumps," in the process of integration that lead toward a cultural maintenance trajectory include endogamous marriage/partnerships, Spanish surnames, dark skin tone and non-European phenotype, Catholicism, traditional gender ideologies, strong family memory, and participation in civil rights activism. Differences between the thinned attachment and cultural maintenance patterns that begin in the second generation widen in the third generation.¹⁶ Cultural maintenance individuals recount family memories of ethnic pride more frequently, they more often have Spanish surnames and non-European or ambiguous physical features, they are more often Catholic, and they hold more traditional gender ideologies than thinned attachment individuals. While nearly all families interviewed lived in racially integrated neighborhoods, some cultural maintenance families lived in or in closer proximity to majority-minority neighborhoods than some thinned attach-

ment families. While I have little data on the marriage patterns of the third generation, current dating and marital choices (as well as value systems) suggest that cultural maintenance third-generation individuals will either in- or out-marry whereas thinned attachment third-generation individuals have a high probability of continuing their parents' pattern of out-marriage. In sum, racial/ethnic awareness and cultural allegiance pervade the family life, social life, and practices of Mexican American cultural maintenance families more than for those who are thinly attached.

By highlighting patterns of association, we see that *different constellations of elements* lead to particular pathways of incorporation. There is no single causal mechanism leading to a trajectory; rather, there are *different constellations* of strong and weak elements that lead people to a particular pathway. While different elements combine to promote either thinned attachment or cultural maintenance, these two categories are distinctive as “ideal types” that represent two types of incorporation trajectories. The concept of “family resemblances” is useful here:

Things within one category bear numerous resemblances to other things within that category, as well as to things in other categories. It need not be the case that all things within one category bear any one resemblance to each other; some resemblances may be taken as more important to category membership than others; some members of one category may be more paradigmatically located within that category than other members of the same category by virtue of possessing more of the more heavily weighted characteristics of resemblance; consequently, category boundaries are fuzzy. Borders between . . . categories, then, are zones of overlap, not lines. (Hale 1998: 323)

While “thinned attachment” and “cultural maintenance” were the most common modes of racial incorporation and self-understanding, these two models are “ideal types” that highlight common trends. Thinking of “thinned attachment” and “cultural maintenance” as two ends of a continuum rather than discrete, dichotomous categories is useful to understanding the nonexhaustive nature of these models. There is a middle ground between these two trajectories and variation within them.

Cultural maintenance families, more so than thinned attachment families, concertedly “remember their roots.” They do this by holding onto traditions, religion, and cultural beliefs, and by preserving and transmitting family history. While these orientations may have predated the civil rights movement, that period of heightened racial mobilization helped create the space for a

cultural maintenance assimilation pathway and racial identity formation process. The civil rights movement facilitated this cultural maintenance trajectory of racial incorporation into the United States by fostering an environment of multiculturalism and appreciation of diversity.

Elucidating the complex interplay between biography and historical context, Takahashi discusses Japanese Americans:

[Their] personal decisions and collective actions were made within specific historical contexts where economic and political forces, as well as cultural and ideological realities, were at play. . . . As historical actors, their efforts to shape their destinies emerged from a complex of generational and racial processes and dynamics that intersected with their lives. (Takahashi 1997: 197)

As a result of the civil rights era, minority-oriented social networks blossomed, commitment to social justice and “cultural citizenship” (Flores and Benmayor 1997) strengthened, and multicultural ideologies burgeoned. Given this historical background, second-generation Mexican Americans were empowered to embark upon a cultural maintenance pathway in a way that was more supported by society at large than ever before. Cultural preservationist instincts became proclaimed and enacted more fully in the second and third generations than in earlier periods.

The intersection of history and biography produces profound effects. During the civil rights and affirmative action period racial and ethnic minorities have been empowered to proudly claim nonwhite racial identities. Only a generation earlier Americanization, deportation, and recruitment programs hampered possibilities for ethnic pride. While not formative for all second-generation Mexican Americans, the civil rights movement was a “bump” in the road of assimilation that motivated people to challenge the definition of “American” and claim racial and cultural dignity. It is in part due to the civil rights movement of the 1960s that Mexican Americans in California in the new millennium can live out an upwardly mobile and cultural maintenance paradigm simultaneously.

Chapter 4 challenges the common notion that family instruction moves unidirectionally “down” the generations from older to younger by exploring family formation and its consequences, illustrating how thinned attachment and cultural maintenance pathways are not linear but susceptible to change. The micro-level processes of marrying a life partner can have tremendous influence on multiple family generations in terms of identity and cultural practices. The choice of marital partner, so often considered a purely individual decision in American society, has ramifications that extend far beyond the couples who say “I do.”